

# TWI-LIGHTS

Volume 10 | **Winter 2026**

**First Day Hike**

**Tree in the Rotting Stump**

**Great Backyard  
Bird Count**

**Ski Binding Jig**

**Cruise on the  
Rose Lummis**

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## ABOUT US

Trail Works, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, was founded in Wayne County New York in 1997 by a small group of individuals who are dedicated trail users who are interested in trail development and expanding trail use.

## OUR PURPOSE

Trail Works purpose is to provide a unified voice for Wayne County trail users as well as to coordinate the development and maintenance of high-quality, year-round multi-use trails. Our purpose also embodies public education about trails and public awareness of trail issues. To carry out our purpose, we recognize the importance of the relationships Trail Works has established with local and county governments. These relationships are vital to moving ahead on any plans for trail development. Whether we are planning trails, cutting trails, maintaining them, posting signage or using trails by hiking, riding, kayaking, snowshoeing, skiing or biking... we are all about trails.

WEBSITE: <https://trailworks.org>

Cover photos: by Rich Ross

## MEET THE TWI BOARD

President	Barb DeRoo	<b>Members at Large</b>
Vice President		Gary Abbott
Secretary	Caileigh Shippers	Gil Burgess
Treasurer	Nancy Snyder	Mark DeCracker
Newsletter	Nancy Snyder	Tom Kolankiewicz
	Rich Ross	Mike Shippers
		Glenn Wallis



Next newsletter deadline for articles is **May 31st 2026**  
 Please have newsletter articles and photos sent to [Trailworks@trailworks.org](mailto:Trailworks@trailworks.org)

## From the Editor:

As we start 2026, we'd like to thank two departing Trail Works Board members.

Sal Vittozzi has served on our board since 2020 as an at-large member. We are grateful for his time, dedication, and the many contributions he has made to Trail Works. His knowledge and history of Beechwood State Park along with his involvement in other community organizations has enriched our work and strengthened our connection to the region.



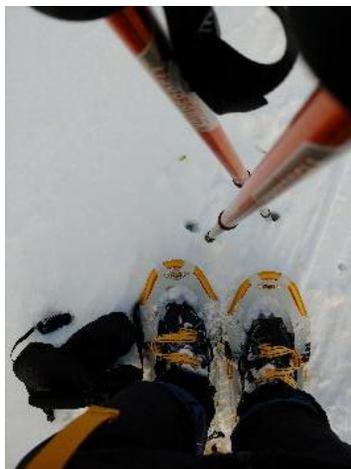
Holly Burgess stepped up two years ago to fill our Vice President role during a challenging transition period following the passing of past president Bethany Comella, when VP Mark DeCracker assumed the duties of acting President. Since then, Holly has been a steady and generous presence on our board. She has secured meeting locations for us, often arriving with her delicious baked treats, run meetings when needed, supported local table events, and participated in the annual Canal Clean Sweep as well as other trail work days. Her reliability and willingness to pitch in wherever needed have been invaluable to Trail Works.



Thank you, Sal and Holly, for your dedication to Trail Works!

Snow, snow, and more snow! We haven't seen this much snow in Wayne County in many years, especially with snow starting the end of November, with a December full of snow!

This gives us many of opportunities to play outside! Look for the flat rail trails with sled tracks for XC skiing, and almost anywhere else for snowshoeing. Just remember to be prepared for winter (see the DEC Hike



Smart NY chart in this newsletter). Snow/ice is one thing, but the bitter cold is quite another (talk about draining your phone battery)!

As we look forward in 2026, we are planning to hold some training and demo events. New this year will be demonstrations on the use of a ski jig to swap out bindings on XC skis. The ski jig demo will take place on Tuesday, February 17, at 6:30pm before our normal monthly Board meeting.

*Leave No Trace* training is currently scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup>. The bike tune-up clinic is scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup>. Confirmation of these dates and specific times and locations are yet to be determined.



We are also excited to team up with Save Our Sodus (SOS), and book a scenic bay cruise on the historic Rose Lummis cruise boat!

And last but not least, we will be continuing our popular "shoreline hike series" with Tim & Tom along Lake Ontario.

