



## Discover the Power of Parks 2017 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



Nine college graduates were recruited and trained by SCA NH Corps to provide guided hikes, interpretive tours and imaginative environmental workshops for children, families, and other park visitors. These Interpretive Rangers presented programs that focused on connecting participants with nature and building an appreciation for New Hampshire's natural and cultural heritage.

Figure 1 Left to Right: Sam Nunlist, Julia Boyer, Hannah Park, Anastasia Slough, Pete Lampley, Lee Dudek, Haley Doty, Brittany O'Neal, and Brian Donovan.

The state parks included in this year's program were: Greenfield, Monadnock, Pawtuckaway, Bear Brook, Clough, Hampton Beach, Kingston, Wallis Sands, Silver Lake, White Lake, Franconia Notch, Crawford Notch, Moose Brook, Echo Lake, Ellacoya, and Odiorne Point State Parks.

A website and a URL are maintained by the Division for the program, [www.discoverpowerofparks.com](http://www.discoverpowerofparks.com). This page shows the participating state parks and days that programing is offered at each of the cooperating sites.

### Measuring Success

#### *Conservation Education Program Field Trips*

The Discover the Power of Parks Interpretive Rangers get their first experience in leading programs by hosting 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes from Manchester, Hooksett, Deerfield, and Allenstown that are part of the SCA NH Corps winter environmental education program. In early May, the Interpretive Rangers led 15 days of school field trips at Bear Brook State Park. This year the rangers guided nearly 1,000 students in an investigation of aquatic and terrestrial life.

### *State Park Programs*

With guidance from the SCA NH Corps Education Coordinator, Davis Brush, and State Park staff, the Interpretive Rangers created imaginative programs to connect families with the outdoors. While there are programs that are given at most sites like ponding and night hikes, the creativity of the Interpretive Rangers make each program year special.

Some new, unique, and innovate programs that the Interpretive Rangers developed and delivered this year include:

- **MonadRock Stop!**, which was developed by Brittany O'Neal at Monadnock State Park. This program was created to get people to take a break while on their journey to the top of the mountain. Standing with her stop sign Brittany would get individuals to halt and engage in her short five minute lesson about the geology of Monadnock.
- **Inspiration Point**, another Monadnock State Park program, inspired visitors through the words of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson who wrote about their fascination with the mountain.
- **A Berry Boggy Hike**, created by Julia Boyer at Greenfield, taught park guests about the peat bog that is known as Hogback Pond. This program covered glacial eskers, kettle hole ponds, and bog plants.
- **Songs of the Old North**, created by Pete Lampley, the White Lake interpreter, include the usage of an accordion as he sang the songs of the loggers, mountain men, reformers, and patriots that lived in the area generations ago. These songs brought local history to life.
- **Anastasia Slough, the Northern Rover**, did some wonderful first person interpretation that put a new twist on the classic furbearer program. As 'Dog Face Charles' she helped people understand the importance of the fur trade and its impact on the New England landscape during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- **Brian Donovan** started Fish Friends of Franconia, which connected visitors to the natural history of the Eastern Brook Trout.
- **Haley Doty** took the initiative to obtain some of the insect displays from Forest and Lands. With these she informed visitors about the issues of transporting firewood and invasive forest pests. This engaging program really increased awareness of what we are trying to prevent from happening – the spread of forest pests across the state.
- The two Seacoast Interpretive Rangers, **Sam Nunlist** and **Hannah Park**, spent time tabling at various evening concert venues on the coast to try to engage with some different park user groups.
- **Lee Dudek**, the interpreter at Pawtuckaway, helped introduce park guests to the park's plants through a scavenger hunt based on orienteering skills he taught them.

