

PUTNEY ROWING CLUB

P.O. Box 90, Putney VT 05346

2025 HANDBOOK

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The Club

Putney Rowing Club (PRC) is a small but active rowing club located on the banks of the Connecticut River in Putney, Vermont (USA). We are a non-profit organization dedicated to providing rowing opportunities within the local area and conserving the river. Each spring PRC holds a beginner clinic for a limited number of new rowers.

Additional information may be available on the website (www.PutneyRowingClub.org) or from the club secretary (secretary.prc@gmail.com).

Directions to the Boathouse and Docks

Take I-91 to Vermont Exit 4, Putney Vermont, then:

Northbound: Turn right at the exit. Descend towards the river, cross over a set of railroad tracks, and bear right. The river will be on your left. Proceed to the near end of the cornfield, bear left and downhill at the fork at the cornfield. You will see a portapotty and a short steep trail down to boathouses.

Southbound: Stay right at the exit. After 1/5 mile, take a right. (The Putney Co-op will be on your left.) Descend past the Putney Inn and the northbound exit, and toward the river, cross over a set of railroad tracks, and bear right. The river will be on your left. Proceed to the near end of the cornfield and bear left and downhill at the fork at the cornfield. You will see parking, a portapotty, and an entrance to a short steep trail to the boathouses.

PRC Annual Calendar

(check PRC website for dates and times)

Annual Meeting, Annual Election of Officers and Potluck Social, *(late winter or spring)*

PRC Board Meetings *(usually every month)* See PRC website for dates, times and locations

Docks-In spring work session *(late April or early May)*

Beginner Clinics *(usually mid-May-early June)*

Big Boat or Long Distance Row, Scrambles and Race Training *(summer)*

Green Mountain Head Regatta *(late September or early October, 3 weeks before Head of the Charles Regatta)*

Docks-Out work session *(late October, early November)*

Membership

Full PRC membership entitles members use of club equipment, including club boats and club oars, use of the docks, invitations to club events and voting rights. Two boathouses provide limited rack space for members with their own boats. The boathouse lock combination, a list of PRC members' contact information, and PRC bylaws are available to members from the PRC secretary after joining PRC and upon request.

PRC offers an introduction to rowing for those new to the sport, clinics and training for experienced and beginner rowers, and hosts the annual Green Mountain Head regatta. The focus of the club is on sculling and currently there are no boats rigged for sweep rowing or club sweep oars. The club offers opportunities to row in singles, doubles and quads.

New members who have rowing experience are required to undergo an evaluation to assess rowing skills before rowing independently. Novice members who have completed the clinic should row with another person and are restricted to recreational singles, doubles and quads. After gaining additional proficiency they can ask to be evaluated before moving to a racing single.

There are three full membership categories: **Individual, Family, Youth**. Additionally, an **Associate** membership provides access to all club activities and events with no rowing privileges.

PRC Guest Passes

Guests may use the PRC facilities as long as the following conditions are met:

- Guest in a single has previous rowing experience and is not a beginner. Otherwise, guest may row with PRC member(s) in a double or quad.
- Guest and hosting member sign a legal waiver before rowing.
NOTE: Deposit the signed waiver in the blank waiver envelope in the boathouse.
- PRC member assumes all responsibility and costs associated with any damage incurred by their guest.
- PRC member must row with their guest on the river.
- Each PRC member is limited to 5 guest passes per season.
- Any guest is limited to 5 guest passes per season.
- The hosting PRC member will be sent an invoice for \$15.