Watch for more news on these events on our Facebook or website events page and we sure hope you can join us!

*Nancy Snyder, editor*

# First Day Hike at Palmyra Aqueduct Park and Palmyra Wetland Trail

By Tim Wilbur

Trail Works chose a canal theme at the Palmyra Wetlands for the First Day Hike of 2026. Trail Works' Calleigh Shippers counted off 22 of us as we began our trek down the old Erie Canal towpath. Fortunately, there wasn't much wind, and that made this 16-degree day an acceptable walk through the snow.



As this was my 'back yard' playground growing up here in the 1960's, I got the honor of being hike leader with frequent stops for some canal trivia, past and present. Our first stop had Trail Works' Mike Shippers demonstrating the Wegmans *Hit the Trail Wayne County* smartphone app to find and record the rubbing post of the Wegmans Passport Series. We both gave a run-down on this program.

Next pause was Cannon Hill, where in 1825, a cannonade from Buffalo through Palmyra, and on to New York City, shot off in succession, signifying the opening of the canal. This hill is on the south side of the canal, and was chosen to shoot off the cannon as it is the highest point along this part of the canal, and thus got its name as Cannon Hill. The cannonade took one hour and twenty-five minutes to complete, one cannon fired after the other all the way from Buffalo to New York City.

Our tour also touched on many lesser-known pieces of history, including where buildings of commerce along the canal once stood, a gravel pit, and where in 1970, a mini twister touched down just north of the Barge Canal, tore a path south east across our trail, through the business district, went up Prospect Hill (where Trail Works promotes another trail) and ended in the cemetery.

I can remember in the 1960's, this abandoned Erie Canal was a mosquito breeding ground with mostly stagnant, slow-moving water, working its way around all kinds of trash and debris from old bed springs to tires and fallen trees obstructing the abandoned Clinton's Ditch. The swamp area between the canals was full of cattails, wild vines and thick green algae on the surface of the water. In the early 1970's, efforts began to start reclaiming this piece of history into what we see today. Aqueduct Park was established at Lock 29, reclaimed from the scrub land and overgrowth. Over the years, hundreds of volunteers, groups and individual efforts including the New York State Canal employees, have worked year after year to give us this beautiful outdoor venue, loaded with local history right here in our back yards and free for all to enjoy.

Skirting around the east end of the swamp, we then paralleled the Barge Canal, hiking our way back to Aqueduct Park along the north berm of the swamp in between the canals. Along here is an observation deck (in sore need of repair), where in the summer weather, you are likely to see dozens of turtles sunning themselves on any available log, stick or high spot.



With Trail Works' president Barbara DeRoo serving as our sweep, we concluded our First Day Hike for 2026 as temperatures now reached 18 degrees! As we left, another hiking group had shown up for their First Day Hike. For Dawn Fortier of Macedon, this First Day Hike also became her first hike with Trail Works as she became our newest member.

For those experiencing this park/trail for the first time, I suggest a return visit in the spring, summer, or fall weather as this can be an all-day adventure. Bug spray is suggested but for this First Day Hike, not one mosquito bothered us!



### Happy Smiling Faces!

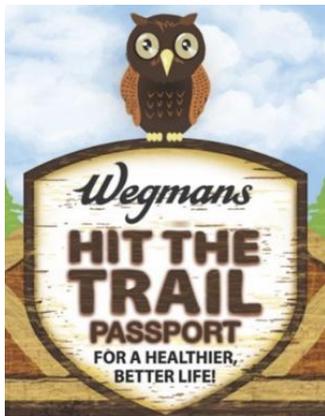
This is what we like to see...happy, smiling faces turning in their completed Passport booklets to Cornell Cooperative Extension in Newark! We've had several emails with David and Arlene who have not only completed the Wayne County Passport booklet, but have also done many of the Rochester area trails as well. They are so excited about our trails, they have already started hiking them again this winter! Thank you, Dave and Arlene, for visiting our friends and partners at CCE-Wayne to turn in your booklets!

The Wegman's *Hit the Trail* Passport Wellness Program is very popular in our area. It is designed to get you out and moving! Each year, Wegmans supplies Trail Works with a \$250 gift card as a prize for our National Trails Day drawing for those who have turned in their completed passports. Trail Works holds the drawing each year on the first Saturday of June, which is always designated by the American Hiking Society as National Trails Day. Dave and Arlene's entries will be added to our stash used to draw from each year for this prize!



