

NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Volunteer Program

2022 Annual Report



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DNCR Volunteer Program

2022 Annual Report

Overview

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) Volunteer Program oversees volunteers working in New Hampshire's state parks, state forests, and state historic sites. This statewide program spans two Divisions within DNCR, the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Forests and Lands.

At the beginning of September 2022, Phil Bryce retired as the Director of NH State Parks after serving more than a decade in the position. While reflecting on his time as Director and the accomplishments that took place over the last 10 years he said, "these transformations would not have occurred without the active support of elected officials at all levels of government, partners, volunteers, local communities, other state agencies, and our division employees."

Brian Wilson was confirmed by the Governor and Council as the new Director of NH State Parks in October of 2022. Wilson has a strong history of working within the recreation industry in New Hampshire, including as NH State Parks' Seacoast Regional supervisor and as a recreation program supervisor in Dover. Throughout his career, he has also held several positions at local and statewide parks organizations in Connecticut, most recently as assistant director of Connecticut State Parks. At his confirmation he said, "NH State Parks have a profound positive impact on the lives of millions of residents' and visitors—and I am no exception... I look forward to working with the amazing State Park's team, the DNCR, and the communities that work together to contribute to the stewardship for these special places."

The Cohos Trail Association and Seacoast Science Center continue to be a reliable source of volunteer opportunities where the public at large can engage with State Parks hands-on. Major community efforts, like we've seen surrounding the re-construction of the Nansen Ski Jump have shown that people are still very much community-minded and want to contribute their skills and time toward something positive.

DNCR volunteers donated a total of 20,038 hours of volunteer service to state lands in 2022. This impressive amount of time and effort is equal to a total donated value of \$600,138.00. This number is not only a quantitative way to express the dedicated volunteers, but it also reflects the trend of increased reporting quality—despite a gap in staffing while the volunteer program manager role was vacant and. Nonetheless, it is clear that DNCR volunteers provide a variety of invaluable services to New Hampshire's state lands, visitors, and staff. The agency is looking forward to another successful year in 2023 now that the volunteer manager role has been filled once again.

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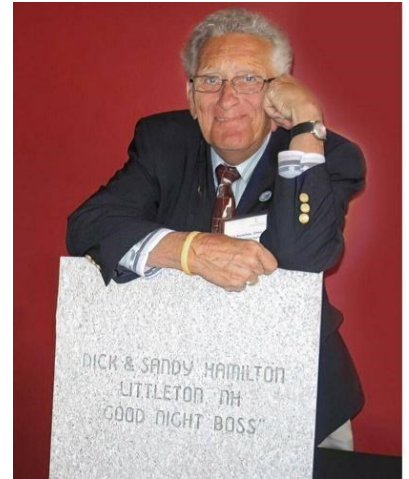
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In Remembrance

Richard Freeman “Dick” Hamilton

February 13, 1936 - July 20, 2022

Dick was considered to be the father of modern White Mountains tourism. When the Old Man of the Mountains fell, he was devastated and made it his mission to create a lasting and fitting monument to his “Boss.” He and a dedicated group of volunteers known as the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund, made it their mission to raise funds through private donation and construct what today is known as Profile Plaza located in Franconia Notch State Park. This meaningful remembrance allows visitors to experience seeing the Old Man in his former glory.



Ray Jackson

August 9, 1940 - October 9, 2022

Ray Jackson joined the Trailwrights non-profit organization in the second year of its existence. He was president of Trailwrights from 1997 to 2014 and was full of great ideas and suggestions for the organization and their work at Franconia Notch State Park and Fox Forest. Ray was also a dedicated trails community volunteer with the Society of the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) and a long-time member of the Statewide Trail System Advisory Committee . Ray leaves behind a legacy of NH hiking trail improvements that includes countless water bars, stone steps, drains, bog bridges, and the annual brushing of trails.