PRC members' guests may use the following boats:

| | | |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| Stubby | Anne Ham | Graeme King |
| Kingfisher | Henry | |
| George 1 | Kookaburra | |
| Nickerson | Linda K | |

Member Requirements

- Rowing is a vigorous sport and rowers should be in good health, and able to swim. There are no lifejackets in a rowing shell, so anyone participating must be able to swim.
- A waiver must be signed before going out on the water.
- All members must undergo a recovery from falling out of the boat and a treading water test.
- Both major and minor accidents directly impact the lives of those involved, and some incidents can have repercussions for the entire rowing community. All PRC members are required to view the [Safety Video](#) annually at the beginning of the season.
- Review and be familiar with the Safety Guidelines, a copy of which can be found on the Member Information page of the Members section of the PRC website.
- Attend the Annual Meeting held in the spring:
 - Elections of officers.
 - Planning for the upcoming rowing season.
- Attend “Docks-In-Day” in the spring:
 - Put the docks in ~ all hands on for light lifting.
 - Bring equipment out of winter storage.
 - Rig club boats and hang up oars.
 - Prepare the boathouses for the rowing season.
- All members must help out at the Green Mountain Head Regatta.
 - Late September or early October.
- Attend “Docks-Out-Day” in the fall:
 - Take the docks out ~ all hands on for light lifting.
 - De-rig club boats and store oars for the winter.
 - Clear the boathouses for the winter.
- Be familiar with the contents of this handbook.
- Take the boat flip and swim test within a year of joining the club.
- Review the boathouse checklist and heed protocols for safe rowing.
- Participate in at least one standing committee.

Committees

All members participate in at least one committee. E-mails will be sent to the membership announcing specific dates for each activity.

Boathouse Committee:

The boathouse committee is in charge of maintaining the PRC's two boathouses, the PRC's rowing equipment, launch, docks, the A-frame and the grounds. This is a huge job and includes the following:

- Arrange transportation for boats to and from winter storage.
- Assign and label boats and racks in both boathouses.
- Oversee repairs on all existing PRC equipment.
- Make equipment purchase recommendations to the board.
- Check and adjust club oars, club boats and rigging.
- Oversee the sign out of club boats for races and trips to regattas.
- Oversee boat reservations for club boats for regattas.
- Organize work crews and workdays to maintain equipment & grounds.
- Oversee the care of the boathouse facilities.
- Oversee the care and maintenance of the A-frame.

Membership Committee:

This committee oversees membership participation, including the following:

- Ensure that members are assigned to committees as needed.
- Review and update policies related to club activity and membership.
- Evaluate new member rowing skills and beginning member skills as they progress.
- Review and update member handbook as needed in collaboration with members of other committees.

Education Committee:

This committee organizes educational events and community outreach, which might include the following:

- Rowing Clinics for beginners through experienced.
- Community Outreach.
- Long distance or big boat rows.
- Testing of recovery from falling out.
- Treading water testing.
- Social activities for members.
- Fall Connecticut River Clean Up, under the auspices of the "Connecticut River Watershed Council".

Regatta/Green Mountain Head Leadership Committee:

The Green Mountain Head is a "stake race" of 3 miles held at Herrick's Cove north of Bellows Falls, VT. Singles and doubles start 15 seconds apart and race 1.5 miles upstream, row around two large orange buoys and then return 1.5 miles to the finish line. Over 300 boats including world-class rowers participate.

This committee takes the lead in organizing and coordinating the regatta in the fall. This is PRC's primary fund-raising activity. All PRC members are asked to help in some capacity, either on the day of the regatta or beforehand, to make this a success. This is a huge job and volunteers are needed for many tasks such as:

- Registration.
- Course set-up and takedown.
- Food organization.
- T-shirt design and sales.
- Timing and computer expertise.
- Parking and tent management.
- Advertising and publicity.
- Dock masters, registration table, etc.

Board and Officers

The PRC Board is composed of four officers, three members-at-large and several honorary life-time members. Each officer serves a 2-year term and is elected at the Annual Meeting early spring.

PRC President oversees general activities of the club, presides over all meetings, and ensures that the club is run in accordance with the by-laws governing this nonprofit organization.

PRC Vice President takes the place of the President should he/she be unable to perform his/her duties, and performs other duties as needed.

PRC Secretary records and files the minutes of PRC meetings.

PRC Treasurer is responsible for the club's finances. He/she receives and deposits all club funds and accounts for receipts, disbursements and balance on hand. The treasurer maintains copies of the Federal not-for-profit authorization that exempts Club purchases from taxes. The treasurer is assisted by a **bookkeeper**, who enters financial information into QuickBooks to track income and expenses used to run financial reports. The treasurer also maintains and updates membership lists, and takes in memberships and waivers throughout the year.