While you don't have to wait for spring to get out on the trails, you can also use snowshoes or XC skis to complete certain trails. Just be sure you check out each trail location to see if it's good for XC skiing. Now is the time to start planning to get those remaining trails done.

Completed passports need to be turned in to CCE-Wayne in Newark before June 6, to be eligible for the gift card drawing. Or you can always mail them to Trail Works, P.O. Box 43, Williamson, NY 14489. If you complete all 30 of our trails, your name(s) will be added to the "Dirty Thirty Finisher" page on our website!



## The Tree in the Rotting Stump

submitted by Aaron Netsky

*It's a Wonderful Life*; George Bailey invests in people. I don't mean through his Building and Loan, I mean through how he treats them. There comes a time in the movie when George thinks he has lost everything, that there is no hope, and that is when his investment, much to his surprise, pays off. The lesson he and viewers learn is that money (stocks, bonds, etc.) is not the only way to invest. We are, in fact, investing constantly, in all kinds of ways, we're just not thinking of it as investing. I first had that thought about the movie years ago, but last year, when I started volunteering for the Genesee Land Trust, investing took on yet another meaning for me, thanks to a sapling.

My first Trail Keepers event took place on a cold April morning at Macyville Woods Nature Preserve in Sodus Point, NY. I was a little late, but, fortunately, I arrived in time for instructions. We had three hundred baby trees to plant, Eastern White Pines and Red Maples. We were told how to dig the holes (the trees were so small that the holes did not need to be very wide) and, importantly, how to make sure the roots did not tangle around themselves and choke the trees. These lessons came in handy when I transplanted three trees for my parents not long after. One of those trees did not survive, but it wasn't because I had been careless with the roots.

Three hundred trees is a lot, but the point of so many was that even if only a fraction survived, it would still be a good number. Three hundred little investments, only some of which would grow. Would any of us ever personally benefit from any of these investments? Who knows? But we had all benefitted from trees that had been planted by other people (or animals, or the wind), and those of our trees that survive will surely benefit others, in turn. In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer writes that our relationship with trees, and nature more broadly, should be reciprocal, that we shouldn't just take, we should give back. I was probably not the only one at that event whose interest in planting trees stemmed from a desire to give back.

How many trees did I plant that day? I forget. I also forget where I put most of them, and that's fine; George Bailey forgot about most of his investments, too. But I know exactly where one of the Red Maples is. Down in a gully, I came upon a rotting stump, and something clicked in my '90s kid brain: there is an episode of *The Magic School Bus* in which the kids are taught how important decomposition is by spending some time in a rotting log that one of them had been advocating to have removed so that a new tree could be planted. The lesson: the best thing for new life, including new plant life, was to let the rotting log be. I stuck my shovel into the soil within the rotting stump in the gully at Macyville Woods, and inserted a Red Maple. Waste not, want rot.

Of course, I also wanted to remember where at least one of the trees I planted was. I planted another in the soil left behind after a few of us removed some old mattress springs from the woods, but I don't think I could find that tree if I tried. The one in the stump is special. I had no specific plans to visit it, but the Genesee Land Trust had a mushroom-themed event at Macyville Woods last

fall, and while we were tromping around looking for fungus, I found the little Red Maple. It still had a few leaves and there were some mushrooms on the stump, to boot. I felt so proud of that little tree. I plan to visit it on the anniversary of its planting. Maybe I will make a tradition of doing so. Again, trying to find most



of the trees I planted that day would be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. But the Red Maple in the stump is an investment I can check on that will serve to remind me that I don't know how many "seeds" that I have "planted" in my life are growing and will yield results, whether for me or someone else. It is a reminder to "keep planting to find out which one grows," as some other '90s kids once sang.

## Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count is almost here! Our dates this year are February 13-16. Count the birds you see on one of these days in your own yard, or anywhere you happen to be! This is a yearly tradition with Trail Works, but we need YOU to participate! Here's your chance to win a new bird feeder and a bag of bird seed. Count the birds you see for 15 minutes, and then submit your list to us along with the names of the bird *species*. You do not count the *number* of birds you see, but rather the number of *different species* you see (*i.e.* cardinal, junco, sparrow, etc.).