The Interpretive Rangers 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:

Park	Interpreter	Total # of Program Attendees	Total Park Visitor Contacts (In addition to program attendees)
Greenfield State Park	Julia Boyer	1335	473
Monadnock State Park	Brittany O'Neal	1593	2664
Bear Brook State Park	Hannah Park	1230	546
Pawtuckaway State Park	Lee Dudek	1672	116
Franconia Notch State Park	Brian Donovan/ Haley Doty	3779	8540
White Lake State Park	Pete Lampley	2349	2042
Southern Rover	Sam Nunlist	2223	175
Northern Rover	Anastasia Slough	868	1413
North Country/Ossipee Outreach	Anastasia Slough	284	na
Greenfield/Monadnock Outreach	Pete, Julia, Brittany	1626	na
Bear Brook Outreach	Sam, Hannah, & Lee	387	na
Totals		17346	15969

**Total Visitor Contact = 33,315 of which 2,261 are fall outreach program participants.**

*Fall Outreach: September – October*

This year seven of the nine Interpretive Rangers conducted outreach programs. These Interpretive Rangers were based in the Merrimack Valley, Monadnock Region, and at White Lake State Park, which covered the Ossipee area and Great North Woods. This fall the members conducted programs ranging in length from one hour to a half day, or a series of programs with each of the organizations they visited. In total the members connected with 40 community organizations conducting 59 programs during the five weeks of fall outreach. On top of this the Interpretive Rangers at Monadnock State Park conducted 8 bus talks. The list of organizations can be found in appendix A.

*Volunteer Trail Work Days:*

Working with Patrick Hummel, the Interpretive Rangers took on a new role facilitating volunteer trail maintenance at some of the parks. Six of the Interpretive Rangers were involved in three trail projects. The three projects included brushing the Laurel Trail at Rhododendron State Park, cleaning up the view scape at the Historic Halfway House site at Monadnock State Park, and closing social trails in the “workout” area of the Bear Brook State Park day use area. In total there were 11 volunteers that assisted with this much needed trail work for a total of 34 hours. This volunteer time combined with the Interpretive Ranger assistance led to 56 service hours on these three projects.

*Social Media Outreach*

Interpretive Rangers began blogging voluntarily in February to chronicle their experience in the schools, hosting field trips at Bear Brook in May, and continued through their service at their parks this summer and fall. The blog quality increased without the pressure to produce a blog every few weeks. A total of 32 blogs were published.

During the SCA NH Corps environmental education season this past winter/spring Brittany O'Neal wrote eight blog posts. These posts told the story of lessons taught that helped students become aware of the natural

environment of New Hampshire as they evolved into Earth Stewards vowing to continue learning about and protect nature.

Throughout the Discover the Power of Parks interpretive program season the members wrote a combined twenty-four blog posts. These blogs introduced us to the search and rescue team at Monadnock, gave us an inside look at a day in the life of an Interpretive Ranger at Franconia Notch, divulged the history of the lost city of East Weare, taught us about the toads and frogs at Bear Brook, and identified plants along the Hogback Pond Trail at Greenfield. These posts were well received being viewed roughly 36,000 times and garnering 16,800 likes on Facebook during the season.

These posts were shared through the states other social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter as well. The blogs are archived at, <http://blog.nhstateparks.org/category/discover-power-of-parks/> and this year the introduction video of the Interpretive Rangers taught us how they “Discover the Power of Parks” and can be found here, [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9U8yCzE6rwl9V6j6qMZLVxyDGDCk\\_7UD](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9U8yCzE6rwl9V6j6qMZLVxyDGDCk_7UD).

### *Program Marketing*

DPP program participants that take part in 5 programs are awarded a Discover the Power of Parks patch. This year eight campers at Pawtuckaway and two at Franconia completed the required number of programs and were sent a patch. Having eight individuals’ complete five programs each at Pawtuckaway is a testament to the wonderful diversity of programs that were available there this season.

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

The Division has committed to contract for nine Interpretive Rangers again for the 2018 calendar year. It is expected that programs will be offered at all current program sites in 2018 except Silver Lake State Park due to the high number of beach swimming closures and low attendance over the past two seasons. Additional program sites are being evaluated for summer and fall outreach.

