
Pickering Rouge Canoe Club

PRCC NEWS



June 2026



Paddles Up in 2026

Spring programs are in full swing and summer programs are just around the corner. With extensive construction at Rouge Beach, our paddling programs are again running from Glen Rouge, and have moved even further up the Rouge River. PRCC has invested in a C-Can for boat storage and docks to accommodate the new launch point.

Summer camp for ages 6 to 14 runs for one-week sessions from June 29th to August 29th. For more intensive paddling programs for ages 9 to 14, we have **Intro to Sprint** (2-weeks) and **Bantam** (all summer). Our popular **Leaders in Training (LIT)** program allows LITs aged 14 to 16 to earn volunteer hours while learning valuable coaching skills on land and water. Many former LITs have been hired by PRCC as coaches. Our Special Olympics program designed for paddlers with disabilities runs on Monday evenings. For adults, we have **Rouge River Expeditions** running on Thursday evenings and the **Family Paddle** on Tuesday evenings. Something for everyone!

We are also happy to report that PRCC's blue dragon boat is back on Frenchman's Bay and is available for rental.

Bantams Back on the Bay!

PRCC is pleased to announce that the City of Pickering has allowed us to run our Bantam and Intro to Sprint programs on Frenchman's Bay this summer. PRCC is renting a C-Can that will store K1s and C1s on the west side of the Bay, on the spit close to the accessible dock. The upper Rouge River, where we are running Camp and other programs, is not deep nor wide enough for Bantams to train properly, particularly with crew boats. Athletes will still have Glen Rouge as their main site and will travel to the Bay for their paddling training. The PRCC Board is working to secure a permanent site on Frenchman's Bay.

PRCC continues to invest in new equipment. We have just acquired a spiffy new K4 and K2. These will come in handy as our athletes race in the following regattas in 2026:

- July 18 - Missy Regatta in Mississauga
- July 24-26 - WOD Divisional Regatta in Welland
- August 8-9 - WOD Championships in Welland
- Date TBD - U10, U12 Championships in Mississauga
- August 15-16 - Ontario Cup (Provincials) in Ottawa

Summer 2025 was a Big Success

Last summer was very busy with 239 participants in Camp, 26 in Intro to Sprint, 25 in Bantam, and 8 in our Special Olympics program. The Rouge River Expeditions program returned with 26 adults participating. The High Performance and Development programs continued to be paused.

Our Bantam athletes participated in **four regattas** in 2025: Mississauga Regatta, WODs in Welland, U10 & U12 Regatta in Mississauga, and the Ontario Cup (Provincials) in Welland. We had so many athletes that we ran out of boats and had to borrow from other clubs. Our young athletes cleaned up!

We also ran very full Fall paddling programs for Bantam and Rouge River Expeditions.



Meet PRCC's New Head Coach - Declan Forgie

Declan started paddling with PRCC as a Bantam, along with his two older brothers. His commitment to the club is going on 11 years! He was a bantam, development, and high performance athlete, coached as both a camp and bantam coach and is now stepping into the role of head coach.

In the words of Declan... "I am honoured to be taking on the role of Head Coach at Pickering Rouge Canoe Club. I am excited to keep working closely with our athletes and continue the development and success in our programs during this exciting time for our club."



Declan as a PRCC Bantam showing off his winnings in 2016, and now as Head Coach in 2026

Big Thank You's!

PRCC operates on the dedication of volunteers. A special thanks goes out to **Hugh Wilson** who spends hours repairing and rebuilding PRCC's sprint boats. Hugh fixes our boats for free and gets donations of materials from various contacts.

We are grateful to **Parks Canada** who provides PRCC with the Glen Rouge site, including the containers by the parking lot for housing our boats and equipment. They also partnered with PRCC in our summer programming to provide the quality visitor experience and learn to camp sessions.



A huge thank you to the **City of Pickering** for providing a temporary location for PRCC to run sprint programs at Frenchman's Bay until October. Council voted unanimously for the approval.