Three **at-large board members** maintain a presence at all meetings. They have voting privileges and represent the views of the general club membership.

Club Boats

Beginning Rower's Boat Progression:

Once a beginning member has attained a good skill level in a recreational single and wants permission to try a racing shell, they can contact the PRC Membership Committee. The committee will arrange for observation of their rowing skills and boat handling skills to determine if they have the proficiency to be permitted to row a specific racing shell. It is considered unusual for a beginning rower to be ready to row a racing shell in the first season of rowing.

PRC Recreational Singles:

- *Stubby* – (Most stable, shortest shell)
- *Kingfisher*
- *Dimples*
- *Slim*

PRC Racing Singles:

- *Nickerson* – medium weight, recommended for rowers 165 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *Rapp* – medium weight, recommended for rowers 165 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *Anne Ham* – heavyweight, recommended for rowers 190 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *Henry* – heavyweight, recommended for rowers 190 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *George I* – medium weight, 165 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *George II* – medium weight, 165 plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *Samuel Dowe-Sandes* – medium weight, 165 plus or minus 15 lbs.

- *Pat* - lightweight, 135 lbs plus or minus 10 lbs.
- *Pierson* - light to medium weight, 140 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.

PRC Recreational Double:

- *Kookaburra* – a stable boat suitable for all rowers.

PRC Racing Doubles:

- *Linda K.* – medium to heavy weight, recommended for rowers 175 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *Popycock* – medium weight, recommended for rowers 165 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs.
- *George and Johnny* – heavy weight, recommended for rowers 185 lbs plus or minus 15 lbs. (Privately owned for club use).
- *Wintec Double* – light to medium weight, recommended for rowers 135 -165 plus or minus 15 lbs.

PRC Quad:

- *Graeme King* – straight quad (no coxswain)- designed for heavyweight crew (190 pounds).

Responsibility for boats:

Members bear the financial responsibility up to the insured deductible for damage to the boats and equipment they use. The deductible amount is \$250 for Dimples and \$500 for all other boats and is doubled if the boat is damaged in transit. In order to save money and expedite repairs we will, if possible, repair the boats in-house and charge for materials and labor @ \$40/hr. which will be donated to the Boat Fund. Any cost of transporting a boat for repairs will be borne by the member.

Boathouse and River Protocol

For rowing and upon return to the boathouse:

1. **LOG OUT** - Before taking a boat out on the river, you must sign out on the log inside the large boathouse near the white board (and at the far end of the small boathouse). If you see any not previously recorded damage to the boat make a note in the log. Review white board and log for any recent important information such as new snags or recent river conditions. Review the safety poster. Always be aware of impending weather conditions.
2. **LOCKING UP** - Before leaving the docks and after returning always lock up the boathouse; leave locks in the 0000 position.
ROWING DIRECTION - Always row up river on the New Hampshire (east) side and down river on the Vermont (west) side. The Connecticut River is in New Hampshire

and subject to NH marine law and patrol. **In an emergency situation, call 603-293-2037 or 877-6429700 for the NH Marine Patrol.**

