

BOOTPRINTS

Volume 17, Issue 2

March 2013

SCHROON LAKE

By Donna Diduk

During the Martin Luther King weekend, I ventured up to Schroon Lake in the Adirondacks. They had received almost 2 feet of snow between Christmas and New Year, and the weather remained cold following the snowfall, making the first long holiday weekend of 2013 ideal for snowshoeing.

I brought a friend along, and convinced her that we could venture out and explore new trails. Little did she know that I would bring her along slightly over 10 miles of trails in 2 days!!!

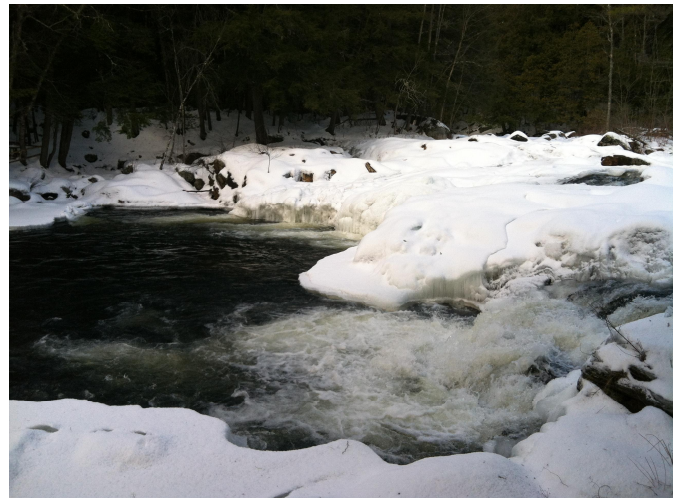
A bit of history of the Schroon Lake Region: It is considered by some to be one of the most scenic sections of the Adirondacks, with many lakes and trails. The origin of the name %Schroon+is not exactly known. Some believe that it is derived from a Native American word for %large lake.+Others believe that it was named by French soldiers in honor of the Widow Scarron (Françoise d'Aubigne), who was previously the wife of the noted French author and playwright, Paul Scarron. She was subsequently the Madame de Maintenon and second wife of Louis XIV of France.

But enough of history and on to the weekend snowshoe adventure. Our first day brought us to the Goose Pond Trail, just off of Alder Meadow Road. The day was chilly but sunny, and the woods provided us with enough protection from the wind that it actually was a most excellent day to venture out. Along the way towards Goose Pond, we saw scenes such as those described below.



Day 2 found us at the Natural Stone Bridge and Caves in Pottersville, NY. I had only been there for hiking in the summer months and was quite impressed by the scenery. Little did I know how different it would look in the winter; but it was just as spectacular. They have almost 10 miles of trails, and most are self guided. There is an entrance fee to get in. They provide you with snowshoe equipment, if needed, along with laminated copies of the trail map. They also have guided nighttime snowshoeing tours, which are led once a week during the winter months. This place has great displays of ancient Adirondack geology. including rock that is estimated to be over one billion years old!

Even during the winter months you can see how forceful the waters are, and how spectacular the view is of the ice-covered rock formation.



ELECTION RESULTS

Our annual election was held at the club's February meeting and our new Board Members are as follows:

President: *Chip Pray*
Vice President: *Marcia Kelly*
Secretary: *Lori Tisdell*
Treasurer: *Carol Vanderheiden.*

Thank-you Chip, Marcia, and Carol for last year's service on the Board, and welcome Lori as the club's new Secretary. Also, a big **Thank You!** to Cindy Hibert and Cindy Dolgoff for their co-secretary service last year.

MERCK FOREST BACKPACK

By Lori Tisdell

Once again, as they do nearly every year, Rob and Lisa Schechtman led a winter backpack event. When I first joined the club I never would have thought that I'd be participating in this type of event. But over the past few years I've gone on other hiking events that I never thought I would, so when Lisa talked about this one several months ago, I thought it was time to see what winter backpacking was all about.

Merck Forest sounded like a good introduction to wintering in the woods for a weekend. It's only about a 2¼ mile walk to the cabin, which has a wood-burning stove. It sounded perfect, but to be on the safe side I decided to bring my own car in case I hated it and wanted to bail. One should always keep one's options open in a new situation, right?

I met up with Lisa, Rob, and Rick to head for the trailhead. Al, Karen, and Dale were going up later and would meet us at the cabin. When I got to Rob and Lisa's place, Rob was putting the finishing touches on the sled we were going to use to bring in the food and other supplies. I thought to myself, the hike can't be that bad if we were going to be pulling a sled in! On the other hand we were heading to Vermont on a very cold morning, with frigid temps forecasted for the entire weekend.



