



BooTpRiNts

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

White Mountain Sampler 2026

by President Erin Squires

PVHC has had a tradition for more than 20 years of spending a weekend in the White Mountains. It was named the White Mountain Sampler and has a history of being a well-attended event. This year there were 35 of us visiting Lincoln, NH. It was a rainy and chilly weekend but no one cared. Hikes went on as scheduled.

There were some changes this year. We did not meet on Friday evening. We met on Saturday for a pizza party. It was well-attended with over 20 people sharing stories of their White Mountain adventures. We were lucky enough to secure a room at the Inn Season site as it was raining. Pizza was delicious and everyone brought appetizers to share.

I want to take a moment to thank Lori Tisdell and Jeanne Kaiser for organizing the trip. I want to thank Peggy Tibbitt and Sandy Sego for stepping in when Lori and Jeanne could not make the trip. Everything ran smoothly. Thank you to all the hike leaders who led hikes. I enjoyed the Lonesome Lake Hut Hike. It was my first time to this hut. Jim Tibbitt led this hike and he was an outstanding leader! He did not lose one hiker.

Best,

Erin

Volume 30, Issue 4

July, 2026

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Smurfy advice for the trail...

Fuel for the Trail

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

How you eat and drink on a hike can greatly affect your enjoyment, safety, and health, as well as how pleasant you are to be around for others hiking with you. Timing when and what you have for meals, snacks, and drinks all contribute to how your body handles hiking stresses and can help you feel your best.

Like with any exercise, we need to provide fuel to our bodies to gain the maximum efficiency and health benefits. Hiking burns a lot of calories and even minor dehydration can have a major effect on your performance.

I recall one of my first major hikes with the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club when I took on Mount Marcy in the Adirondacks. Having set a goal of enjoying my lunch on the summit I continued to push on even though I started to feel hungry. I could see the summit ahead and thought it would be so much better to enjoy my lunch after getting to the top.

This was a hard climb and while the summit looked close by it took longer than I thought. Resting a little before the summit I took some water, but felt a little nauseous. Feeling hunger earlier, I now had no interest in eating. I had pushed past the point where my body was functioning properly and had lost my appetite. I was feeling unusually tired and worn out. I ended up taking a much longer break than I wanted and eventually I felt well enough to force myself to eat some snacks. Fifteen minutes later I started to find new energy and felt so much better. I had pushed too hard and past my body's limits to function efficiently. It would have been so much better to eat when I was hungry than to have forced myself to eat to recover.

I'll share another instance when I ran low on water. I started rationing. See *Fuel for the Trail* continued on page 3



PaPa Smurf

"I had pushed too hard and past my body's limits to function efficiently. It would have been so much better to eat when I was hungry than to have forced myself to eat to recover."

~ PaPa Smurf



*“For the best performance, eat and drink before you feel hungry and thirsty.”
~ PaPa Smurf*

Fuel for the Trail continued from page 2

my water and was clearly getting dehydrated. My planned water resupply was dry, as well as several other backup sources of water I had counted on for my hike. When I finally found some water I was hiking slowly, no longer perspiring, and lethargic. Within minutes of drinking I could feel my body reacting and rehydrating. A close call averted. It was surprising how quickly I ran out of energy once I reached a certain level of dehydration.

While these are pretty extreme examples of what can happen with a mild loss of energy, hydration can have major effects on how you feel, how you enjoy your hike, and how easily your body recovers after a hike.

Timing of Eating and Drinking on a Hike

For the best performance, eat and drink before you feel hungry and thirsty. Waiting until hunger signals arrive means blood glucose has already dropped, and recovery can take 20 to 30 minutes of resting versus continuing to hike. Space snacks and hydration evenly over the course of your hike.



Before your hike:

Fuel up 1-3 hours before you start hiking. Avoid heavy, greasy, and high-fiber meals that can make you sluggish or need an early bathroom break. You want to preload your system with readily available fuel. It's also a good idea to load up on lean protein, carbs, and nutrition-rich veggies the night before, especially if it's an exceptionally strenuous hike. Drink fluids 30 minutes before hiking so you start your hike well-hydrated.

See *Fuel for the Trail* continued on page 4

Fuel for the Trail *continued from page 3**During your hike:*

Eat numerous smaller snacks at short intervals. It makes it easier to digest while hiking. Eat something every 45 minutes to an hour to keep a steady supply of fuel going to your body. When eating a large snack or meal, stop to rest. It is harder for your body to process food while you are moving. Glycogen stores start depleting after 2-3 hours. A mid-day larger snack or meal with a 20-30 minute rest will allow your to restore faster.

*“During your hike:*

Eat numerous smaller snacks at short intervals.

It makes it easier to digest while hiking.”

~ PaPa Smurf

After hike:

Focus on a high carb and protein refuel to replenish and repair muscles after your hike.

