



## Discover the Power of Parks 2012 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

Four 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: 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:

- Serving the environment
- Driving economic development
- 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:

	<u>Program Attendees</u>	<u>Informal Contacts</u>
Greenfield	623	2,233
Monadnock	28	6,282
Franconia Notch	1,139	7,926
White Lake	759	1,383
Fall Programs	751	
	<u>3,300</u>	<u>17,824</u>

**Total Visitor Contact = 21,124**

2012 marks the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the program partnership between PSNH-SCA-NH Parks and a look back at the program and the numbers of guests served is important:

Park	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Program	Contact										
Bear Brook	125		158	163			344	246	264	369		
Pawtuckaway	228		365	216	393	545	365	394	772	283		
Greenfield	1,200		813	630	267	367	355	552	336	465	623	2,233
Monadnock		24,000	321	9,890	57	3,230		3,628		3,289	28	6,282
Franconia	587	6,950	847	8,167	485	2,200	632	7,945	1,181	4,600	1,139	7,926
White Lake			580		955	845	871	646	542	255	759	1,383
Fall			245		55		1,055		364		757	
Total	32,730		22,345		10,113		17,033		12,786		21,124	

### *Programs*

With guidance from the Education staff at the SCA NH Corps 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.

#### Round the Campfire

The stories that populate New England are innumerable. Join Ranger Stamati 'round the campfire as he regales you with tales guaranteed to make you say, "Huh" in one way or another. Freaky Friday Edition: Our tales take a frightening and surprisingly local turn on Friday the 13th!

#### The Sand(wich) Between Your Toes

As you bathe in the crystalline waters of White Lake, feeling the sand beneath your feet, have you ever wondered exactly what it is you dig your toes into? Did you ever think your feet could be covered in an old Sandwich? If you think that's ridiculous, think again! Join us for a story of the mountains, the lake, and the forces that shaped them and continue to shape them.

#### Camp Like a Champ

Every one loves a champion, especially when it comes to camping. Learn how to be at your best through Leave No Trace ethics when camping in front country or backcountry, and maybe you too can become a CAMPION!

#### Firefly Fireworks

Have you ever seen a firefly glow like a firework at night? Have you ever wondered how and why they light up? Meet at the Lafayette Place Campground Amphitheater and find out how fireflies use light to communicate! A short firefly walk will also be included.

#### Flume Detectives

Who discovered the Flume? Why does it have stuff growing all over it? Uncover the answers to these questions on a scavenger hunt along the Flume Gorge walk. Find the table in the Flume Gorge and Visitor Center to begin unlocking the secrets of the Flume.

### Summit Lichens: The Relationship Experts

They are small, love sunlight, grow barely a millimeter each year, and surprisingly, cannot live on their own! Come join me on a ridge trail hike at the top of Cannon Mountain to learn more about Summit Lichens, the relationship experts. You will learn about lichen, what it is used for and why it is so important to humans! Knowing about nature's relationship expert will open up your eyes to a whole new side of the forest!

### Pond-emonium!

There is a whole different world right at the pond's edge! Nets and basins will be provided as we explore life in the pond and search of creatures such as frogs, snakes, dragonflies, salamanders and many more. Ready. Set. Feet wet! Come enjoy this wonderful adventure with Ranger Jonathan. All ages welcome!

### Makes Sense

Ever wonder what your senses are doing when you walk through the wild and wooly woods? We will be journeying through a select spot at Greenfield State Park. You will notice we don't have to go far to get our senses in tip-top condition! See, smell, taste, touch, and even taste your way through nature on this ranger-led program that will teach anyone interested to use their senses when hiking or even in their own backyard!

### Nature's Recipes

Join Ranger Jonathan as we discover the bountiful feasts in the woods of Greenfield State Park, learn what foods and medicines nature provides for us while being respectful of the land. Meet at Interpretive Circle.

### *Fall Outreach*

Interpretive programs were offered to schools, community organizations, and clubs in the Greater Merrimack Valley Area at no cost after Labor Day. In addition, the Monadnock interpreters visited local schools groups prior to their visit to talk about Hike Safe principals.

### *Social Media Outreach*

This summer the interns took turns providing blog posts each week which provided a special glimpse into the parks the interns were serving at and their experiences in NH. These posts were shared through our other social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. The blogs are archived under each author at, <http://www.nhstateparks.org/whats-happening/discover-the-power-of-parks/interpreters.aspx>.

### **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. Most participants learn about the programs at registration or internal advertizing, however, many reported learning about the programs prior to their stay from the website, Twitter and community advertizing. 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.

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

Funding for six interns has been restored and recruitment has begun to provide programming at Bear Brook, Pawtuckaway, Monadnock, Greenfield, Franconia Notch and White Lake State Parks for 2013. In addition, the SCA has submitted a grant application to expand the program to two North Country location; Lake Francis State Park and Umbagog State Park. 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. Reach out to host community organizations to bring their programs to the parks.
5. Offer programs to youth groups camping in the parks.
6. Strengthen the program by diversifying funding partners.

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

“Very fun and cool to see all the creatures living in the pond” ~ Pepperell MA

“I had so much fun, thank you for making camping so, so, so much fun!” ~ Norfolk MA

“I think it is important that the State Parks offers some programs like this it creates a family atmosphere and makes guests feel like they are part of the experience here at the park as well as more enjoyable.”

- Art Charbonneau, Park Manager at White Lake State Park

“This is a wonderful program that continues to grow. I believe that it adds to guests experiences and believe that the passion from the Interpreters helped entertain and engage our guests.”

- Julianne Ireland, Park Contact at Franconia Notch State Park