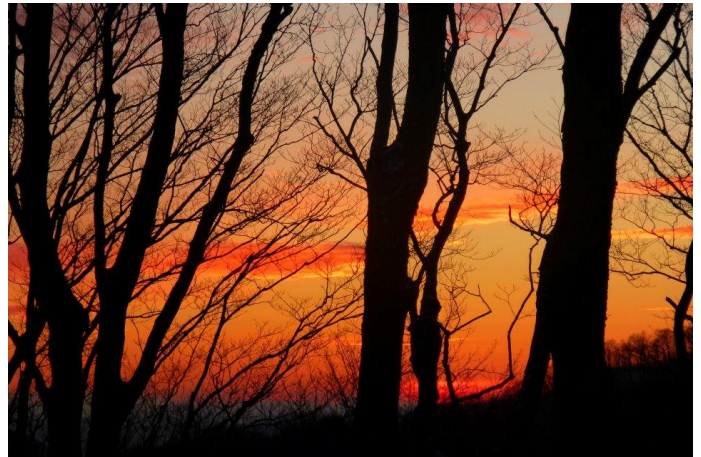
A Hiking we will go!

We arrived at Merck Forest and readied ourselves to hike in. Merck Forest and the affiliated Farmland Center is a non-profit environmental education organization that provides support to sustainable agriculture, maple sugaring, habitat preservation, recreation, etc. And the facility is located in a lovely area, just what you expect the Vermont countryside to look like. So, with backpacks on and the sled secured, off we went. We passed by a lovely farm scene of barn, sugar house, horses and sheep, as well as mountains in the distance, as we made our way into Merck Forest. Our destination was Nenorod Cabin, listed as the most distant cabin in the forest. We took turns pulling and helping push the sled up the snow covered, icy road and trails to the cabin. It wasn't terribly difficult, and

the reward was a lovely cabin with a porch on two sides piled high with wood for heat!

It was very cold inside but Rick and Rob soon had a fire going in the stove. Within a few hours it was warmer than my apartment! I am now forever spoiled for winter backpacking. We had two rocking chairs, a picnic table, heat, and Rob and Lisa's great menu for shared dinners. Once Al, Karen, and Dale arrived we all had dinner together. Lisa and Rob put together an amazing meal of pasta, sauces, sausage, salad, cheese, and other foods. There we were in the middle of the woods in a warm cabin with a checked tablecloth, plates, candles burning, and delicious food to eat. This is living!

The next day we broke up into groups and hiked to various parts of the woods, but at some point everyone made it to Mt. Antone . the highest point at Merck. The views were just wonderful. Hiking through the forest was so interesting, and not just because it is so beautiful, especially in winter. There is an interpretive trail called Silviculture, with educational signs explaining sustainable forestry and the types of trees stands we were passing through. Also, there are sap lines running from tree to tree for the maple sugar/syrup operations.



Saturday night we were treated to a spectacular sunset and moonrise. We stood outside amazed and awed by the breathtaking display of the day's end and night's beginning. We could still see the colors of the sunset to the west while the moon rose full and bright to the east. Nature and the great outdoors at its finest.

We all enjoyed another fun evening of laughs, great food, and great company. There were a few hijinks, and the motto became "What happens at Nenorod stays at Nenorod!" Someone may even have a video that could earn him some money not to circulate! We capped off the evening with a moonlight hike around the cabin. Yep, literally around the cabin, we did not even take off our "door" booties!

The next morning we packed up and headed out of the forest, back to the real world. As I write these words I think, is it experiences like this or our day-to-day lives that are the real world? The natural world gives me so much that I cannot fully explain it in words. It sustains
See Merck Forest on page 3

Merck Forest continued from page 2

my spirit, feeds my soul, gives me strength, brings immeasurable joy; it balances my life outside of nature.

Thank you Rob and Lisa for all the work you put into this great backpacking trip at Merck Forest. A couple years ago Lisa encouraged me to try one of these weekends and I resisted until now. What was I thinking?

PVHC SNOWSHOE AT QUABBIN

By Chip Pray

At nine a.m. on Saturday February 15 we gathered at the Belchertown meeting place, Hawleys parking lot, at the intersection of Routes 202 and 9. It was an overcast morning, decorated with three inches of freshly fallen snow. There were 19 club members in attendance. We carpoled and traveled east, caravan-style, past the main gate of Quabbin, on to the next entrance. Our destination was the trailhead at the Winsor Dam parking lot.