Types of fuel:

Fast-digesting carbs, fruits, gels or high-sugar snacks for quick energy.

Fats and protein (like nuts, seeds, peanut butter, trail mix, granola bars, chips, protein bars, etc.) for slow energy release.

Common Mistakes

Using your hike as a diet or weight loss opportunity. Hiking is stressful, this is not the time to restrict needed nutrients.

Not acting until you are thirsty or hungry. Declines in your body's performance are hard to perceive until you are at dangerous levels. See *Fuel for the Trail* continued on page 5



Fuel for the Trail continued from page 4

We don't feel thirsty or hungry until we are already declining in performance which means we are already breaking down parts of our body's fat and muscles to fuel our exertions.

Goal-oriented rest stops versus not listening to our bodies and understanding timing. Our body's needs are related to timing and exertions and don't follow your planned, or unplanned, scheduled goals.

Summary

Fueling up before hiking will improve your final-mile hiking performance while consistent small snacks and drinks will prevent getting tired early and improve your efficiency. Staying well-fueled and hydrated makes you hike better, feel better, and act better. Pushing on when your body is depleted makes you miserable and is medically taxing to your body.

Remember, proper fuel timing is the key to optimizing your performance, maintaining energy levels, and insuring efficient recovery after your hike. With good fuel timing both you and your hiking partners will notice the difference.

--PaPa Smurf

(If you have a suggestion for future topics or a hike-related question you would like covered in this column, send a note to john.klebes@gmail.com)

"Staying well-fueled and hydrated makes you hike better, feel better, and act better."

~ PaPa Smurf

Book Review by Dick Forrest:

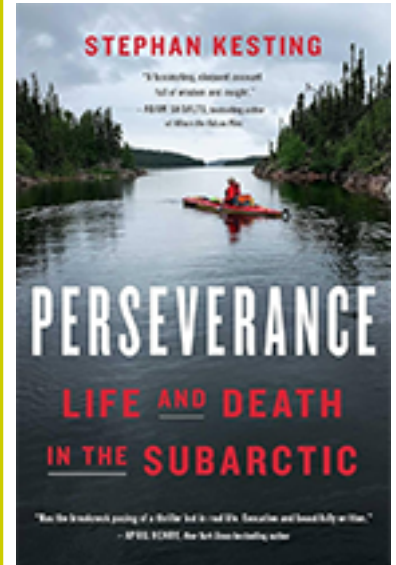
Perseverance: Life and Death in the Subarctic

by Stephan Kesting

I love the nonfiction "Adventure" book genre. This adventure by Stephan Kesting is what I feast on when I read books. It's a story about Stephan's 1,000-mile solo trip in a modified canoe/kayak. Stephan is a firefighter from British Columbia, Canada (CA), who also enjoys jujitsu (he's an instructor who has his own business), and solo wilderness canoeing. Stephan is dying of polycystic kidney disease, and his brother is a match and gives him one of his kidneys, allowing him a second chance on life. Despite that, he never gives up on his dream. He gets married (his second marriage) one day, and on the very next day, his new wife gives him her blessing to go on an extremely dangerous 41-day wilderness canoe trip by himself. His 1,000 mile (about 1600 kilometer) journey starts on the Churchill River in the northeast portion of the CA province of Saskatchewan, through the northwest corner of the CA province of Manitoba, and into the CA territory of Nunavut, ending up at the town of Arviat on Hudson Bay.

Could I do this trip alone and survive? Absolutely not. Stephan possesses all the skills needed to survive this trip. I do not. The trip didn't go perfectly, but he survived, which is a real achievement in itself. He had to navigate rivers with whitewater both up and downstream. Some rivers he paddled with the current and some rivers along the way he paddled against the current. He had to read the whitewater, to ferry across rivers in his boat, or to track/line his canoe/kayak up and down rivers where successful navigation was impossible. Or often, even jump into eddies with his boat when the current was at its strongest and he couldn't see the line in the river that he had to take. He often had to step into the water and take his boat manually upstream or downstream in shallow water. He had to portage around perilous whitewater and treacherous falls. He had to survive and

See Perseverance continued on page 7



"Could I do this trip alone and survive? Absolutely not."

~ Dick Forrest



Perseverance continued from page 6

navigate big lakes which can be extremely deadly if a storm comes up. He had maps and a GPS and a compass which helped him navigate, and he knew how to use them. He had to prevent hypothermia and have the right gear for that to happen. He had to take food for the entire journey. He had to contend with hordes of mosquitoes and black flies. He had to beware of bears – grizzlies, brown, and polar bears. He took a shotgun just in case he needed protection from them. He even set up a bear alarm as an early warning system around the perimeter of his tent. He slept in a tent with an air mattress, which gave way close to the end of the trip. It's unbelievable what hardships he had to endure during this journey. His body was constantly tired from paddling all day. And oftentimes, if the weather was auspicious, he would continue paddling late into the evening.

