

New Hampshire Conservation Corps (NHCC) Interpretive Ranger - Discover the Power of Parks Program 2023 Annual Report



*Presented in collaboration with
the Student Conservation
Association and made possible by
financial support from Eversource.*



Partnerships

The NHCC program would not exist without its programmatic partners. AmeriCorps has been a partner since its inception in 1993 and Our partnership with Volunteer New Hampshire provides funding for our AmeriCorps members to meet critical conservation and education needs across the state. NHCC also serves in conjunction with New Hampshire State Parks who has been a vital part of the program since the beginning - NHCC is based out of the historic Spruce Pond Camp in Bear Brook State Park. Eversource has also provided critical funding for our service work through the Discover the Power of Parks program. Additionally, partnerships with schools and after school programs, where we provide environmental education programs, are also key to our success. Many of these service partners have worked with the NHCC since it began its educational programs. Thank you to everyone who has chosen to work with us over the years and again in 2023.

Since 2007 the Discover the Power of Parks Interpretive Ranger program has been supported with generous funding from Eversource Energy. This capital has helped the NH Corps hire, train, and supply the Interpretive Rangers with the resources needed to deliver quality environmental, historic, and recreational programs to New Hampshire's residents and visitors. The NHCC appreciates this continued support and looks forward to finding new, mutually beneficial ways to collaborate and meet the ever-evolving needs of NH's communities, recreational resources, and environment.

About the SCA

Since 1957, SCA programs have been serving communities and lands throughout the United States by completing conservation services that enhance and protect the environmental and recreational resources. Beyond direct field service, the SCA also provides educational opportunities that promote the understanding, protection, and stewardship of these natural areas. The New Hampshire Conservation Corps (NHCC) continues this legacy through the lens of the SCA mission – Building the next generation of conservation leaders and inspiring lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.



Orientation and Education Training – March & April 2023



NHCC Interpretive Rangers arrived in New Hampshire in late March to begin their five weeks of service training and preparation. The first week introduced them to their new home in Bear Brook State Park, as well as AmeriCorps and SCA policies. During the next 2 weeks, members went through Wilderness First Responder medical training. The last 2 weeks of training immersed the Interpretive Rangers in environmental education. Training topics covered included the ecology of New Hampshire, place-based education, and pedagogical skills with the NHCC Education Coordinator. During this time Lindsay Webb of NH Fish and Game provided further training on wildlife education. Thank you to Lindsay for enhancing our member experience by assisting us with these fantastic trainings. This year, NHCC added two new experiences to the Interpretive Ranger's training schedule. First, we provided "pilot programs" for the Manchester Police Athletic League during New Hampshire school vacation week in April. This was a great opportunity for all the Interpretive Rangers to practice leading a game or activity with a multiage group of children. Second, the Interpretive Rangers participated at the Farm, Forest, and Garden Expo in Deerfield New Hampshire. Alongside NH DNCR, the Interpretive Rangers set up different table-top activities to

engage visitors and promote the DPP program. In addition to this promotional and networking opportunity, the Interpretive Rangers received first-hand experience with informal, drop-in educational programs. Both training opportunities proved to be fruitful in the Interpretive Ranger's preparation.

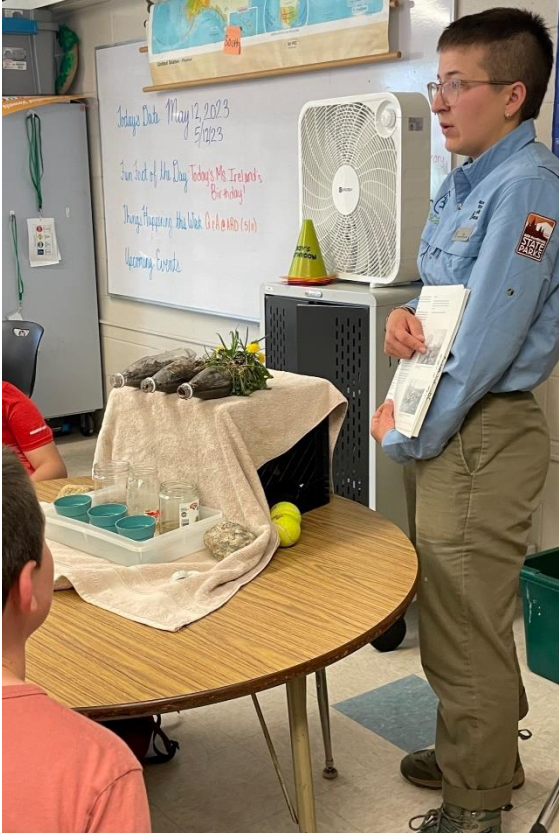
Interpretive Ranger Spring Outreach Season – May 2023