As we approached the Winsor Dam entrance we observed a state trooper parked in his MA State Trooper car. The trooper informed us that the Winsor Dam gate would not open for the entire day. So, I on the hike leader and suddenly my carefully measured and choreographed hike is gone! Okayō on to Plan B! We head west out of the closed Winsor gate entrance and park at the parking lot near the west branch of the Swift River, where the fly fishermen operate. This is our new trail head.



The snow was deep enough that most of us were wearing our snowshoes. We pose for a group picture at the trail head and then hike to the bridge crossing the Swift River in the shadow of the Winsor Dam, for another group picture on the bridge.

We then hike across the vast open area below the southern side of the Winsor Dam in a seemingly substantial depth of snow.

On the far eastern section of dam we ascended to the top for a view. I was concerned that the new trail head

starting point was going to increase our mileage past the 6 miles advertised.

I was lucky enough to have a GPS device and so did Mike Gross. For the remainder of the hike I would ask Mike what his GPS had for mileage to see how they compared to my readings.

We trekked to a lookout in the woods that allowed us to see the entire waterfront of the Winsor dam. The trails were unbroken, so we broke trail most of the hike. We eventually arrived at Quabbin Tower and a great view overlooking the entire Quabbin watershed, with a bonus view of Mt. Monadnock.

My intention prior to arriving at the tower was to continue to the Enfield Lookout area. After comparing mileage figures with Mike I realized that we would have to cut this extended hike short. So, after a short lunch break (due to the wind chill) near the Quabbin Tower parking lot, we headed directly for Webster Road. This would enable us to loop back towards the Winsor Dam.

On the way down to Webster Road we were in relatively deep snow, and saw some very large tracks that caused us to think it could be Black Bear. After this, three or four of us at the head of the pack hurried down the hill, snowshoe skiing in the fluffy snow. Quite an exhilarating feeling! Try it sometime. Just remember to keep your toes up!



When we retraced our steps hiking past the outside of Winsor Dam, we noticed collectively that an extraordinary amount of snow from earlier in the day had disappeared. Some of us arrived at the theory that the disappearing snow could be attributed to convection because of the shape of the dam itself and also because of the warmer water on the other side.

We arrived back at the cars and then back at Hawleys without out incident. I think Mike had 6.25 miles on his GPS, and I had 6.48 on mine. More than enough mileage for the Snowshoeing PVHC!

MT. MONADNOCK

By Marie Babbitt

Dick and Sue's annual Mt. Monadnock hike went off without a hitch once again this year. There were 30 of us this time around. The day promised to be sunny but cold, and everyone was well prepared for the hike. There were two meeting spots for carpooling, and some others met us at the parking lot. There were many cheery Hello's between our party and those whom we had not seen in awhile. As people visited and prepared for the day's hike, I was able to entice some of my fellow hikers to partake in some little chocolates. We circled up for the usual introductions and got our final instructions for the day from Dick and Sue, and we were off.



30 Awesome PVHC Hikers

The day was cold and there was a bit of a breeze, if I am remembering correctly, but not all that cold once you got moving. The trail was well packed down, so the foot traction of the day was micro-spikes or Stablicers, which were more than adequate, as we did not run into any really tricky places. I found myself hiking in-between



Friends helping friends

groups and enjoyed the quiet of the woods, especially in the winter. The quiet of hiking in the winter is something special if you have never hiked at this time of year.

The one section of the trail where a rope would come in handy if the conditions were icy, along with some help from your friends, was pretty tame this year. As promised, Lori for me waited at this spot, with rope in her backpack in case it was needed, but thankfully it was not. The trail had a deep base of snow, and many hikers hiked up the right side of the rock face that sometimes requires additional maneuvering. After this section it was onward to the top. Usually about this time in the hike it's always good to turn around to see the view from the side of the mountain before you even get to the top. The view was great as usual.

As we were reaching the top the faster hikers of our group were already coming back down. As we had already heard from others on the trail, they confirmed that it was indeed quite windy at the top. We reached the top and were treated to a 360-degree view along with the very strong wind, as advertised, so the wind chill dropped the temperature to around 0 degrees, I believe. I was trying to take a video with my camera but could not figure out how to do it. Prior planning on my part about how to take the video would have proved valuable. In the end I did not figure it out so I took pictures instead. Lori, our soon to be chef, brought along some sweets she had made, and they were distributed and eagerly accepted by all.

After a short stay at the top we headed back down the mountain. When we got to the trail junction, Harry showed me how to take a video with my camera. It bit too late for Monadnock filming, but thanks again, Harry. We made it back to the parking lot pretty quickly, and after making sure everyone was off the mountain. we headed for the restaurant for a late lunch.