Some programmatic goals we will be working on include:

1. Administration
  - a. Provide Interpretive Rangers with adequate housing and office resources throughout the program year from June-October.
  - b. State Park supervisors will complete a performance review and an evaluation of the Interpretive Ranger and their programs to assist the Education Coordinator in improving and growing the program in a positive direction.
2. Advertising and Marketing
  - a. Continue to write and publish blogs during the SCA NH Corps program year, January – October, to highlight the important service and science and nature education provided to New Hampshire’s schools and youth.
  - b. Continue with blog posts and videos as time allows for interested Interpretive Rangers and New Hampshire State Park staff.
  - c. Interpretive Rangers will email previous fall outreach partners as early as possible to continue building the relationships between local communities and New Hampshire State Parks.
  - d. During the May field trips to Bear Brook all students will receive information about the DPP programs and locations, which will include a recreational activity card.

- e. If we decide to continue the trail days with the DPP Interpretive Rangers the SCA will work more closely with Patrick Hummel to increase the awareness of these events and the number of volunteers that come out and assist with these projects.

### 3. Programming

- a. The Interpretive Ranger will reach out to partners and other community resources to collaborate in programming. This past year we worked in collaboration with the Division of Forest and Lands, Forest Health Bureau. This partnership allowed the Interpretive Rangers to utilize insect displays for their programs on invasive forest pests and their public service announcements about the dangers of transporting firewood.
- b. Programs should grow and change as the season progresses to stimulate the Interpretive Rangers and guests. Repeat guests should see different programs on the schedule throughout the DPP Season.
- c. Develop self-guided quests/nature walks for properties in the region.
- d. Continue to develop interpretive materials with park staff (brochures, signs, guides) or exhibits that enhance the park visitor experience.
- e. Continue offering programming to day-use and overnight youth groups as the schedule permits. These scheduled programs have been on the rise as a greater awareness of the depth and breadth of programming provided reaches these groups.

### 4. Communication

- a. Continue to improve communication among Interpretive Rangers, park managers, and SCA's Education Coordinator.
- b. During training, Interpretive Rangers will contact park managers to discuss their program ideas and park needs to begin the collaboration with the park managers as early as possible.
- c. Include the Interpretive Rangers in pre-season training and staff meetings to help integrate them into the culture of the park.



**Appendix A**

	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Organizations Location</b>	
<b>Northern River</b>	Tapply Thompson Community Center	Bristol	
	Unity Christian School	Berlin	
	Sugar Hill Retirement Community	Wolfeboro	
	North Country Community Recreation Center	Colebrook	
	Hillside Elementary School - 5th grade	Berlin	
	Errol Consolidate School	Errol	
	Wolfeboro Senior Center	Wolfeboro	
	Berlin Middle School - 8th Grade	Berlin	
<b>Merrimack Valley</b>	Hooksett Public Library	Hooksett	
	Small Steps Learning Center	Pembroke	
	Pittsfield Senior Center	Pittsfield	
	Fuller Public Library	Hillsboro	
	Discovery Village Early Learning Center	Concord	
	Girls Inc.	Manchester	
	Webster Elementary	Manchester	
	Salisbury Free Library	Salisbury	
	Barrington Public Library	Barrington	
	Whipple Free Library	New Boston	
	Seacoast Community School	Portsmouth	
	Derryfield School Trail Day at Bear Brook	Manchester	
	Girl Scouts	Taught @ Pawtuckaway	
	Boy Scouts	Gilmanton	
	Smyth Public Library	Candia	
	Newbury Public Library	Newbury	
	<b>Monadnock</b>	Peterborough Library	Peterborough
		Jaffrey Public Library	Jaffrey
Olivia Rodman Memorial Library		Nelson	
Ignalls Memorial Library		Rindge	
Gay-Kimball Library		Troy	
Harrisville Public Library		Harrisville	
Lawrence Academy		Monadnock	
Conant High School		Jaffrey-Rindge Regional	
Victory High School		Jaffrey	
Keene Montessori School		Keene	
Greenfield Elementary School		Greenfield	
Hampshire Country School		Rindge	
Keene State College		Keene	
Monadnock Region Boy Scout Council		Monadnock Region	
Dublin Christian Academy		Dublin	
Robins Nature Nest Preschool	Peterborough		