In May the members started delivering programs for schools and after school programs in the Merrimack Valley Region. Armed with their new knowledge and skills a total of 104 different programs were delivered in just 4 weeks! See Appendix A to read the programmatic data by the numbers.

It can be difficult to quantify the full magnitude of any education program. The goal is always for lessons to positively impact students - giving them experiences they will enjoy and remember for years. These outreach programs looked to do just that: teach scientific information, build environmental/scientific literacy, encourage an interest in conservation, and empower students to explore New Hampshire's outdoor spaces and State Parks. The accomplishments of the outreach season have been captured by the numbers, but the reader should remember that education always transcends quantitative data. We don't know how many of our students might visit one of New Hampshire's State Parks, or what piece of information may serve as the foundation for a student's future interest in nature or science. Qualitatively, we were able



to gather feedback from participating teachers. Results of this survey show that most students enjoyed spending time outside, learning about animals, being able to interact with animal pelts and skulls, and activities that included games. All of our programmatic partners indicated that they were pleased with the hands-on lessons, which helped them meet curriculum goals and standards. Karen Bradley a third-grade teacher at Hooksett Memorial School, said that year after year we “value having the SCA at our school” to provide hands-on learning experiences for their students. Even with our outreach program only being a month, the Interpretive Rangers felt that these experiences prepared them well for their upcoming roles as Interpretive Rangers in New Hampshire State Parks.



Preparation for DPP Summer Programs at NH State Parks – June 2023

During the first week of June, members participated in Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) training through the National Association of Interpretation. This training was a great way for the Interpretive Rangers to take their knowledge of formal education in public schools and apply that to informal interpretive education. Everyone learned how to develop and structure programs that meet the needs of multi-aged audiences and differentiate between a table-top or drop-in activity as compared to a scheduled 45-minute program. This additional training certainly helped the members mentally shift to the outdoor park programming that lay ahead.

After the CIG training, the Interpretive Rangers had about a week and a half before they headed to their parks. During this time the members used park legacy binders, created by past interpretive rangers, to build programs based on previous successes, and dove deeper into creating additional activities and lessons based on their own

interests. Beyond their parks they learned about and became familiar with the local communities and their amenities. This is great information to know when serving in a visitor services capacity.

Summer DPP Programs– June-October 2023

In what seemed like a blink of an eye, school was out for the summer and visitors began to flock to New Hampshire State Parks! The Interpretive Rangers hit the ground running and offered a variety of natural and cultural programs to visitors. Per usual, the most popular programs involved animal skulls and pelts, and evening programs involving stories about local culture and the night sky.





Programs with the highest visitation this past year were:

- Animal Adaptations – All Parks
- Getting Batty – Pilsbury State Park
- Constellation Observations – Greenfield State Park
- Creatures of the Night – Monadnock State Park
- Native Seed Bombs – White Lake State Park
- Call of the Loon – Umbagog State Park
- Fire Fun and Safety – Umbagog State Park
- Pondemonium – Greenfield State Park
- Moose of the Marsh – Franconia Notch State Park
- Camping 101 – All parks

Some new program offered this year:

- Indigenous Fire – Franconia State Park
- Hibernation Hiatuses – Pawtuckaway State Park
- What’s That Scat? – Franconia State Park
- Fire Tower Fun – Miller State Park
- Water, Life, and Abenaki Culture – Greenfield State Park
- Fishing Frenzy – Umbagog State Park
- Camp like a Secret Agent – White Lake State Park
- Mountain Artists – Monadnock State Park
- The Famous 48 – Franconia Notch State Park



From June to October, the Interpretive Rangers positively impacted the experience of thousands of park patrons. The Interpretive Rangers offered 896 DPP programs, with 23,524 park attendees! In addition to program attendees, the Interpretive Rangers were able to connect and interact with an additional 13,607 park goers in a visitor service capacity. This means that this cohort engaged with 37,131 park visitors this year! These numbers are truly impressive and shows their dedication to service, the environment, and New Hampshire (Please see Appendix B for specific details/data).

