



Petrel Point Nature Reserve James Robert Swan Memorial Tract Boardwalk Removal

Progress Report for Southern Ontario Orchid Society and Canadian Orchid Congress

30 September, 2024

Progress to Date

Ontario Nature staff have begun the decommissioning and removal of the unsafe section of boardwalk within Coastal Meadow Marsh habitat at Petrel Point Nature Reserve. To date, the entrance sections have been removed to discourage access. Pieces of cribbing remain in place, but no boardwalk sections are visible from the road (Figure 1, Figure 2). Use of the trail has not been noted by stewards or staff since this was completed.

As part of Ontario Nature's Annual Gathering, our Nature Reserves Manager hosted a tour of Petrel Point Nature Reserve. This tour highlighted the orchid species present on the property, sensitivity of the habitat, and the need for coastal wetland conservation. During this tour, 30 participants walked the accessible trail and roadside. On the roadside directly adjacent to the decommissioned boardwalk entrance, participants observed yellow lady's slipper and showy lady's slipper in bloom. This was used to emphasize the need for careful selection of trail locations and highlight the habitat restoration work being completed.

Next Steps

In November 2024 the project will be completed, including:

- Removal and disposal of remaining sections of boardwalk and cribbing. Some boardwalk sections have been stacked and are ready to be removed, while others remain in situ.
- Installation of 'No Public Access' and 'Regeneration Area' signs. These signs have been designed by Ontario Nature staff and will be erected in November 2024 while the final steps of boardwalk decommissioning are taking place. This will make it clear that while the location of the former boardwalk may resemble a trail, no access is permitted due to habitat sensitivity.
- Vegetation monitoring will be conducted during spring visit(s) in 2025, and will identify species regrowing in the footprint of the former boardwalk.

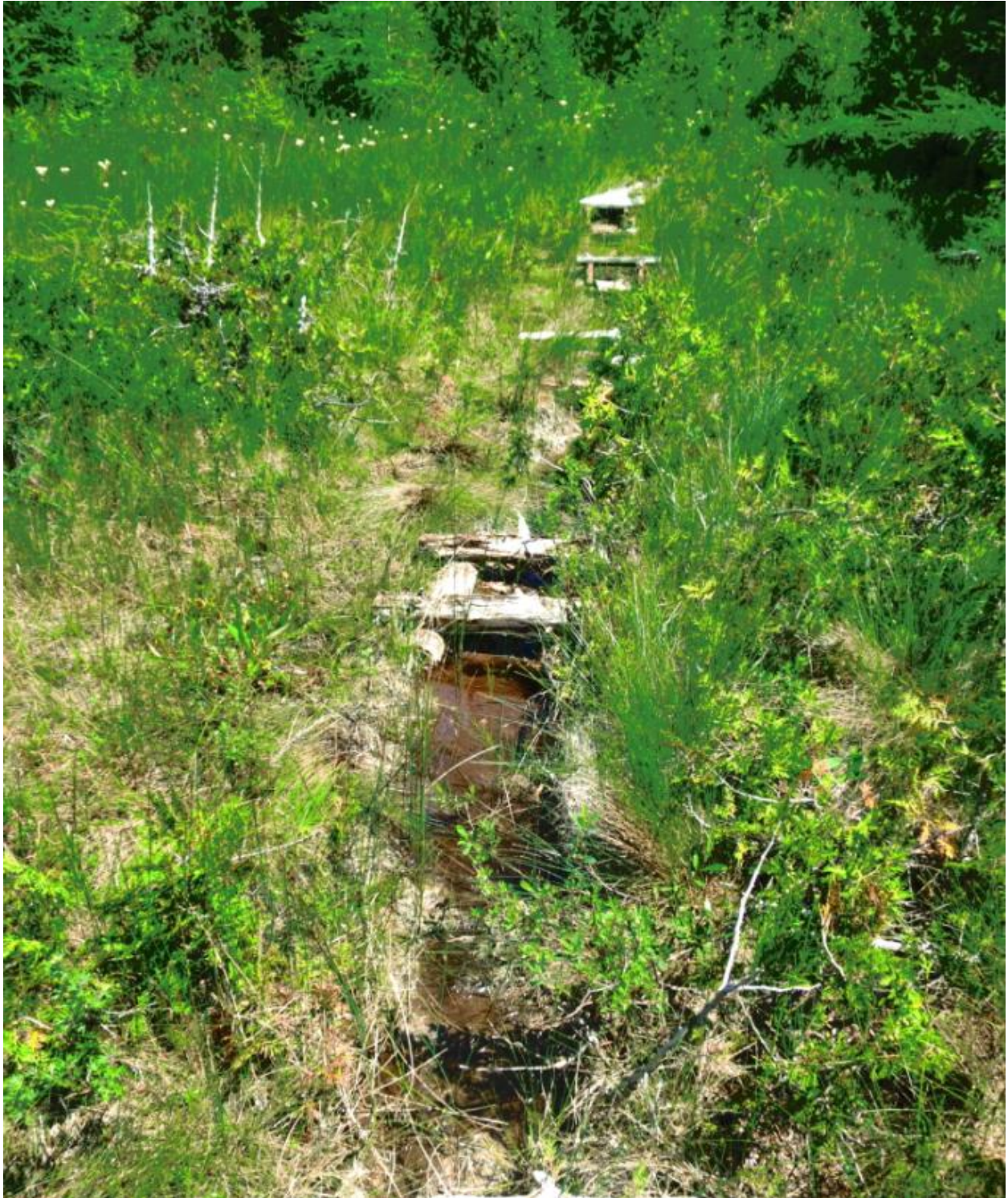


Figure 1. Former location of boardwalk entrance. Photo: Smera Sukumar.



Figure 2. Boardwalk section prior to decommissioning. While the boards look to be in reasonable condition, many are detached, and the cribbing is rotten (as seen in Figure 1).



Figure 3. Ontario Nature members while touring Petrel Point Nature Reserve.