This has been done for many years in conjunction with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It's also very easy to register with the Cornell Lab, create an account and submit your data to them. It's fun and very interesting to look at other reports to see where people are reporting from and what they are seeing around the world! Love the birds, and feed them too!



Submit your entry to our Trail Works email along with your name: [www.trailworks@trailworks.org](mailto:www.trailworks@trailworks.org).

See this Cornell link and read more about this project that can be fun for the whole family! (<https://www.birdcount.org/>)



## New Ski Binding Equipment

Trail Works recently acquired a “ski jig” for cross country skis. This jig is a specialized tool used to mount ski bindings to ensure proper boot alignment.

Trail Works member Ed Sawester will be giving a demonstration of this equipment prior to our February Board meeting. Ed has a wealth of knowledge on cross country ski equipment, and is willing to share his knowledge with Trail Works members to help get people outdoors and having fun!

Prior to the meeting, Ed will conduct a “triage” for folks who bring in their skis, and have questions about their equipment. For example, if you have skis but recently upgraded your boots and they no longer fit the bindings, Ed can help guide you on your next steps. Ed can guide folks on any part of the XC ski experience.

The demonstration will take place before our February 17 monthly Board meeting at Reliant Community Credit Union, 10 Benton Place in Sodas (use back entrance). The demonstration will start at 6:30 pm and last about 30 minutes. If you have questions about your skis, bindings, boots or poles, you are welcome to bring them to the meeting for Ed to look at.

Thank you, Ed!



## Trail Works Cruise on the Rose Lummis

Something fun and different is coming in 2026...think water or “blue” trails!

Trail Works would like to offer our members an opportunity to take a cruise on the Rose Lummis tour boat on Sodus Bay this summer. The Rose Lummis has quite a history in Sodus Point and other places, and she is now back on Great Sodus Bay doing wonderful things!

The Rose Lummis was acquired in 2025 by the water preservation group “Save Our Sodus.” SOS has been working hard to plan programs like eco tours, sunset tours, educational tours for children’s groups, and private group bookings.

We will be planning for this cruise during our spring meetings. We are not sure if the cruise will be paired with

a hike or another Trail Works event, or just a cruise on the boat. Information on how to make a reservation and purchase tickets for this Trail Works event will be forthcoming. Stay tuned!

Build in the earl 1950’s, the Rose Lummis has a fascinating history and story as to how she returned to Sodus Bay. Please refer to the links below from the *Sodus Bay Historical Society* and *Save Our Sodus* organizations.

It is our understanding that the Rose Lummis will be docked at different location(s) this year.



<https://sodusbaylighthouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-Summer-Newsletter.pdf>

<https://www.saveoursodus.com/sodusbaytours>

## Trail News & Notes

### Bicentennial Trail (Williamson)

A doggie bag and collection station has just been installed on this trail! Two local residents contacted us and then received the required permissions to install the doggie station after seeing large amounts of dog droppings being left on the trail, making it a less-than-desirable walk for all.

Bags will be provided and a receptacle to leave the bags in as well. These caring and conscientious residents are also willing to maintain this doggie station.

Thank you!



### Enlarged Erie Canal Lock 56

We have applied for and received a work permit from the NYS Canal Corporation for work on this trail. Although we have been doing work here for years to enhance the property around the historic **Poorhouse Grocery** building (now a private home), we recently learned that a permit was needed to continue this important work.

We will continue our work here to keep the property and grounds surrounding Lock 56 looking groomed and well-kept for visitors and resident Allyn Perry, who grew up in the **Poorhouse Grocery**.



### Lauraville Landing Trail

We have just learned from our partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension in Newark that there will be a permanent *story book trail* installed there this year!

This will be a joint effort between CCE-Wayne and the Clyde/Savannah Library. Funding will be through CCE-Wayne in Newark.

Thank you, Friends!