Throughout their service term they became more flexible and adaptable, as they learned to evaluate their programs and interactions with park visitors. As an educator, being able to evaluate oneself through reflection and critical thinking is paramount to one's continued growth and professional development. The SCA NH Corps is thrilled that its Interpretive Rangers were able to successfully grow both personally and professionally throughout the service term, continue offering amazing programs, and meet programmatic challenges with a smile on their face!



Discover the Power of Parks Legacy Projects

This year's group of Interpretive Rangers started DPP legacy projects. The intention of these is to develop valuable educational resources and experiences that enhance a park patrons' connection with NH State Parks. The legacy project goals are:

1. Develop new or significantly enhance current programs that focus on indigenous peoples of New Hampshire in an accurate and respectful manner.
2. Provide more sustainable camping programs that educate park goers on reducing their impact on the environment, and NH State Parks.
3. Enhance lifelong connections to NH State Parks. This will be done in several ways, including but not limited to citizen science, geocaching, blog posts and a potential DPP "program passport" to encourage continued park visitation throughout the year.

New Indigenous Peoples Program Content

In 2023, the Interpretive Rangers developed resources to support programming that highlights the Abenaki people. It is important that these resources be accurate and respectful of their culture. The majority of the research and information gathered came from Native American sources/authors. An extensive annotated bibliography was created utilizing resources in the NHCC programmatic library and from vetted websites, museums, historical societies, and local Abenaki individuals.

Two indigenous peoples' programs created this year are "What's in a Name?" and "Ethnobotany." Just as it sounds, "What's in a Name" is a program that explores the pronunciation and meaning of some of the local New Hampshire towns, lakes, rivers, and mountains. Many of these names are familiar, but the meaning behind them is not. What a fantastic way to connect our native history while also providing our visitors with a deeper sense of place! "Ethnobotany" is the study of the cultural uses of plants. By discovering the versatile uses of birch bark, the durability of an ash tree, and the healing properties of jewelweed, we hope that individuals begin to understand what this flora meant and means to the native people of New Hampshire.

New Sustainable Camping and LNT Program Content

Our Interpretive Rangers found it difficult to engage visitors with their sustainable camping programs. The biggest challenge they faced was trying to grab the attention of park visitors that are laser focused on hiking. This was most common at Franconia Notch and Monadnock. Many hikers have a tight schedule and are not interested in engaging with the Interpretive Rangers. Throughout the summer, through trial and error, our members learned that they were able to engage these visitors through the use of trivia questions and visitor polling.



Some examples of these LNT, hike safe, and sustainable camping questions and polls were:

- How many inches of rain did yesterday's storm produce?
- What do you think the temperature is at the summit?
- How many of the "ten essentials of survival" do you have in your pack?
- How much water does the average person need when hiking these trails with the current weather conditions?
- True or False – All paper plates are safe to burn in a campfire.
- Can you guess how many dish wash stations are at this campground?

Once visitors engaged with one question, they were hooked and stayed to learn more. This short interaction allowed them to participate in a program, learn something new, and stay on schedule hitting everything on their park itinerary for the day.

In addition to these programs, Interpretive Rangers also developed new content that included:

- How trail crews create a pathway for sustainable outdoor recreation and camping
- Sustainable backpacking
- Sustainable foraging and gathering of fire fuel.

Interpretive Ranger Fall Outreach Season – September/October 2023

Fall Outreach was a time for the Interpretive Rangers to try new things. They developed programs for new audiences and were accountable for their own programmatic scheduling with local schools, nonprofits, and other community organizations. Members reached out to and delivered programs for new groups and organizations - see Appendix C for more details. The Interpretive Rangers displayed the educational skill and creativity that proves they grew by leaps and bounds throughout their service term and are on well on their way to becoming highly successful environmental educators.



