



BooTpRiNts

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

Picking Up Pickleball

by President Erin Squires

Pickleball has been picking up in popularity. More and more pickleball courts are popping up, both indoor and outdoor. I must admit that I got caught up in the pickleball movement. It's a fun sport and easy to pick up. Okay, I will admit the scoring can be challenging. A few of us in the club started getting together to play. Sandy Sego had taken lessons and was willing to share all that she's learned.

Last year we put pickleball on the schedule and we were surprised at the interest. We are attempting to add more pickleball activities to the schedule. We are, by far, not professional players. We play for the fun of the sport and to gather with our fellow hikers on another type of adventure. One that includes a kitchen and letting the ball bounce once before hitting it. If you are interested in joining in the fun, keep an eye out for pickleball on the Team Up schedule.

Best,

Erin

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The Rising Corner Floating Boardwalk

by Ron Morrisette
with Editorial Assistance
from ChatGPT and OpenAI

Celebrating Ten Years of the Boardwalk and Decades of PVHC Stewardship

Today, hikers beginning MA Section 1 of the New England National Scenic Trail at Rising Corner cross the Southwick wetland on a broad floating boardwalk. Its finished surface gives little indication of the work behind it. Completing the new crossing required volunteers to remove the old, mud-covered bog bridge, transport and assemble the large modular components, and solve unexpected problems as the work progressed.



Completed in September 2016, the Rising Corner floating boardwalk carries MA Section 1 of the New England National Scenic Trail across the Southwick wetland.

On September 16, 2016, the final connections were installed and the Rising Corner floating boardwalk was officially completed. A decade later, it remains an important part of the trail and an enduring example of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club's stewardship of the New England Trail.

"This is our bridge and our legacy to share with all!"

— Chip Pray, *Bootprints*, November, 2016

A Crossing That Kept Changing

On May 11, 2002, club volunteers began constructing a wooden "bog bridge" across the wetland. The original structure was approximately 120 feet long and was intended to rest primarily on the muddy bog.

Beaver dams contributed to rising water levels, transforming a site that had once held about six inches of water into one containing three or four feet. The bridge began floating and became increasingly wobbly. PVHC added sections, attempted to anchor the structure, and continued making repairs—including using club funds to patch it.

See *Floating Boardwalk* continued on page 3

***"This is our bridge
and our legacy to
share with all!"***

*~ Chip Pray, Boot-
prints, November,
2016*



“Replacing the bog bridge required several years of coordination....”

~ Ron Morrisette

Floating Boardwalk continued from page 2

By 2011, PVHC representatives had begun formally expressing to New England Trail administrators the need for a replacement plan. Continued extensions brought the old bridge to approximately 280 feet by 2013, but the crossing remained difficult to stabilize and maintain.

From Repair to Replacement

Replacing the bog bridge required several years of coordination among PVHC, the Southwick Conservation Commission, New England Trail personnel, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and the Town of Southwick.



Before the 2016 project, hikers crossed the Rising Corner wetland on a narrow and deteriorating bog bridge.

The selected system used black flotation units beneath a rigid, five-foot-wide deck, connected by a galvanized-steel spine and held in alignment by vertical anchor-and-guide posts that allowed the boardwalk to rise and fall with changing water levels.

PVHC Volunteers Answer the Call

Approximately 40 members volunteered to prepare the site, unload and stage materials, remove the old bog bridge, and help assemble the new boardwalk.



PVHC volunteers move a modular flotation component from the staging area to the wetland, where it will be assembled as part of the new floating bridge.

Removing the old crossing was a major undertaking. Volunteers constructed a rope-and-pulley “high line” over the wetland to lift out heavy, mud-covered bridge sections. They also removed old poles, separated usable wood from debris, and cleared the route for the new structure.

Volunteers handled large bridge components and removed heavy, muddy sections of the old crossing. Many worked eight consecutive days, and on at least three days as many as 23 PVHC volunteers were on site, in addition to the two-person Roving Conservation Corps crew.

See Floating Boardwalk continued on page 4

Floating Boardwalk *continued from page 3***Built Through Teamwork and Ingenuity**

The first mock-up revealed numerous deficiencies in the parts and plans. Paul Kozikowski and his crew oversaw the effort to resolve the initial assembly problems, including repairing deficient parts and mechanically adapting components that did not fit properly.

The broader construction effort also received assistance from Michael Zloger, the New England Trail Volunteer Trail Maintenance Chief, members of the Roving Conservation Corps, and Appalachian Mountain Club personnel.



PVHC volunteers and members of the Appalachian Mountain Club crew gather at the Rising Corner worksite during construction. Approximately 40 PVHC members contributed more than 1,500 volunteer hours to the project.

By September 1, the old bog bridge had been completely removed, and by September 6, approximately 180 feet of the new floating boardwalk had been completed. Work resumed on September 14; by mid-afternoon, the ramps were in place and all 20 anchor-and-guide posts had been driven into position.

On September 16, the remaining bolts and railing hardware were installed, officially completing the approximately 250-foot-long, five-foot-wide boardwalk.

What the Club Built Together

The Rising Corner boardwalk was a collaborative effort. The Appalachian Mountain Club provided coordination and professional trail support, while New England Trail personnel assisted with planning and design. The Town of Southwick contributed \$70,000 in Community Preservation Act funding, and its Department of Public Works—including Chris Faria—provided equipment, transportation, and help unloading the bridge components.

See *Floating Boardwalk* continued on page 5

“The first mock-up revealed numerous deficiencies in the parts and plans.”

~ Ron Morrisette

“The Rising Corner boardwalk was a collaborative effort.”

~ Ron Morrisette



“PVHC members brought years of stewardship, practical skill, and more than 1,500 volunteer hours to the replacement effort....”