3. **PASSING AND RIGHT OF WAY** – If being overtaken, move to the side of the river. If overtaking a boat that has not yielded, move to the side of the boat with the most space. If you are stationary, move so as not to obstruct boats in motion on the river.
4. **DUNKING** - From time to time most rowers experience a dunking in the river. In this event: **a:** always **stay with the boat** as it is your flotation device, **b: relax** and assess the situation, **c:** normally it is best to **hold onto the boat and swim it to shore** since the boat itself is a flotation device, **d:** on shore, hold both oars, straddle the boat and climb back in. Make sure there's enough clearance under the entire length of the boat, about a foot, before sitting in the boat. Rowing fairly close to shore reduces the distance of your swim. **NOTE: If the water is cold, as in early spring or late fall, it is best to get back into or on top of the boat immediately; there may not be sufficient time to swim it to shore before hypothermia sets in. Always be prepared with a change of clothing in a waterproof bag.** See [Severe Damage to Boat](#) below.
5. **TREES AND BUSHES** – When rowing, turn your head frequently towards the banks to be aware of what is ahead. In some places along the banks there are stumps, trees and limbs sticking out, so give them a wide berth. Check with other rowers as to where the hazards are located. After a heavy rainfall there may be more debris than usual in the river.
6. **MOTOR BOATS** - Most passing motorboats will create a wake. When this happens stop rowing, place your boat parallel to the wake, place your oars flat on the water, with your hands together and relax as the wake passes. Your boat should float easily on the surface with a small amount of disturbance.
7. **RETURN MARKER** - When coming back down river look for the white house above on the bank of the Vermont side (before the public launching area.) It indicates that the rocks ledges are near. Begin immediately moving your boat towards the middle of the river.
8. **DOCK APPROACH** - Always land heading upriver. Move the bow end of the boat gently towards the dock and come in parallel to the dock. At the dock, raise the port oar slightly so that the oar and rigger pass over the dock platform. Holding both oar handles in the left hand, grasp the dock with the right hand and move the boat to a forward position.
9. **EXITING THE BOAT** - Holding onto both oar handles with left hand, put the left foot on the "step plate" and rise slowly, stepping on the dock with your right foot. When on the dock pull the riverside oar into the dock.
10. **OAR REMOVAL** - Open the keeper and remove the riverside oar first. Close the keeper. Place the oar on the dock with the blade over the boathouse side of the river. Follow the same procedure for the dockside oar. Do not leave a boat in the water unattended without oars resting on the dock to hold the boat in place. If motor boat passes you must hold docked boat off dock to avoid damage.
11. **MOVE BOAT TO THE SLINGS** - Carry the boat to the slings. Place the boat on the slings upside down. Sponge off any river residue with a sponge and water, then dry with a towel.
12. **RE-RACK BOAT** - Move the boat, stern end first, into the boathouse. Be careful that

riggers do not hit and damage other boats on the racks. Move the boat onto the rack in the correct position to minimize load bearing. Ask another member about correct placement if you are unsure what to do.

13. **OARS** - Rinse the oar blades in the river. Club oars are numbered and should be replaced in their corresponding numbered oar rack.
14. **SLINGS** - If you are the last person to leave the boathouse, bring the slings inside the boathouse. Otherwise, leave them for the next person who is still out rowing and will be coming off the water.
15. **LOG IN** - Sign in your mileage on the log sheet. If any damage has occurred to your boat, it must be noted in the log.
16. **LOCK** - Close the lock and reset the combination to 0000.
17. **TRASH** - Carry out any garbage.
18. **NOTE CHANGES IN CONDITIONS** - If you notice any new hazards such as snags on the river, note it on the board and the sign-in sheets to alert subsequent rowers.
19. **PARKING** - Make sure that you are parked in a way that does not impede others from leaving the parking area. Do not back into planted cornfield.

River Hazards and Distances

Hazards:

SEVERE DAMAGE to BOAT - Rowing is a very safe sport and in the infrequent occasions that club rowers have flipped or collided with floating or stationary objects, they have been able to recover with little difficulty. However, you are responsible for your own safety and it is important that, before you launch, you have a plan for what to do if your boat is damaged severely and can't be rowed.

If you are rowing with another boat, the plan can simply be to wait on the shore with your boat while the other boat summons assistance.

When rowing alone, a plan is particularly important. If possible, swim your boat to the Vermont shore where you can eventually reach the railroad tracks and follow them back to the boathouse. With this in mind, consider whether you would be able to walk in your rowing footwear. We have verified that there is cell phone coverage on the Connecticut River and it is advisable to take a phone with you to summon help. That is especially true if: a) you row at a time when others are unlikely to be on the water, b) you row further than 3 miles upstream (or any distance downstream), c) you are rowing in early spring or late fall when there are few other boaters on the river.