Thank you to all our **wonderful parents** who bring their kids to Camp & Sprint, and help us at regattas.

What Constitutes a PRCC Member?

PRCC has **94 voting members** as of the end of 2025 (up from 64 in 2024), who were then eligible to vote at the 2025/26 annual meeting which was held on April 8, 2026.

PRCC by-laws define voting members as:

- Individuals in good standing aged 16 years or older who have paid and participated in a PRCC paddling program, excluding one-day programs and Camp;
- A family member in good standing of children aged 9 to 15 who have paid and participated in a sprint paddling program, including the Intro to Sprint program;
- All members of the Board of Directors; and
- Committee Chairs.

A Member can have only one vote, even if they fall into more than one membership category. The term of Membership is one year. Each Member is entitled to receive notice of, attend, and vote at all meetings of Members, and each Member has one vote at these meetings. The family member of children in a sprint racing program determines who will be their voting Member. Only one person per family of children aged 9 to 15 is entitled to vote.

Our next annual meeting will be in early 2027, once the financial statements for 2025/26 are finalized. If you have registered for a 2026 program (excluding one-day programs and Camp), you are considered to be a PRCC member and will be eligible to vote.



Meet the 11 Directors on the 2026 PRCC Board

The PRCC Board of Directors is made up of dedicated volunteers who manage and direct the organization. The only employees at PRCC are summer staff, which means the directors do the hiring, organizing, registering, grant proposals, banking, website, and so much more. Without these volunteers, there would be no PRCC. Plus, volunteers allow us to keep participant costs low and staff wages competitive.

Ashley Barich - Commodore

As PRCC Commodore, Ashley has a demanding volunteer job that keeps her busy at club sites and on her phone. She is working with the City of Pickering Council to secure a site on Frenchman's Bay, all while also dealing with Parks Canada and construction at our Rouge site. She is dedicated to securing the future of paddling for the youth of Durham Region & Scarborough. Ashley has three children in their twenties - Brooke, Cameron and Eric - who have all paddled and coached with PRCC for years. She understands how important it is for parents to secure high-quality paddling and sports programming for their children. The benefits of engaging in sport last a lifetime. Ashley also has a busy work life as an insurance professional, specializing in commercial liability claims.



Matthew - Vice Commodore

Matthew joined the PRCC Board in November 2025, and jumped in with both feet to become Vice Commodore at the April 2026 annual meeting. With an athletic background in many sports, Matthew has coaching experience as previous head coach of the snowboard racing program with Caledon Ski Club and has been involved in coaching tennis in the past. His daughter Zoe, has fallen in love with paddling and is keen to grow with the club. Matthew brings his love for sport and looks forward to connecting with the community and growing the current program for the future. His work as a realtor has given him a wide range of skills that will prove advantageous for PRCC.



Charmaine Carter - Treasurer

Charmaine joined the PRCC Board in October 2025, and became Treasurer at the April 2026 annual meeting. She paddles in Frenchman's Bay for a local dragon boat team and was introduced to PRCC through the Rouge River Expeditions program, which she loved. As an accounting professional and Finance Director for a large printing company, Charmaine is well suited for the role of Treasurer. But it is her enthusiasm and willingness to help with anything that needs to be done that is a real asset to PRCC.



Mary-Anne Pietrusiak - Secretary



Mary-Anne has been on the PRCC Board since 2016, serving in many roles over the years, including Commodore. Her twin sons, James and William Mann, started as Bantams in 2013, trained in high performance and worked as coaches for PRCC. James is now Head Coach for the Sudbury Canoe Club. William continues to help out PRCC in different capacities. Mary-Anne is a retired epidemiologist and manager from Durham Region Health Department. Working as a public health professional for 35 years has given her a keen interest in health and equity issues. She is committed to ensuring PRCC succeeds and that children, youth and adults have access to high-quality paddling programs.