### Palmyra Wetland Trail at Palmyra Aqueduct Park

There are several trees down along this trail that obstruct the path. Some you can get around easily, and others you cannot. We have informed Wayne County and the NYS Canal Corp of work that needs to be done here this spring. There is also an observation deck there that is in dire need of repair.

We have a new rubbing face plate for the Passport post that will be installed in the better weather (thanks, Tim Wilbur!).



## Shaker Tract Trail (formerly Third Creek Trail)

Going forward, we are calling this trail the **Shaker Tract Trail** to coincide with the name given to it by the NYS DEC. The trail is part of the DEC Lakeshore Marshes Wildlife Management Area, Shaker Tract Unit in the Town of Huron.

Trail Works has always called it the “Third Creek Trail” as Third Creek itself is within the property, and empties into Sodus Bay. Not wanting any confusion with names, locations and maps, we decided to just rename the trail within our organization including our website, Facebook page and publications.



DEC has also erected a new kiosk at the northwest trailhead across from Briscoe Cove Rd. Within the kiosk you will find the Trail Works tri-fold brochure!

Lastly, the small footbridge at the south end of this trail has been destroyed by the elements yet again. It will be taken down in the spring, and nothing will be put in its place until the DEC builds a more permanent structure at this location. DEC funding has been secured for this new footbridge, but there is no timeline yet for bridge replacement and installation.



## Williamson Town Loop Trail

We have been notified that there are number of ash trees down in the vicinity of Peck’s Woods behind the Williamson Orchard Apartments.

We have gotten the necessary permissions to work on this trail in the better weather.

We will put out a call for help when a work date has been chosen for this trail.

Stay tuned!



## Past Tracks

### October 18 Ontario Pathways Pumpkin Walk

Last fall, we supported the annual Pumpkin Walk sponsored by Ontario Pathways in Canandaigua where Trail Works member Tim Wilbur spends the other half of his volunteer trail time. The main fundraising event for Ontario Pathways, several Trail Works members attended to support Tim as he led the way, with co-hike leader Tom Kolankiewicz who brought several members of the Genesee Valley Hiking Club. Trail Works member Jillian Eberlin attended along with her husband, Adam, and sent us the following comments:

*“We truly enjoyed our time with the group. It was a beautiful evening for a walk, and the group stopped a few times along the way to learn some history about the area. We also have great respect and thanks for the volunteers who help keep the trail in great condition through their work on a weekly basis. There was beautiful artwork along a stretch of the trail, and also a short "off-shoot" trail that we navigated, and was nicely maintained as well. I'm grateful to the hike leaders for their time and effort to show us this trail that they should be very proud of. I'd like to go back again soon!”*

*“The "Great Pumpkin Walk" portion of the hike was a lot of fun as well. We took our time walking the half-mile of trail out and back. We enjoyed seeing the huge variety of 800+ pumpkins that were carved; many of them were really impressive!”*

*“We also met up with the hiking group afterward at the pub and had great food and conversation with others after a fun evening overall. I can't think of a better way to celebrate fall. I've told many people since then about the amazing time we had that day!”*

Thank you to Tim and Tom for their hike-leader efforts, and to Jillian for her positive comments!



## Past Tracks

### October 25 Cracker Box Palace Halloween Event

Board members Mike & Caileigh Shippers represented Trail Works at this fun annual Halloween event at Cracker Box Palace at Historic Alasa Farms. Although it was a soggy day, it was well attended as kids in costume went around the farm to visit and feed the rescued farm animals, enjoy a haunted barn, music, and pick up some candy along the way! Thank you Caileigh & Mike for braving the rain for us!