The beauty of a New Hampshire fall season brought an abundance of nature-lovers to NH Parks. Per usual, Monadnock had quite a few school groups visit to hike the mountain. Many bird-loving enthusiasts “flocked” to Miller State Park to participate in the Hawk Watch. The timing of peak foliage could not have been better for the Indigenous People’s Day holiday weekend at Franconia Notch State Park! The busiest seemed even more so over the long weekend.



After Indigenous People’s Day, the NHCC members returned to Bear Brook State Park. They participated in facility projects at Spruce Pond Camp, to leave their cabin and surrounding environment just as good, if not better, than it was when they arrived. Also during this time, we celebrated their dedication to service with a fun field trip to Portsmouth and the Strawberry Banke Museum, and facilitated the traditional NHCC “Bear Brook Olympics”. After the final few weeks at Spruce Pond Camp, the NHCC members leave the program with a deeper sense of themselves, place, and service. They have also gained a plethora of hard and soft skills, everlasting friends and memories, and a jump start on their career path to becoming the next generation of conservation leaders!

Interpretive Ranger Bios

David Bailey – Franconia Notch State Park

David is originally from California, and currently attends California State University in Sacramento. He is seeking to complete his degree in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration. David is no stranger to the SCA, as he was a member in 2018 helping manage the installation of a community garden in Los Angeles. He was also on a trail crew with the SCA while he was in high school. During his service term, David gained skills in providing interpretive programming for large groups and learned how to encourage visitors to hike safely and ethically.



Connor Cahill – Franconia Notch State Park

Connor is originally from St. Charles, Illinois, but currently lives in the lakes region of New Hampshire. He is hoping to pursue a career with the U.S Forest Service. During this program, Connor became more confident in public speaking and dove into learning more about land management and State Park operations.

Sam Crabtree – White Lake State Park (summer)

Bear Brook State Park (fall)

Sam went to Union College in his home state of New York, where he studied environmental science. During his time with the NHCC Sam discovered he is passionate about environmental ethics and cultural anthropology. This program helped Sam dive deeper into this passion for local indigenous history. Moving forward he hopes to go back to school to nurture these new interests and find his niche in the working world.

Casey Devanney – Seacoast and Pawtuckaway State Parks

Casey was born and raised right here in New Hampshire! He recently graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in wildlife and conservation management. Casey has a passion for local plants, trees, and forest ecology. Casey learned that, while he enjoys engaging with the public, he wants to pursue a career path as a biologist or ecologist and not as a frontline educator.

Rebecca Durinick – Umbagog and Mollidgewock State Parks (summer)

Miller State Park (fall)

Rebecca is from Connecticut. She went to Paul Smith's College before transferring to Unity College in Maine, where she will graduate with a degree in conservation management. Rebecca took this opportunity with the NHCC to learn about survival skills and indigenous cultures and assist with visitor services at Miller State Park where she participated in the Hawk-Watch project.

Olivia Gottlieb – Ellacoya, Pillsbury, and Sunapee State Parks (summer) and Pawtuckaway (fall)

Olivia is originally from Missouri and attended the University of Wyoming to study biology. Olivia has a diverse background of experience in education and science. One of Olivia's passions is pond ecology and macroinvertebrates. Olivia confirmed her passion for experiential outdoor education and moved back to Wyoming for a position as an Interpretive Ranger at Devil's Tower.

Dan Guider – Monadnock State Park

Dan is originally from Morristown, New Jersey. He studied environmental studies at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. Dan was a previous member of the SCA on a trail crew in southern California. He is passionate about hiking and educating others on Leave No Trace principals, and this program solidified his passion for trails and all things nature. He will be moving from here to an SCA fire corps team this winter.

Becca Leone – Seacoast and Bear Brook State Parks

Becca is from Buffalo, New York and recently graduated from SUNY at Cobleskill. Becca has experience in the world of science education and brought a wealth of experience to the Interpretive Ranger team. Becca will be pursuing her passion for sustainability when she returns to the classroom as a student in the near future.

