



Discover the Power of Parks is an interactive series of interpretive programs for visitors to New Hampshire's State Parks. The program is a collaboration between the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) with program support from the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps).

## Program Overview



Figure 1 From Left to Right: Clare Delbecq, Sam Judson, Becki Lindhart, Luis Nandall, Lauren Bos, Monica Casey and Anthony Vincente .

Seven college-age interns were recruited and trained by SCA NH Corps to provide guided hikes, interpretive tours and imaginative environmental workshops for children, families and other visitors. Interpretive programs focus on connecting participants with nature and building appreciation for New Hampshire's natural heritage.

The parks included in this year's program were: Greenfield, Monadnock, Pawtuckaway, Bear Brook, Umbagog Lake, White Lake, and Franconia Notch State Parks.

A website and a URL are maintained by the Division for the program, [www.discoverpowerofparks.com](http://www.discoverpowerofparks.com).

## Measuring Success

### *Conservation Education Program Field Trips*

The Discover the Power of Parks interns get their first experience in leading programs by hosting the Manchester and Allenstown 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes that are part of the SCA NH Corps environmental education program. In early May, the interns lead 3 weeks of school field trips to Bear Brook State Park and guided 1,011 (a new high) students in an investigation of aquatic and terrestrial life.

### *Great Park Pursuit*

The SCA NH Corps was the event day host for the 2014 Great Park Pursuit kick-off on June 14<sup>th</sup> at Bear Brook State Park. The interns developed and presented four guided programs; Fireside Fables, Camping Correctly, Great Pond Pursuit and Wild, Wonderful Woodlands. The conservation crew members helped with set up and break down and hosted the self-guided activities such as lanyard making and s'mores.

### *Partner Recognition*

On October 29, 2014 the Governor and Executive Council issued a commendation to the Student Conservation Association recognizing the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program, the more than 600 SCA NH Corps members that have served in New Hampshire and PSNH for their support of the program since its inception in 2007.

### *State Park Programs*

With guidance from the SCA NH Corps Service and Education coordinator, Clare Croteau and State Park staff, the interns created imaginative programs to connect families with the outdoors. While there are programs that are given at every site like ponding and night hikes, the creativity of the interns make each season special.

The interns provided information and delivered environmental education programs to thousands of visitors, campers, hikers and local citizens. They were asked to keep track of the number of visitors they reached and reported the following:

<b>2014</b>	<b>Program Attendees</b>	<b>Informal Contacts</b>	<b>Fall Outreach</b>
Bear Brook	1,491	2,201	1,186
Franconia Notch	4,008	6,484	
Greenfield	691	636	
Monadnock		3,737	2,780
Pawtuckaway	1,560	421	
Umbagog Lake	930	1,118	377
White Lake	929	1,996	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,609</b>	<b>16,593</b>	<b>4,343</b>

**Total Visitor Contact = 30,545**

Two programmatic changes occurred this year. The Greenfield/Monadnock intern housing location was changed from Monadnock to Greenfield. Programming at Greenfield was offered Wednesday – Saturday and the intern spent Sunday’s at Monadnock providing informal programming and assisting park staff on this busy day of the week. Programming was discontinued at Lake Francis and only one intern was stationed in the Great North Woods region.

### *Fall Outreach*

Interpretive programs were offered to schools, community organizations, and clubs in the Greater Merrimack Valley Area and the upper Great North Wood Region at no cost Labor Day through Columbus Day (Tuesday-Friday). In addition, the Monadnock interpreters visited community groups prior to their visit to talk about Hike Safe principals. The interns developed three programs for groups to choose from and programs were offered in the park or at their site. There were a total of 4,343 participants.

### *Social Media Outreach*

This summer the interns took turns providing blog posts twice a week (for a total of 28) and took part in four informational You Tube videos which provided a special glimpse into the parks the interns were serving at and their experiences in NH. The blogs had 7,374 page views and the videos 1,387 views!

These posts were shared through our other social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. The blogs are archived at, <http://blog.nhstateparks.org/category/discover-power-of-parks/> and the Interpreter playlist of videos, [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9U8yCzE6rwl9V6j6qMZLVxyDGDCk\\_7UD](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9U8yCzE6rwl9V6j6qMZLVxyDGDCk_7UD).