~ Ron Morrisette

Floating Boardwalk *continued from page 4*

Kestrel Land Trust holds the conservation restriction on the property, Southwick conservation officials supported the project, and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts provided additional grant funding.

PVHC members brought years of stewardship, practical skill, and more than 1,500 volunteer hours to the replacement effort—from preparing the site and removing the old bridge to assembling the new structure and solving problems in the field.

This was more than a structure built on a trail the club maintained. It was a major PVHC undertaking accomplished alongside trusted partners.

A Place Transformed

Community members toured the completed boardwalk in December 2016. A memorial stone honoring longtime New England Trail leader Pat Fletcher was later installed nearby.

In 2020, the Appalachian Mountain Club completed a quarter-mile accessible approach trail and added two accessible parking spaces at the Rising Corner Road trailhead.

Ten Years On

A decade later, the Rising Corner floating boardwalk continues to carry hikers through a dynamic wetland environment. Behind its steady surface are years of maintenance, meetings, planning, fundraising, construction, and volunteer dedication.

For longtime members, the boardwalk may bring back memories of familiar names, difficult workdays, muddy clothing, and friendships
See Floating Boardwalk continued on page 6

Floating Boardwalk continued from page 5 strengthened by a common purpose. For newer members, it reveals something important about the club they have joined: PVHC's legacy is not limited to the hikes it leads. It also lives in the trails its members maintain, the problems they solve, and the places they leave better for those who follow.



Section by section, the new floating boardwalk extended across the Rising Corner wetland as volunteers transported and positioned the modular components.

Every hiker who crosses the wetland at Rising Corner today benefits from the dedication of those who, ten years ago, worked together and persevered until the job was done.

The structure floats, but its legacy is firmly grounded.

September 16, 2016 – September 16, 2026

Ten years of stewardship at Rising Corner

The Project by the Numbers
Approximately 40 PVHC volunteers

More than 1,500 PVHC volunteer hours

Approximately 250 feet long

Five feet wide

20 anchor-and-guide posts

Official completion: September 16, 2016



Chip Pray and Peggy Tibbitt during construction of the Rising Corner floating boardwalk. Mud was unavoidable, but so were fellowship, teamwork, and a shared commitment to completing the project.

"Every hiker who crosses the wetland at Rising Corner today benefits from the dedication of those who, ten years ago, worked together and persevered until the job was done."

~ Ron Morrisette

Research and Editorial Credit

Historical research and article preparation: Ron Morrisette

Editorial assistance: ChatGPT, OpenAI

See Floating Boardwalk continued on page 7



Floating Boardwalk continued from page 6

Sources Consulted:

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club records

Bootprints, November 2016 — “New Bridge at Rising Corner: ‘The NET Gateway to Massachusetts’”

<https://pioneervalleyhikingclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/bp2016nov.pdf>

Bootprints, January 2017

<https://pioneervalleyhikingclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/bp2017jan.pdf>

Official trail and government sources

New England Trail — Massachusetts Section 1

<https://newenglandtrail.org/hike/ma-net-section-1/>

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Program — 2018 Grant Projects

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/2018-recreational-trails-programtrail-grant-projects/download>

New England National Scenic Trail — 2020 Annual Report

<https://npshistory.com/publications/neen/ann-rpt/2020.pdf>

Contemporary newspaper reporting

The Westfield News — “People Tour Floating Boardwalk,” December 3, 2016

<https://thewestfieldnews.com/people-tour-floating-boardwalk/>

The Westfield News — “Memorial Stone Unveiling to Honor Hiker,” June 2, 2017

<https://thewestfieldnews.com/memorial-stone-unveiling-to-honor-hiker/>

--Ron Morrisette



Future Club Events

2026

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

September 28 - 30 - Vermont Challenge (VT) overnight trip to Burke Mt. (9/28), Bluff and Bald Mts. (9/29), and Mt. Pisgah (9/30) organized by Jim E. Brown

October 14 - Vermont Challenge (VT) Mt. Ascutney 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:

Sept Renewals

Lars Brown
Cindy Cary
Rika Clement
Shari Cox
Theresa Dahlquist
Wendy Donovan
Nicole Fonsh
JoAnne Gebski
Lisa Golob
Judith Hansen
Gail & William Howe
Laurie Mahoney
Bill & Jan Martin
Lori McMahon
Joseph & Terry McNeill
Stacey Munro & family
Christine Overstreet
Marty & Meg Schoenemann
Lynn Schwartz
Susan & Taylor Seybolt
James St Peter
Linda & Gary Surprenant
Carl Todd
Paul & Kathleen Tonelli
Earl & Donna Uprichard
Ann Walaszek

Oct Renewals

Karen Atkinson
Donna Beck
Julie Bermant & David Murray
Jeff Briggs
Paul & Suzanne Curtis
Michael Delaney
Joanne Fortin
John & Regina Fortune
Barbara Graf
Julie & Nick Huanca
Brenda Jorgensen
Barbara Kowal
Rebecca Laramée
Jennifer Leahy
Betty Lempke
Susan Lewin Opitz
Karen Markham & Al Roman
Jim McNerney
Betsy Post
Maria Rocco
Celeste Rosselli
Carolyn Young

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

July

Cheryl Coltman
Dee Dice
Katelin Nadeau

August

Josh Feldstein
Cathy Schoen



UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

Mondays	Morning hike
Tuesdays	Evening hike
Wednesdays	Morning hike
Thursdays	Morning hike
Fridays	Occasional morning hike
Saturdays	Morning hike
Sundays	Occasional morning hike
October 6	Club Meeting
November 2	Club Meeting

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

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

October 6, 2026, 7 p.m. at **ROC**
 November 2, 2026, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

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

Deadline for submissions to the next *Bootprints* is October 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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