Sanford “Sandy” Young

April 28, 1961 - October 4, 2022

Sandy Young began working for the State of NH on May 14th, 1993. He worked as the Lake Francis Park Manager in the summers and spent his winters with the Trails Bureau. On June 28th, 2002 Sandy was promoted to the Regional Supervisor for the Great North Woods Region which includes overseeing all the state parks, waysides, and campgrounds in the North Country and the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters land. His contributions to NH State Parks and the trail systems are immeasurable and will live on for generations to come.



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2022 Highlights

| Volunteer Agreement Type | Total for 2022 Calendar Year |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Long Term Groups | 42 |
| Single Day Groups | 25 |
| Individuals | 121 |

Long Term Groups = Friends groups and non-motorized organizations in a long term volunteer agreement with DNCR (up to 3 years).

Single Day Groups = Groups that enter into a short term agreement with DNCR to perform a single project or event.

Individuals = Individual volunteers who do not work on behalf of a Friends group or organization.

- **20,038 volunteer hours** were submitted for the 2022 calendar year, this equates to an estimated value of **\$600,138.00** in donated volunteer labor and time on DNCR land.
- **Over 1,200 individuals volunteered** their time and effort on DNCR land in 2022.
- **6 long-term Friends groups** entered into new volunteer agreements with DNCR in 2022. These groups include: Weeks State Park Association, Wentworth-Coolidge Commission, Enriched Learning Center, New England Mountain Bike Association: Seacoast Chapter, NH Mushers Association, Friends of Forest Lake Trails
- **18 long-term Friends groups renewed their volunteer agreements.** These groups include: Access Fund, Appalachian Mountain Club, Belknap Range Trail Tenders, Coos Cycling Club, Friends of Fort Constitution, Friends of Fort Stark, Friends of the Ledges, Friends of Friends of Pisgah, Friends of Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail, Monadnock Climbers Association, Northwood Meadows State park, Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund, The Cohos Trail Association, Surfrider Foundation, Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Coalition (SRKGC), Trailwrights, White Mountain National Forest, Cooperative Maintenance Agreement with Mount Sunapee Report and SRKGC
- The Department **provided liability insurance** that covered approved volunteer activities for 13 different non-profit Friends groups and non-motorized trail maintenance organizations whose work spanned 21 different state reservations.
- The Department held **2 free volunteer chainsaw safety certification classes** for DNCR volunteers at Bear Brook State Park and Milan Hill State Park. DNCR volunteers can be granted approval to use a chainsaw on state lands if they have an up-to-date chainsaw certification on file with the Volunteer Program Manger. Approved DNCR volunteers are permitted to cut downed debris that is not under pressure or strain.
- **DNCR volunteers provided a variety of services** throughout the state including grounds maintenance, trail work, GPS data collection, invasive species removal, search and rescue, and so much more.

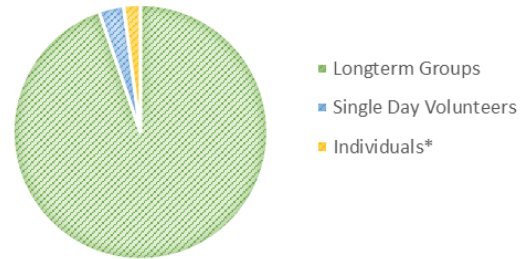
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Volunteer Hours for 2022

| Volunteer Agreement Type | Reported Volunteer Hours |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Individuals | 355 hours* |
| Single Day Groups | 1,596 hours |
| Long Term Groups | 18,087 hours |
| TOTAL | 20,038 hours |