We were seated in a separate dining area overlooking a brook. We were a pretty loud group but, heck, it was because we were enjoying each other's company!

Laurie, Shari, and Rick were camping out at the campground in the park. They brought extra sleeping bags and extended an invitation to me to stay overnight with them but I declined. It's nice to have friends who think about you though. After finishing up our lunch we parted ways and headed back home.



Dick and Sue

It was another great day to be out there hiking. Thanks Dick and Sue for another great day on the trail.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>
Jen Krzanik	Steve Daly
Michael Falcetti	David MacPhaul
Christa Winter	Paul Plasse
Ted Jarowski	Pat Jorczak
Barbara Pasternak	Ed Paquette &
Bryan McGrath	Christopher Catania
Janet Howard	Paul Kozikowski
	James Morris
	Misa Dargie

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Chip Pray, President
 Marcia Kelly, Vice President
 Lori Tisdell, Secretary
 Carol Vanderheiden, Treasurer
 Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences
 Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Schedule: Sue Forest & Chip Pray
Backpacking Coordinator: Rick Briggs
Trail Maintenance: Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman
Web Page Editor: Dick Forrest
Non Member Email Coordinator: Rob Schechtman
Club E-mail Coordinator: Chip Pray
Quartermaster: Mike Carrier
Bootprints Editors: Marie Babbitt & Mike Reed

Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story/event contributions to the editor at: marie_babbitt@hotmail.com.



An after picture

Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

March Renewals:

Debbie Bombard/
 Cheryl Stevens
 Stephanie Bustos
 Kay Byington
 Suzanne Carey
 Mike & Gail Carrier
 Norma Casillas
 Shari Dorman
 Donna Dunn
 Howard Eldridge
 Alan Goodhind
 John Gorey
 John Klebes
 Donna Mages
 Edmund Marrone
 Denise Matthews
 Chuck O'Connor
 Richard Perreault
 Lorraine Plasse
 Linda Quesnel
 Jay & Kathy Taylor
 Kevin & Robin
 Withers

April Renewals:

Sue Anderson
 Jackie Barden
 John Bien
 Luci Bolduc
 Virginia Brown
 Donna Crabtree
 Lisa Crogan
 Isabella Dellolio
 William Driscoll
 Arline Ely
 Michael Fiat
 Sue French
 Jane Glushik
 Bryan Goodwin &
 Joan DelPlato
 Frank Grabinski
 Mike Gross
 Laurie Long
 Desiree Malo
 Sharon & Mark
 McDonald
 Susan McGurk
 Lori McMahon
 Robert Morgan
 John Occhialini
 Sarah Pascale
 Louise Pilegi
 Dorothy Pulowski
 Mike Rattelle
 Bea Robinson
 Elsa Rosenak
 Albert Shane
 Lynne Shapiro
 Murray Watnick
 Ed Watson
 Susan Young
 Jacqueline Sheehan

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (*Make checks payable to PVHC.*) Mail your renewal with your name and any address or phone number changes to:

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club
 PO Box 225
 West Springfield MA 01090-0225
 (Dues are \$25 member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

- Every Mon. (MA) Morning Hike . various locations
- Every Tues (MA) Tuesday evening hikes with Carol
- Every Wed. (MA) Wednesday evening hikes with Marcia
- Every Thurs (MA) Afternoon Hike
- Every Thurs (MA) Thursday Morning hikes with Harry
- Mar. 9 (MA) Quabbin, Gate 55
- Mar. 9-10 (VT) Stratton Pond Backpack
- Mar. 23 (CT) McCann Farm & Whitaker Woods .
snacks & games aft
- Mar. 30 (MA) Bird watching at Fitzgerald Lake
- Apr. 6 (CT) Sleeping Giant
- Apr. 13 (MA) Colrain State Forest
- Apr. 20 (MA) Mt. Everett & Mt. Race
- April 26 PVHC exhibit at People's Bank Whitney Ave
- Apr. 27 (NY/CT) AT section from NY/CT state line
- April 27 Pioneer Valley Outdoor Fair (including an
exhibit and hike by PVHC)
- May 3 Club Day at EMS featuring exhibit by PVHC
- May 4 PVHC Maintenance and Luncheon at EB'S
- May 5 (MA) Tully Lake - Long Pond Loop



IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:
April 2, 2013, 7 pm at **FBC**
May 7, 2013, 7 pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Deadline for submissions to the next
BootPrints is April 24, 2013

FBC - First Baptist Church, West Springfield

**** Check out our web page at:**
www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org

Members may join the PVHC Email List by
sending a message to:
pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com

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