Kathy Sparks - Camp Director

Kathy is PRCC's Camp Director Extraordinaire. She has run the programs at Glen Rouge, making improvements and hiring amazing staff, all while navigating constantly changing circumstances at Rouge Beach and Frenchman's Bay. All four of Kathy's children grew up with PRCC and her son Lucas is currently in the Bantam program. Kathy works as a labour and delivery nurse in Ajax, giving her excellent skills and experience to run our programs, which is a lot like delivering babies. And sometimes she is on the water paddling herself.



Abhishek Rai - Registrar

Abhishek joined the PRCC Board in October 2025 and assumed the role of Registrar at the Annual Meeting in April 2026. He became involved with the club through his daughter's participation in the summer camp program. Professionally, Abhishek works in the actuarial industry, specializing in pension plan risk management. He has quickly learned how to use the RAMP program, which PRCC, and sprint clubs across Canada, uses to register our participants.



Nilus Rubanathan - Past Treasurer



Nilus was PRCC Treasurer for three years before passing the torch to Charmaine. He got to know the club during the Covid years while participating in the Solo Paddling Together program, which was the precursor to Rouge River Expeditions. Nilus is the father of two young daughters (future paddlers?) and works as the Director of Finance at the Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters.

Michael Douglass - Past Registrar

Mike has passed along responsibility for the RAMP program and PRCC's registrations to new board member Abhishek, but he remains close by to help when needed. Mike's invaluable experience with paddling and PRCC has resulted from his son Jasper's involvement with the sport as a high-performance athlete and coach. Jasper will be working as our Bantam Lead this summer. Mike works as a financial analyst in the tech sector, and enjoys hiking, biking and skiing.



Bryan Skitch

Although Bryan formally joined the Board this past April, he has been part of the PRCC family for decades. His willingness to allow us to use his property on Frenchman's Bay kept the Bantam program running, especially after PRCC lost their site on the Bay. He has been our equipment manager, fixing and maintaining our outboard motors for years. Bryan has three children who all went to Camp, and five grandchildren, two of whom have been to Camp. His daughter Erin was a PRCC athlete and coach many years ago. Bryan knows the history of Frenchman's Bay better than anyone.



Jan diLeo - Dragon Boat Rep

Jan is a passionate paddling advocate, community leader, and lifelong ambassador for the sport of canoeing, kayaking, and dragon boating. Through her extensive involvement with PRCC, DragonBoat Canada, and the International DragonBoat Federation, Jan has dedicated and contributed to the growth and development of recreational and competitive programs while championing accessibility, participation, and community engagement. Her leadership philosophy is rooted in the belief that paddlesports have the power to transform lives, build confidence, foster lifelong friendships, and strengthen communities. Her legacy is defined not only by a Guinness World Record, and several world championships but by her ongoing dedication to helping others discover confidence, connection, and achievement through sport. In her spare time, Jan volunteers for a local food bank, and at various events in Pickering. She has been a director on the PRCC Board for the past two years but has been connected with PRCC for years.



Martin Lee Ying

Martin joined the PRCC Board in November 2025 and has been helping improve PRCC's marketing efforts. Both of his kids attended Camp, and every day they would come home with stories that made it clear how much confidence, joy, and adventure Camp brought into their world. Seeing their excitement reminded Martin of how powerful a simple canoe, a shoreline, and a supportive community can be. This was reinforced when he felt that magic himself out on the water with a board member. Professionally, Martin's background centers on marketing, strategic planning, community engagement, and building programs that bring people together. He's spent more than 15 years helping organizations grow through clear communication, thoughtful planning, and strong community connections. Ultimately, he wants to help PRCC to continue building a place where kids grow more confident, parents feel connected, and families rediscover their relationship with the outdoors, just like he did.



Paddling Moms Become In-Laws

Kathy's daughter, Mackenzie, and Mary-Anne's son, William, married in January, proving that the paddling community is truly one big family. Mackenzie & William became friends in the Bantam program back in 2013 and started dating after 2018 Nationals in Sherbrooke, Quebec. The rest, as they say, is history.



Have Questions?

You can reach PRCC by emailing info@pickeringrouge.ca or phoning our number at 647-947-5556. Check out our website at pickeringrouge.ca and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