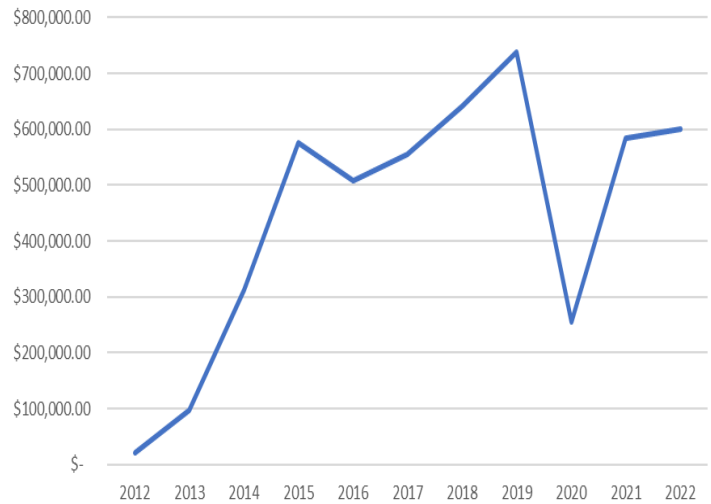
Percentage of Hours by Agreement Type



Volunteer Hours Over Time

| Calendar Year | Reported Volunteer Hours | Approximate \$ Value |
|---------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 2012 | 751 hours | \$16,575 |
| 2013 | 3,208 hours | \$73,335 |
| 2014 | 10,456 hours | \$240,279 |
| 2015 | 19,182 hours | \$472,755 |
| 2016 | 16,971 hours | \$418,096 |
| 2017 | 18,565 hours | \$473,779 |
| 2018 | 21,403 hours | \$551,341 |
| 2019 | 24,660 hours | \$646,832 |
| 2020 | 8,555 hours | \$244,398 |
| 2021 | 19,855 hours | \$610,518 |
| 2022 | 17,437 hours | \$600,138** |

Value of DNCR Volunteer Hours Over Time**



* It is assumed that many individuals did not report their time during the volunteer manager vacancy

** Approximate value is calculated using the Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time for 2022.

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2022 Highlights

- The Department held **Bear Brook State Park Trail Cooperative** and **Pisgah State Park Trail Cooperative** meetings in March and April of 2022. These meetings brought together state staff and user group representatives to discuss strategies and share information on how to best cooperatively manage the trail system in each park.
- In April the Department held three **Trail Clean-up Days** across the State. At **Bear Brook State Park** 37 volunteers donated 111 hours, at **Pisgah State Park** 4 volunteers donated 14 hours, and at **Blue Job State Forest** 20 volunteers, including the **Trailwrights** volunteer group, donated 80 hours. Volunteers cleared the trails of fallen debris and recorded trail issues for staff to address at a later date.
- **Nansen Ski Club** efforts to restore the Nansen Ski Jump at the **Nansen Wayside State Historic Site** continued in 2022. The group received federal funding from Senator Jeanne Shaheen via the “Save America’s Treasures” program and were awarded the “Read the Marker Award” and the “President’s Award” from the National Association of State Park Directors.
- **Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund** installed their second batch of engraved brick pavers at **Franconia Notch State Park’s** Profile Plaza. Funds raised by these pavers goes towards the long-term maintenance of the plaza.
- **Friends of Fort Stark** held a volunteer day every Wednesday at Fort Stark. Work included grounds maintenance, maintaining displays inside the museum/visitor center, mending holes cut in the fencing around the bunkers, painting over graffiti, and opening and closing the gate to the parking lot.
- **Single Day Volunteer Groups** continue to work with the **Blue Ocean Society’s** and the **Seacoast Science Center** for volunteer clean-ups from state beaches and invasive species control with the Rockingham County Conservation District
- **Trailwrights** held 9 work days at **Franconia Notch State Park** performing trail work at Artists Bluff/Bald Mountain and Mount Pemigewasset and the Fox Research and Demonstration Forest



Chainsaw safety training class held at Milan Hill State Park.



Nansen Ski Club meeting with Senator Shaheen at the Nansen Wayside State Historic Site.



Brian Fowler, President of the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund, greeting visitors at Profile Plaza in Franconia Notch State Park.

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2022 Highlights



Volunteers planting native plant species at the summit of Miller State Park.



Trailwrights and Friends of the Wapack at Temple Mountain State Reservation.



AMC rebuilt a 0.7 mile loop using RTP funds in order to make the trail fully accessible for wheelchair users.