### November 15 Joint Hike at Cornwall Preserve, Hance Orchard & Lakeview Cemetery

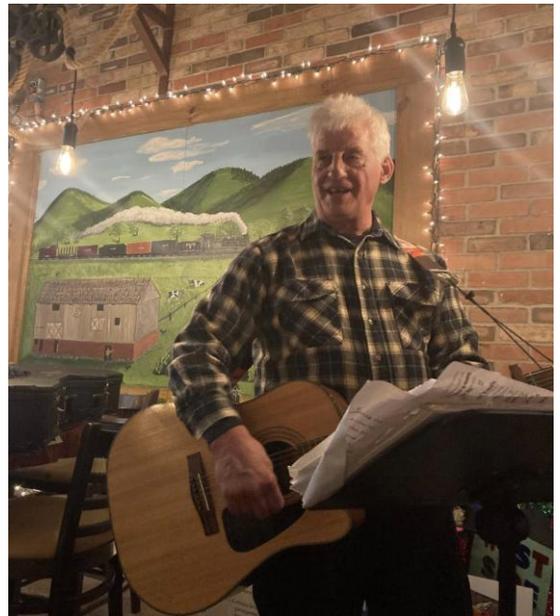
We had a classic Upstate New York gray overcast November day with temperatures in the 40s, and about 10 minutes of rain smack in the middle of the hike (☹️). Luckily, it wasn't too windy though by the lake. We had a total of 33 folks join us on the hike, but several people joined in time for the wine-tasting portion of the event. Folks had a great time at Boom Point Winery after the hike. The Bernard family had us set up in their processing room, which is where they press and ferment their wine. \*\*Our thanks to Tom for leading this event and to the Bernard family for their continued hospitality!\*\*



## Past Tracks

### December 16 Trail Works Christmas Dinner

The Trail Works Board and members swapped the regular monthly meeting for a nice holiday dinner at Westside in Clyde. We had Jim & Nancy Comella, parents of past-president Bethany, join us for the evening. Mark DeCracker brought along his guitar and played some holiday tunes. Mark also brought along a new sign recently made for the Butterfly Nature Trail along the Canal in Macedon. Everyone enjoyed the evening. Thank you, Mark, for setting this up and for the music!





# TRAIL WORKS



PATHWAYS FROM THE PAST, TRAILS FOR TOMORROW



Trail Works, Inc.  
P. O. Box 43  
Williamson, NY 14589  
[www.trailworks.org](http://www.trailworks.org)  
[Trailworks@trailworks.org](mailto:Trailworks@trailworks.org)

## Trail Works Membership Form

Check Type of Membership:

_____	Individual	\$15
_____	Family	\$25
_____	Corporate	\$50
_____	# of Family Members	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks payable to Trail Works, Inc.

Mail to: Trail Works, Inc.  
P.O. Box 43  
Williamson, NY 14589



# 10 HIKING ESSENTIALS

1

**NAVIGATION**  
map, compass, GPS system, extra batteries

2

**INSULATION**  
waterproof/windproof jacket, hat, face mask, goggles, gloves, thermals, wool socks (wear layers, pack extras)

10

**EMERGENCY SHELTER**  
space blanket, tent, bivy sack, rope/paracord

3

**GEAR**  
snowshoes, traction devices, gaiters, insulated/waterproof boots, trekking poles

9

**WATER**  
plenty of water, a water filtration system, Insulators on tubing (pack in center of bag to avoid freezing)

4

**LIGHT**  
headlamp, flashlight, lanterns, extra batteries

8

**NUTRITION**  
high-protein/high-calorie (pack extra, break into small pieces, pack in center of bag to avoid freezing)

5

**FIRST-AID SUPPLIES**  
pre-made kit or build your own

7

**FIRE**  
matches in waterproof container, lighter, fire starters

6

**EMERGENCY KIT**  
whistle, signal mirror, flare, duct tape, pocket knife/multi-tool

Carry these essentials on all hikes for a safe and enjoyable experience.



Department of Environmental Conservation



IN AN EMERGENCY CALL: **911**

1-833-NYS-RANGERS (1-833-697-7264)

Trail Works Inc.  
PO Box 43  
Williamson, NY 14589  
www.trailworks.org

## Trail Works Event Calendar February-June 2026

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
Feb 13-16	Great Backyard Bird Count
Feb 17	Monthly Board Meeting, Reliant Credit Union, Sodus
March	Shadow Hill Maple Fest, Ontario
March 17	Monthly Board Meeting
April 18	Canal Clean Sweep, Lock 65, Lyons
April 21	Monthly Board Meeting
May 9	Leave No Trace Training
May 16	Bicycle Tune-up Clinic
May 19	Monthly Board Meeting
June 6	National Trails Day with Passport Drawing
June 13	ADK Outdoor Expo, Mendon Ponds Park
June 16	Monthly Board Meeting