If you take a phone, it should be in a waterproof container and inexpensive pouches can be purchased online. You can also make your own container from a self-sealing "baggie" with a piece of Styrofoam inside or bubble-wrap outside. The amount of

flotation material should be at least equal in volume to your phone. In the event that you flip, you may be distracted enough to lose track of your phone and you may also wish to include a lanyard to attach the phone to your boat.

ROCK LEDGE - As you leave the dock, heading upriver, be aware of the rock ledge that extends into the river from the Vermont side. Some of these rocks may not be visible when the water is high. Head across the river from the dock, toward the NH side, to avoid these hazards.

HIGH FLOW – With high river flow, launching and landing can be more difficult. High flow is usually associated with a higher river level which often results in increased debris in the river as it is washed into the stream and dislodged from its banks. Additionally, high flow results in eddies at various places which can make rowing more difficult. A good place to get an idea of the flow is the web page for the [NOAA gauge at North Walpole](#). The chart shows river data for the recent past and a forecast for the upcoming few days. The river height is indicated on the left and the flow on the right. Here is an approximate guide to decide, using the data from the web page, whether or not the river is running too fast for various rowing abilities. Assuming no wind:

| Discharge (flow cfs) | Rowing Proficiency |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 0 – 5,000 | None |
| 5,000 – 10,000 | Slight |
| 10,000 – 20,000 | Moderate - Good |
| 20,000 - 25,000 | Very good |
| 25,000 – 30,000 | Excellent |
| 30,000 – | Crazy |

During the summer a normal stage is around 7.5 feet and a flow of 4 kcfs ('kcfs' = thousands of cubic feet per second). Note: Flood Stage is 28 feet.

The highest flow rate acceptable for rowing is about 25 kcfs and that is if you are an experienced rower.

HIGH WIND - Wind is as much, if not more, of a factor as current. If it is windy, rowing with even the lowest flow rate can be challenging. Above 5 mph wind speed the river can become choppy.

Distances:

Approximate river distances upstream towards Walpole:

- To first dock and gazebo - NH side 1 mile.
- To second dock - NH side 1.5 miles.
- To rope swing - VT side 2.5 miles.
- To Osprey's nest - NH side 3.0 miles.

Approximate river distances downstream towards Brattleboro:

- Middle of Canoe Meadow curve in river - 1.0 miles.
- To Gazebo on NH side - 3.0 miles.
- To Brattleboro (Marina Restaurant and RowBOC rowing club) - 8.0 miles.

Rowing Resources and Links

Putney Rowing Club

www.PutneyRowingClub.org

Check out the website for information about the Putney Rowing Club, If you are not able to find something on the website or require more information, please contact the PRC secretary at secretary.prc@gmail.com.

PRC By-Laws download at: www.PutneyRowingClub.org

Green Mt. Head Regatta

<http://www.GreenMountainHead.org>

Information is on the PRC website.

RowBOC

<https://brattleborooutingclub.org/rowing/>

PRC sometimes collaborates with the Brattleboro Rowing Club in long rows and the Green Mountain Regatta. For more information on RowBOC contact rowboc@gmail.com.

Marine Patrol and Weather / Water Level Forecasts

Bureau of Marine Patrol

Division of Safety Services, 31 Dock Road, Gilford, NH 03249

For emergencies call 603-293-2037 or 877-642-9700

Business hours: 8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday through Friday

TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

[Hourly, daily and weekly weather forecast](#)

[Connecticut River water conditions at the North Walpole, NH station.](#)

Rowers are advised to be cautious at river flows over 20,000 and novices at 15,000

At this level substantial current often brings debris down the river. Conditions at West River/ Brattleboro will differ.

Rowing Camps (*weekend and week-long sessions*):

[Craftsbury Sculling Center](#), Craftsbury, VT, May-Sept

National Rowing Information:

[US Rowing](#)

This is the national rowing membership association. They have up-to-date information about regattas, results, national teams, resource library and rowing store

[row2k](#)

Lots of information about current events in the rowing world

[Regatta Central](#)

Registration for upcoming regattas and results of past regattas.

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