- **Volunteers at Miller State Park** helped to paint buildings and plant native plant species in an ongoing effort to beautify the summit. The culmination of these years long efforts were celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Senator Sununu and Commissioner Stewart of the Division of Natural and Cultural Resources.
- **Friends of the Wapack** and **Trailwrights** worked together to repair extensive trail damage on the Beebee trail at **Temple Mountain State Reservation** (across the street from Miller State Park). The damages were caused by illegal motorized use on the trail. Repairs included fixing the damaged board bridges, cutting out damaged trees, laying stepping stones in a muddy area, and cleaning and adding new drainage.
- The **Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)** rebuilt a 0.7 mile loop to be fully accessible on the AMC property adjacent to Cardigan Mountain State Forest with funds from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant. Several bridges were replaced, the trail was reimagined and graded, and added picnic areas and tables.
- The **Cohos Trail Association** rerouted part of the Cohos trail in the **Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest** in order to get the trail off the existing road and ATV trail. Funds from the RTP grant program were used to hire the Northwoods Stewardship Center (youth crew) in order to create the 2.2 miles of new trail.
- The **Cotton Valley Rail Trail Club** used RTP funds to maintain the 12 mile stretch of rail trail from Brookfield to Wolfeboro. Work included brushing and clearing overhanging canopy, installing beaver deceivers to address drainage issues, and installing a 84' guard rail to prevent cars from parking over the rails.
- **White Mountain National Forest** Trailhead Steward Volunteer Program ran from mid-May through mid-October at the Old Bridal Path/Falling Waters trailhead at **Franconia Notch State Park**. Trailhead volunteers contacted 11,107 hikers at the trailhead. 1,532 hikers changed plans (went back to the car for more gear did a different hike, decided not to hike) based on volunteer trailhead steward advice.

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2022 Highlights



Rusty Bastedo retired as President of the Wentworth-Coolidge Commission.



SPNHF performing trail work at Monadnock Trails Week at Monadnock State Park.



Jed Piatt organized several volunteer days at Pawtuckaway State Park.

- **Rusty Bastedo** retired as President of the **Wentworth-Coolidge Commission** after serving 25 years on the board. His dedication to preserving the **Wentworth Coolidge Historic Site** can be seen in the various preservation projects he was involved in and the various ways he was able to raise funds for the Commission.
- **Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF)** held the 16th annual **Monadnock Trails Week** at **Monadnock State Park**. 42 volunteers contributed approximately 550 hours of trail work on the White Arrow trail, the Marlboro trail, at trailheads, and on Gap Mountain. Project ranged from trailhead maintenance to technical rockwork.
- Volunteer **Jed Piatt** organized 3 volunteer work days in the climbing areas at **Pawtuckaway State Park**. A total of **20 volunteers** cleared debris at Round Pond lot and Shaw trail.
- **Master Gardeners** volunteered 550 hours over the span of 3 weeks at the **State Nursery** helping staff to sort and package plants.
- The **Weeks State Park Association (WSPA)** and **The Cohos Trail Association (TCTA)** constructed a new trail at **Weeks State Park** in honor of the former WSPA President and park manager Pat Nelson. This trail creates a new loop experience at the summit of the park that leads from the carriage house to the north overlook.



NH Forests & Lands staff, volunteers, and Governor Sununu at the State Nursery during sorting season.



WSPA and TCTA constructing a new loop trail at Weeks State Park.

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- Volunteers at **Belknap State Forest** donated their time to opening and closing the gate on the property from May through November to allow for public access. Volunteers have been assisting the Department with gate duties since the 1990s which has led to a noticeable decrease in vandalism on the mountain.
- **Cardigan Highlanders Volunteer Trail Crew** performed bi-monthly trail work days at **Cardigan Mountain State Forest, Mount Sunapee State Park, and Mount Kearsarge State Forest (Winslow & Rollins State Parks)**. Work included building rock steps, building bog bridges, working on drainage, barricading, and brushing in trails.
- **Belknap Range Trail Tenders** held 6 work days at **Belknap State Forest**. Work included placing rock steps, enlarging water bars, working on drainage, and quarrying rocks for future trail work.
- **Friends of Pisgah** contributed a total of 1,220 hours of volunteer service maintaining the many trails and roads of the 13,300-acre Pisgah State Park. The FOP, in cooperation with equestrian groups developed an experimental technique to prevent slippery bridges which has been adopted by the DNCR as a new practice
- **The Cohos Trail Association** completed 2.2 miles of new trail between Coleman State Park and the Lake Francis Trail, and aided Maggie Machinist in repairing a bridge on Percy Peaks.