Joy Wetzel – Greenfield and Monadnock State Parks

Joy graduated from the University of Georgia in their hometown of Athens, Georgia. They are interested in museum studies and art history. Joy has a passion for indigenous history and is a main contributor to the DPP indigenous history research and curriculum. This position will take them far as they pursue opportunities that focus on art, history, and culture, with a focus on museum interpretation.



Full Time Staff

Davis Brush, Program Manager: Davis manages the general operations of NHCC, builds and maintains our partnerships for education and conservation, and ensures we continue to provide great service in the state of New Hampshire by maintaining AmeriCorps compliance.

Kate Banyas, Education Coordinator: Kate supervises and mentors the Interpretive Rangers. She is responsible for planning, coordinating, and leading the education trainings and supporting the AmeriCorps members throughout the season.

Zach Colatch, Conservation Coordinator: Zach coordinates all aspects of NHCC's conservation season, managing the Field Crew members, and working with Davis to build and maintain partnerships throughout NH. He also helps repair and maintain the historic facilities at Spruce Pond Camp that the NHCC has called its home base for 29 years.

Appendix A

2023 Spring Outreach Season by the Numbers

Spring Outreach Content Creation

After-School Programs (# of programs we provided lessons for)	8
School Programs (# of classrooms we provided lessons for)	101
Total number of lessons delivered (# of classrooms AND afterschool we provided lessons for)	109
Total number of programs delivered for both School and After-School (# of times we visited each school)	34

Spring Outreach School Partners

School Name	Town	Grade Level	Number of Classrooms	# of times we visited each classroom
Pembroke Hill Elementary School (series of programs)	Pembroke, NH	4 th	4	4
Allenstown Elementary School (series of programs)	Allenstown, NH	4 th	1	3
Deerfield Community School (series of programs)	Deerfield, NH	3 rd	3	4
Hooksett Memorial School (series of programs)	Hooksett, NH	3 rd	6	4
Hooksett Memorial School (series of programs)	Hooksett, NH	5 th	6	3
McDonough Elementary School (one program)	Manchester, NH	4 th	4	4
Webster Elementary School	Manchester, NH	4 th	3	4
	TOTAL # of programs offered			26

Spring Outreach After-School Program Partners

Afterschool Program	Location	# of times we visited these programs
Abbot-Downing School	Concord, NH	6
Girls. Inc Manchester	Manchester, NH	2
	TOTAL # of programs offered	8

Appendix B

2023 Discover the Power of Parks Programs – Programming and Visitation by the Numbers

Before exploring the numbers collected from the DPP programs, I wanted to clarify the definition of the language used to display our data.

Programs: These are DPP programs that are pre-scheduled opportunities for park visitors. Programs can include educational drop-in table programs as well as stationary, 45 minutes to hour-long programs, that have more of a “presenter” type of atmosphere.

Program Visitors: Program contacts are visitors that attended DPP programs.

Non-program Visitor Contacts: These interactions consist of our Interpretive Rangers engaging with guests outside of a scheduled DPP program in a visitor service capacity. This may include assisting with visitor questions and general guest services. This also includes “roving” to answer questions while hiking park trails. It is important to recognize how many park visitors are positively impacted by our Interpretive Rangers outside of the programming offered.

June 2023

DPP Programming and Visitation for June 18 th – July 1 st 2023			
Park	Number of Programs	Number of Program Visitors	Number of Non-Program Visitor Contacts
Franconia	24	1,139	252
Echo Lake	4	59	N/A
White Lake	11	210	58
Pawtuckaway	12	282	76
Mollidgewock	4	24	27
Umbagog	10	94	72
Ellacoya	5	37	17
Pillsbury	3	13	19
Sunapee	4	42	N/A
Bear Brook	10	134	39
Seacoast	8	138	N/A
Monadnock	14	371	37
Greenfield	10	123	46
TOTAL Numbers for the Month	119	2,666	643

