



**Discover the Power of Parks  
2010 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 Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) with program support from the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps).

**Program Overview**

Six 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 unmatched natural heritage. The parks included in this year’s program were: Pawtuckaway, Bear Brook, Greenfield, Monadnock, 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) and advertise the programs.

**Measuring Success**

When the Discover the Power of Parks was initially envisioned in 2007, there were several goals agreed upon by the collaborating partners. Those goals included:

- o Serving the environment
- o Driving economic development
- o Meeting state priorities



Serving the Environment

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:

	Program <u>Attendees</u>	Informal <u>Contacts</u>	Trail <u>Contacts</u>
Pawtuckaway	365		394
Bear Brook	344		246
Greenfield	355		552
Monadnock			3628
Franconia Notch	632	7055	890
White Lake	871		646
Fall Outreach	1055		

**Total Visitor Contact = 17,033**

## **Programs**

With guidance from the Education staff at the SCA NH and State Park staff, the interns created imaginative programs to connect families with the outdoors. The wide variety of educational programs offered included:

*Ponding* - Frogs, newts, mayflies and more. Ponding at Bear Brook; it's time to explore. "Wet" your appetite for discovery by searching for wildlife in a pond using nets, magnifying glasses, and terrariums. Plan on getting your feet a little wet. That's part of the fun.

*Get Outdoors* - What inspires you outdoors? This creative program will ask you to look at nature in a new way. A short guided hike to collect items for a collage, stopping along the way to sketch nature.

*Join the CCC* - In 1935 during the Great Depression, thousands of young men were recruited to the Civilian Conservation Corps, President Roosevelt's "Tree Army". Also in 1935 the NH State Park system was created. Come explore the contribution the CCC made at Bear Brook and many of our state parks.

*Forest Homes* - Let's take a walk on the wild side and explore the local fauna and their habitats. We will take a guided walk through the park and discuss animal homes. We'll stop in at a fox den, build a human-sized bird nest for you and your family and make tiny Tom-Thumb houses.

## **Fall Outreach**



This fall two interpreters offered programs to schools, community organizations, and clubs in the Greater Manchester and Concord area at no cost after Labor Day. Programs were offered on-site or at Bear Brook or Pawtuckaway State Parks. Fall programming was a huge success with all program slots taken. Program participants included the Manchester School District, the NH Veteran's Home, Homespun Home School Group, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning after school program. This program served over 1,055 participants! Program offered included:

*Animal Detectives* - Have you ever wondered what kinds of animals were around when you weren't looking? In this program, you'll become an animal detective to investigate the clues that animals leave behind. We'll explore tracks, scat and other animal "clues." You may even have the chance to create some animal clues of your own.

*The Incredible Edible Forest* - Get to know the woods like never before! Through exploration, crafts and games, we'll learn about the trees in our local forests and ways that people have used parts of the trees in the past and present. You may even get to sample a tasty forest treat.

*Ultimate Survivor* - What would you do if you were lost in the woods? In this program, you'll learn some of the basics of wilderness survival skills: from shelter building to navigating without a compass. The contents of this program will vary significantly based on the age level of participants.

#### Driving Economic Development

Tourism is a vital economic driver in New Hampshire and the State Park system plays a key role in providing recreational and educational opportunities for visitors and residents. Program participants were offered the opportunity to fill out a survey at random. The program and interpreters have consistently received high marks through the survey. While we have had some success attracting participation through our website, most participants are already in the park and learned about the program during their stay. Once introduced to the program, many guests attend more than one during their stay.

#### Meeting State Priorities

The parklands act as a "green magnet" for other attractions and businesses and are a vital economic driver in the state tourism economy. The Division is committed to providing high quality outdoor recreational opportunities to children and families. Interpretive programs allow exploration in a structured environment and introduce participants to important public lands.

#### *Great Park Pursuit*

For the fourth year the SCA NH Corps partnered with the Division to present the kick-off of the Great Park Pursuit, [www.nhgreatparkpursuit.com](http://www.nhgreatparkpursuit.com), a program to encourage New Hampshire families and visitors to enjoy all the recreational resources and outdoor activities New Hampshire's State Parks have to offer. Discover the Power of Parks interpretive staff working with other members of the NH Corps presented the day's activities and programming including s'more making, nature crafts, field games and interpretive programs. Over 69 teams, approximately 323 participants, attended.



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

Recruitment for six interns to provide programming at Bear Brook, Pawtuckaway, Monadnock, Greenfield, Franconia Notch and White Lake State Parks in 2011 has begun. Fall outreach programming will once again concentrate in the Merrimack Valley region where the SCA NH Corps has historic contacts with the Manchester school system and after-

school programming. 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. Increase communication among interpreters, park managers, and SCA Education Manager.
2. Improve internal and external advertising
3. Improve program scheduling
4. Improve data tracking for fall programming
5. Create evaluation plan for program

### **Selected Comments from Our Guests and Staff!**

“Jessica was excellent, very patient and caring with my daughter (8). I learned about frogs.” ~ Discover Ponding – Arlington, MA (02476)

“Great Stories. I learned a lot about a park right in my backyard.” ~ It Happened in Bear Brook – Suncook, NH (03275)

“Learning to walk in the dark was very cool. We wish we saw more animals. This is the best night. There are so many stars in the sky.” ~ Night Senses – Dedham, MA (02026)

“ We love our State Parks!” ~ Geology Hike – Bow, NH (03034)

"This program was well received and as we do this program from year to year people have been asking more questions which is great. This has been by far the best year for this program as well as the smoothest I have seen. Great job done by Peter this season will be hard to beat. PS Peter left the house in perfect shape very clean and orderly" - Arthur Charbonneau, White Lake State Park Manager

"We posted some of the day programs down at our day use area and actually got some good participation from day visitors we may want list the program in the day beach area of the parks in the program." - Harry Sloan, Greenfield State Park Manager

"The interpretive programming continues to be a huge help at Monadnock, not only for the chances to enhance visitor experiences and share knowledge, but for the support to the staff and mountain patrollers. Its a mutually beneficial and effective asset to Monadnock." - Patrick Hummel, Monadnock State Park Manager

"This program has drawn more families to camping here and has helped in getting more return visits from them." - Harry Sloan, Greenfield State Park Manager

"Definitely adds to camping experience for campers." - Tara Mayo, Pawtuckaway State Park Manager