



## Discover the Power of Parks 2015 Report

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 Eversource Energy with program support from the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps).

### Program Overview



Figure 1 Left to Right: Vicki Benko, Renee Harding, Ben Spurrier, Ryan Kintz, Christi Conway, Rachel Szczytko and Nicole Cram.

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.

### 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 winter environmental education program. In early May, the interns lead 3 weeks of school field trips to Bear Brook State Park and guided 1,028 (a new high) students in an investigation of aquatic and terrestrial life.

#### *State Park Programs*

With guidance from the SCA NH Corps Service and Education coordinator, Davis Brush, 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>2015</b>	<b>Program Attendees</b>	<b>Informal Contacts</b>
Bear Brook	2,142	130
Franconia Notch	6,502	10,428
Greenfield	1,752	486
Monadnock	2,248	3,602
Pawtuckaway	1,919	568
Umbagog Lake	1,228	576
White Lake	1,362	1,092
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,153</b>	<b>16,882</b>

**Total Visitor Contact = 34,035**

*Social Media Outreach*

This summer the interns took turns providing blog posts twice a week (for a total of 26) 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 11,465 page views and the videos 18,193 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).

*Great Park Pursuit*

The SCA NH Corps was the event day host for the 2015 Great Park Pursuit kick-off on June 13<sup>th</sup> at Bear Brook State Park. The interns developed and presented four guided programs; Water you waiting for?, Come Ponding!, Where in the World has NH been?, Discover What’s off the Beaten Path and Revampin’ Campin. The conservation crew members helped with set up and break down and hosted the self-guided activities such as smore’s and tree cookies.

*Program Marketing*



Figure 2 Interpreter Ryan Kintz at White Lake State Park inviting guests to his “After-Loon” program.

The most frequent way for guests to find out about the program is signage in the park and a visit by the interpreter to campsites and beach areas.

Discover the Power of Parks participants that take part in 5 programs are awarded a Discover the Power of Parks patch; 9 patches were awarded in 2015.

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

**Building on a Successful Program**

The Division has committed to contract for two additional interns for program year 2016. These interns will be based at Bear Brook State Park and White Lake State Park. These “roving interpreters” will provide programming to day-use areas and campgrounds on a set weekly schedule. The program will continue to offer a mix of campground and day-use programming to a broad range of visitors.

Some programmatic goals we will be working on include:

1. Administration
  - a. Provide interns with DRED email addresses.
  - b. Finalize “Roving Interpreter” program and program sites.
  - c. DPP 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, tentative date, June 13<sup>th</sup>, Bear Brook.
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 fall outreach participants with contact information in late May to encourage early program reservations.
  - c. DPP interns will identify and contact new outreach participants in the community such as senior centers, recreation departments, farmer markets and public libraries.
  - d. 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
  - e. Parks will explore direct emailing to incoming guests with program schedule.
  - f. DRED/SCA will continue with blog posts and videos.
  - g. DRED will purchase “feather flags” to advertise and indicate program areas.
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.
  - f. SCA to explore the inclusion of canoe safety training so on-water programming can be offered.
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.