“When people are passionate and knowledgeable about their subject matter - what they want to write about - it comes across in their writing.”

~ Dick Forrest

When people are passionate and knowledgeable about their subject matter - what they want to write about - it comes across in their writing. And that's true for Stephan. His book is extremely well-written. You would think it would be boring to read about someone paddling all day for 41 days straight. In this instance, it's not the case. There are 41 short chapters for every day of Stephan's journey, as if probably written from a journal. There are two places in the book with accompanying pictures of his journey which helps get an understanding of the individual who wrote this book. There's also a map just past the table of contents page at the beginning of the book which shows how far he got on his journey each day and where in the world he started from and where he is going and ending up.

On the last day of his journey where the Lower Thlewiaza River empties into Hudson Bay, Stephan was picked up by boat by the person who would be the future mayor of Arviat, a predominantly Inuit hamlet in the CA territory of Nunavut on Hudson Bay, and his father, the Premier of the CA territory of Nunavut, who was visiting his son.

“Stephan Kesting incredibly persevered and this book is about life/survival in the subarctic, not death.”

~ Dick Forrest

Stephan Kesting incredibly persevered and this book is about life/survival in the subarctic, not death. Should you read this book? Can you vicariously enjoy this amazing journey? Absolutely!

--Dick Forrest



Future Club Events

2026

July 13-14 - Vermont Challenge (VT) overnight trip organized by Jim E. Brown

August 26-27 - Vermont Challenge (VT) overnight trip organized by Jim E. Brown

September 10-13 - Johns Brook Lodge (NY) organized by Karen Markham

September 22-23 - Vermont Challenge (VT) overnight trip organized by Jim E. Brown

October 19-23 - Cape Cod Trip (MA) organized by Debbie Bombard and Cheryl Stevens

PVHC 2025-2026 Executive Board



Left to Right: Brenda Doucette, Secretary; Judy Alfano, Treasurer;
Erin Squires, President; Ed Marrone, Vice President

Important Membership Renewal Notices

The following memberships are up for renewal:

May Renewals

Jill Abrahamsen
Monica Bourgault
James & Diane Brown
Regina Crimmins
Steven & Amy Dane
Laura Daforge
Nora Dryjowicz
Debi Garlick
Ruth Harper
Tom Lake
Phyllis Levenson
Lisa Martial
Ann Matthews & Clark (Skip)
Peggy McLennan
Ron & Eleanor Morrisette
Colleen Murray
Carol & Tom Permar
Leslie Reed
Michael Reed & Deb Gebo
Susan Reeder
Michele & Don Salva
Karen Savoy
Sara Scagliarini & Richard Rabor
Erin, Peter, & Emily Squires
Robert Trombley
Janice & Buddy Webb
Therese Williams

June Renewals

Judy Alfano
Raymond Bourbeau
Robert & Debbie Duclos
Wendy Dudas
Gina Geck
Marie Holmes & Dan Ingram
Richard Howitt
Mike Kurowski
Peter & Beth Ouellette
Ed Page
James (Brad) Permar
Donna & Dave Slozak
Jim & Peggy Tibbitt
Brian & Rita Toole
Anna Viadero
Pamela Wright

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (Make checks payable to Pioneer Valley Hiking Club (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 01089
(Dues are: \$25 individual member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers

Erin Squires, President
Ed Marrone, Vice President
Judy Alfano, Treasurer
Brenda Doucette, Secretary
Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Schedule: Jos Brannan & Lori Tisdell
Backpacking Advisor: Rick Briggs
Trail Maintenance: Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman
Club Website Editor: Dick Forrest
Non-Member E-mail Coordinator: Rob Schechtman
Quartermaster: Mike Carrier
Bootprints Newsletter Editor: Dick Forrest

Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Please email your story/event contributions to Dick Forrest at: dforrest@charter.net

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

March

Theresa Hickson

April

Danni Bellows
Kerisa Fitzgerald
Anne Goncalves
Nooni Hammerlund
Nancy Mead
Liz Schwellenbach
Diane Stock
Idali Torres & Tom Hidalgo
Natalie Zombik



UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

Mondays Morning hike

Tuesdays Evening hike

Wednesdays Morning hike

Thursdays Morning hike

Fridays

Saturdays Morning hike

Sundays

July 7 Club Meeting

August 4 Club Meeting

PVHC <https://teamup.com/ksz8qkbizhndt3qjt7>
Schedule of Events

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

July 7, 2026 7 p.m. at **ROC**

August 4, 2026, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

ROC - Red Oak Church, 337 Piper Road, West Springfield

Deadline for submissions to the next *Bootprints* is August 20, 2026

**** Check out our club website at:**

www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org

Members may join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to:

pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com



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A publication of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club
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