July 2023

DPP Programming and Visitation for July 2nd – July 29th, 2023			
Park	Number of Programs	Number of Program Visitors	Number of Non-Program Visitor Contacts
Franconia	67	2,717	758
Echo Lake	12	198	N/A
White Lake	20	323	87
Pawtuckaway	13	157	42
Mollidgewock	10	48	23
Umbagog	31	280	237
Ellacoya	13	121	44
Pillsbury	3	12	13
Sunapee	13	283	42
Bear Brook	17	267	52
Seacoast	16	389	N/A
Monadnock	37	565	613
Greenfield	21	593	185
TOTAL Numbers for the Month	273	5,953	2,096

August 2023

DPP Programming and Visitation for July 30th – September 2nd, 2023			
Park	Number of Programs	Number of Program Visitors	Number of Non-Program Visitor Contacts
Franconia	95	4,602	1,715
Echo Lake	16	285	N/A
White Lake	29	481	154
Pawtuckaway	14	281	75
Mollidgewock	19	71	94
Umbagog	28	215	452
Pillsbury	8	13	26
Sunapee	12	219	51
Monadnock	44	721	1,215
Greenfield	30	500	264
TOTAL Numbers for the Month	295	7,388	4,046

September 2023

DPP Programming and Visitation for September 3rd – September 29th 2023			
Park	Number of Programs	Number of Program Visitors	Number of Non-Program Visitor Contacts
Franconia	102	3,975	2,069
Pawtuckaway	4	102	71
Miller	17	559	680
Monadnock	27	580	1,461
Bear Brook	13	225	108
TOTAL Numbers for the Month	163	5,441	4,389

October 2023

DPP Programming and Visitation for October 1st – October 10th 2023			
Park	Number of Programs	Number of Program Visitors	Number of Non-Program Visitor Contacts
Franconia	23	1,307	1,118
Pawtuckaway	2	13	5
Miller	7	542	792
Monadnock	12	207	515
Bear Brook	2	7	3
TOTAL Numbers for the Month	46	2,076	2,433

TOTALS for the 2023 DPP Season

896 Programs	23,542 Program Visitors	13,607 Non-Program Visitor Contacts
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Appendix C

2023 Fall Outreach by the numbers

Before exploring the numbers collected from the Fall Outreach programs, I wanted to clarify the definition of the language used to display our data.

Programs: 1 *program* is considered the actual hour-long visit. For example, Hooksett Memorial School has one day scheduled with 3 classes, so that is considered 3 programs. A single class or group may have participated in more than one program.

Contacts: 1 contact is a programmatic partner (organization/school/facility) that we worked with.

Program Participants: Total number of participants that attended our programs.

Total Numbers for Fall Outreach 2023

Fall Outreach Regions	Total Number of Programs Offered	Total Number of Contacts	Total Number of Program Participants
Monadnock Region	15 programs	7 contacts	173 participants
Southeast Region	26 programs	10 contacts	503 participants
Lakes Region	3 programs	2 contacts	70 participants
TOTAL for Fall Outreach Season	43 programs total	25 contacts total	652 participants total

Monadnock Region

Organization Type	Total Number of Contacts per Program Group
Libraries	2
Pre-K / Daycare	1
Senior/Assisted Living Homes	2
Museum Program	1
Town Rec.	1
Scout Group	1

Southeast Region

Organization Type	Total Number of Contacts per Program Group
Library	1
Public School	4
Scout Program	1
4H Program	1
BioBlitz Event	1
Afterschool Program	2

Lakes Region

Organization Type	Total Number of Contacts per Program Group
Libraries	2

Fall Outreach Partners 2023

TOTAL Organization types for all regions:	Partners (* represents that this partner had more than one contact)
Libraries	Holderness Library Gilford Memorial Library Tucker Free Library Olivia Rodham Library Gay-Kimbal Library
Public Schools	Allenstown Elementary School Hooksett Memorial School * Auburn Village Elementary School
Afterschool Programs	Boys & Girls Club Manchester Police Athletic League (MPAL)
Pre-K	Robin Nest Pre-School
Senior Assisted Living	River Mead Assisted Living Monadnock at Home Assisted Living
Scouts, 4H, Rec Departments, Conservancies & Museums	Deerfield 4H Hooksett Boy scouts Monadnock Area Girl Scouts Cheshire Children's Museum Antrim Rec Department
Events	BioBlitz – Seacoast