Belknap Range Trail Tenders on the Red Trail on Belknap State Forest.



Friends of Pisgah at Pisgah State Park.



Surfrider Foundation New Hampshire Chapter at Rye Harbor State Park.

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2022 Reported Volunteer Hours

| Volunteer Group | Hours |
|---|-------|
| Appalachian Mountain Club | 680 |
| Blue Ocean Society | 712 |
| Belknap Range Trail Tenders | 315 |
| Cardigan Highlanders Volunteer Trail Crew | 789 |
| Cohos Trail Association | 1260 |
| Coos Cycling Club | 130 |
| Cotton Valley Trail Committee | 1400 |
| Derry Trail Riders | 40 |
| Friends of Fort Constitution | 120 |
| Friends of Fort Stark | 400 |
| Friends of Northwood Meadows State Park | 100 |
| Friends of Pisgah | 1220 |
| Friends of the Wapack | 123 |
| Monadnock Happy Trails Association | 9 |
| Nansen Ski Club | 3,653 |
| NEMBA: Central Chapter | 75 |
| NEMBA: Southern Chapter | ** |
| Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund | 1250 |
| Rockingham County Conservation District | ** |
| Seacoast Science Center | 4,336 |
| Spofford Lake Association | 20 |
| Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Coalition | 25 |
| Surfrider Foundation | 650 |
| Trailwrights | 843 |
| Wantastiquet-Monadnock Trailway Coalition | 350 |
| Weeks State Park Association | ** |
| White Mountain National Forest | 575 |

** Volunteer hours data not available at time of this report



Parks & Recreation Director Phil Bryce and Weeks State Park Association President Sally Pratt executing the group's first agreement.



Free chainsaw training class for DNCR volunteers held at Milan Hill State park in May of 2022.



Cardigan Highlanders Volunteer Trail Crew at Mount Sunapee State Park.

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Looking Ahead

2023 Volunteer Program Initiatives

- **Non-motorized Trail Specialist** - The Department has hired a non-motorized trail specialist that will be under the Trails Bureau. This position will be working closely with the Volunteer Program to support the needs of our non-motorized trail volunteer groups.
- **Chainsaw Classes** - The Volunteer Program will continue to offer free DNCR chainsaw safety classes for DNCR volunteers. These classes are taught by a Division of Forests and Lands instructor and offered in various locations across the state. Contact the Volunteer Program Manager if you are interested in attending a future DNCR chainsaw safety class.
- **Annual Meetings** - The Volunteer Program is working to host annual meetings for all volunteers in the spring and fall of each year. The purpose of these meetings will be to share what volunteers are working on across the state, provide an opportunity to learn from professionals and peers, and to network and thank our amazing community.
- **Volunteer Activity Passes** - The Department has started to use a NH State Parks Volunteer Activity Pass to make it easier to provide free admission to parks that have a day-use fee for DNCR volunteers engaged in approved volunteer activities. Contact the Volunteer Program Manager to request an activity pass.
- **Volunteer Program Tool Trailers** - Department volunteers under an active volunteer agreement are eligible to borrow the trailer and/or tools from the trailer. Contact the Volunteer Program Manager to reserve the use of this resource.
- **Volunteer Program Handbook** - A handbook of volunteer policies, protocols, and FAQs as a resource for volunteers and staff is under development.
- **Volunteer Recruitment** - The Volunteer Program is looking to further assist volunteer groups with recruitment through promoting groups on NH State Parks social media accounts and advertising upcoming work days.
- **Cooperative Trail Group Meetings** - Biannual meetings are scheduled to be held with state staff and user groups at Bear Brook State Park and Pisgah State Park to collectively maintain and improve the trail system in each park. Staff are working to form similar working groups for Mount Sunapee State Park and Pawtuckaway State Park.