### *Program Marketing*

Discover the Power of Parks participants that take part in 5 programs are awarded a Discover the Power of Parks patch; 12 patches were awarded in 2014.

### **Building on a Successful Program**

The Division of Parks and Recreation has contracted for six interns for the 2016-2017 biennium and the SCA has secured funding through the Corporation for National Service for a seventh intern for program year 2015. The program will continue to offer a mix of campground and day-use programming to interest a broad range of visitors.

Some programmatic goals we will be working on include:

1. Administration
  - a. SCA/DRED increase transportation budget and/or allow interns to use park vehicles for pre-visit hike safe/park info talks to youth groups and for fall outreach to expand range of programming.
  - b. Provide interns with DRED email addresses.
  - c. White Lake intern will need internet (hotspot?) if workspace is relocated to store area.
  - d. DRED will purchase digital cameras for park for interns to use for programming and to blogging.
2. Advertising and Marketing
  - a. DPP interns will write a press release for local newspapers introducing themselves & programming at the beginning of the programmatic season.
  - b. DPP Interns will email 2013 fall outreach participants with contact information in late May to encourage reservations earlier.
  - c. Park Staff will designate a bulletin board or create an area to market the Discover of Parks program to guests. Include a picture of the intern, bio, daily schedule, and a map with meeting location
  - d. Parks will explore direct emailing to incoming guests with program schedule.
  - e. DRED/SCA will continue with blog posts and videos.

### 3. Programming

- a. Reach out to partners and other community resources to collaborate in programming.
- b. Programs should grow and change as the season progresses to stimulate the interns and guests.
- c. Develop self-guided quests/nature walks for properties in the region.
- d. Offer programming to day-use and overnight youth groups as the schedule permits.
- e. Working with park managers, develop interpretive materials (brochures, signs, guide) or exhibits.

### 4. Communication

- a. Continue to improve communication among interpreters, park managers and SCA Service and Education Coordinator.
- b. During training, interns will contact park managers to discuss their program ideas and park needs to begin the collaboration with the park managers.
- c. Include Interpretive Interns in pre-season training and staff meetings.



## **Sample Program Descriptions**

### **Tour de Greenfield**

Bring your bikes and your helmets and join the Interpretive Ranger on a trip around Greenfield State Park. Learn a little about the trails and history as we take a leisurely ride around the park. Meet at the Interpretive Circle located behind the Park Office.

### **Bees, Please!**

Find out why bees are so important to our everyday life! Ranger Monica will explain how busy the life of a bee is and why we shouldn't be so afraid of our buzzing buddies. Take this opportunity to learn how to "bee"-come a friend to these incredible insects. Meet at the Campground Amphitheater.

### **Magnificent Moths**

Explore the wonders of moths and how they play a role in New Hampshire's ecology. Every night they take to the skies in the millions, come as we attract them and admire their mesmerizing beauty.

### **Gazing at Galaxies**

Join me for an hour of stargazing and constellation hunting. This program will meet in front of the campground store, by the carved bear, and move to the field for the majority of the hour. On cloudy evenings this program will run as a night hike.

### **Outdoor Skills**

Swing by my table in front of the campground store to learn how to tie some knots, identify different animal tracks, and learn how to use a compass. Drop by the campground store at any point during the scheduled time to learn or review your skills.

### **Marsh Marvels**

Stop in to discover the creatures living below the surface in Burnham's Marsh! You can catch anything from dragonfly nymph to a red spotted newt in this diverse ecosystem. Burnham's Marsh is located in between the beach and the park store

### **Tracking Basics**

Having trouble finding animals in the wild? Spend some time with me and I can teach you the basics on how to read the tracks of animals. With some practice, you will be able to read the stories that all animals write in their tracks. Meet me on the beach.

### **Primitive Fire**

Ever built a fire without a match or lighter? Meet with me and learn some handy skills that can save you in a survival situation; such as how to use a bow drill, how to make char cloth, as well as some handy fire safety tips. Meet me by the fire ring across from the office.