

Student Conservation Association New Hampshire Conservation Corps 2023 Field Season Report



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About SCA

The mission of SCA is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.

SCA was founded in 1957 by Elizabeth Titus Putnam, a college student with a big dream. “Visionary” accurately describes Liz. Launching an American conservation movement powered exclusively by young people would be ambitious today, but considering that she conceived of the idea in 1957—at age 20—makes her all the more remarkable. While still attending Vassar College, Liz modeled SCA after the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps and enlisted student volunteers to assist with the upkeep of U.S. national parks and public spaces. Sixty years and 100,000 participants later, SCA is not only a stalwart presence in national parks but also a potent partner of other federal, state and local resource management agencies around the country, helping to protect endangered species, conserve urban green spaces, and restore landscapes ravaged by wildfires and floods.

SCA programs serve the communities and land throughout the nation by accomplishing significant conservation service projects that enhance and protect natural areas. SCA programs also provide educational opportunities to promote the understanding, protection and stewardship of these natural areas. The four programmatic outcomes are taken directly from the mission: Service, Leadership, Conservation and Stewardship.

Program Summary

The SCA New Hampshire Conservation Corps (NHCC) is a partnership between the Student Conservation Association, The New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and AmeriCorps. Since 1994, NHCC has provided nearly one million hours of service to the lands and people of New Hampshire. Each year, volunteers contribute tens of thousands of service hours, providing environmental education programming to the state’s residents and visitors, and completing conservation service projects that improve and protect the state’s recreational, environmental, and cultural resources.

The mission of NHCC is to serve the communities and lands of New Hampshire while building the members’ leadership and technical skills in the conservation field. In the tradition of the Civilian Conservation Corps, NHCC members perform direct hands-on service while developing their ethic of service and citizenship. These highly motivated young adults, typically 18-27 years of age, enhance and protect natural areas through environmental education programs, interpretive ranger programs, and conservation stewardship activities that include trail and recreational management projects as well other land and historic preservation projects.

Each year the NHCC AmeriCorps program welcomes members to Bear Brook State Park to serve and learn in its residential program. For 2023, the program welcomed 9 Interpretive Rangers and 16 Field Crew Members. The Field Crew Members arrived to form 3 rotating field crews and overlapped with the Interpretive Rangers for several week of training.

Field Crews receive several weeks of skills trainings before heading out into the field to partner with N.H. State Parks, White Mountain National Forest, local conservation commissions, land trusts, and state-wide nonprofits to provide conservation stewardship throughout the state; from the great north woods to the White Mountains and the seacoast. The high priority conservation projects that the NHCC crews complete include trail construction and maintenance (rock work, native timber, dimensional lumber bridges, and other traditional trail building and maintenance techniques), carpentry projects constructing visitor use structures such as camp shelters, and some habitat restoration, invasive species removal, and historic preservation.

Partnerships

This year NH Conservation Corps partnered with five agencies and organizations to carry out 27 projects. The largest partner was NH State Parks, with crews serving in 18 parks completing 15 hitches. NHCC partnered with the USFS on the White Mountain National Forest for eight hitches and two non-profit land managers for four hitches, and a town conservation commission for one hitch. These land management partners are critical to NH Corps' success and the opportunities they offer members are the core of the program's skill development and service focus.

2023 Partner Agencies & Organizations:

- NH State Parks – Serving in 18 parks
- White Mountain National Forest serving on all 3 districts
- Monadnock Conservancy
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Antrim Conservation Commission

These partners and projects allowed members to experience the beauty of public lands throughout NH. From Rye Harbor on the seacoast to Mt. Monadnock, and from Umbagog Lake to the wilderness areas of the White Mountain National Forest, members served all over New Hampshire. This diversity of locations and project partners helps members learn about different conservation agencies, positions, and career opportunities.

Training



Trails Skills Derby – an SCA classic! Last day of trails training when crews construct mini trail networks to put their new trail knowledge to the test.



Carpentry Training at Moose Brook State Park. Members construct the frame for a camping shelter.

The program dives right into training season to prepare members for the field. Through a combination of formal training and certification courses, hands-on field instruction on real-time projects, and supervised follow-up training, members go through nearly two months of skill development prior to the start of the field project season. Most of this happens as a training-through-service model, as the bulk of training is spent completing projects on public lands.

Advanced Wilderness Responder (WFR): Spruce Pond Camp

- The course was put on by Aerie Backcountry Medicine based in Missoula, Montana. Through this eight-day training, members learn important information to both treat, but also prevent, injuries and illness during the program. With this being the first training following SCA orientation, it serves as a great bonding opportunity for the member group.

Camp Skills & Leave No Trace

- Following WFR, members headed to Wellington State Park to learn a wide range of skills for both frontcountry camping and backcountry wilderness camping. Skill stations covered everything from using propane cook stoves and GPS communication devices to how to set up tents and filtering drinking water. Members also earned Leave No Trace Trainer certificates while going through training on reducing impact and being mindful while recreating, working, and camping outdoors.

Game of Logging: Bear Brook State Park

- Two instructors from Northeast Woodland Training led sixteen members through Levels 1 & 2 chainsaw safety and operation. The training took place at Spruce Pond Camp in Bear Brook and covered felling, bucking, and limbing. SCA staff then worked with members for follow-up and continued skill development. The trees that were felled were then processed for firewood.



Conservation Work Skills: Bear Brook State Park

- Four instructors led a week of trail training projects on four trails in Bear Brook where members rotated through all projects. Skill stations included trail design and construction, native timber, stonework, and trail tread and drainage. The projects were priority maintenance needs in the park and improved the trails for visitors. The program built in a work skills follow-up week that allowed members to complete all initiated projects as well as tackle a dimension lumber bridge in the park.

Carpentry: Moose Brook State Park

- In continuing what has become a training standard for NHCC, program staff taught carpentry skill proficiency through the construction of two Adirondack-style camping shelters. The training focused on reading plans, inventorying materials, developing a project strategy, assessing risks, learning tool safety and use and then immediately putting those skills and knowledge to use. Because this is a training project, the goal is only to construct the frames of the shelters and members completed the shelters during a regular season hitch.



Other trainings:

- Rigging & Griphoist Systems
- Van & Truck Operation
- Trailer Towing
- Exterior Painting
- Menu Planning & Field Cooking
- Leadership Skills
- Conflict Resolution
- Identity and Inclusion
- Project Reporting & Documentation
- Tool Maintenance

Spring Hitch with NH State Parks

Every year NHCC partners with State Parks midway through our training season to field three crews in three regions of the park system: Southern, Central, and Great North Woods. This is a fantastic opportunity for members to hit the field following weeks of training and content, so that they can put their new skills to use while getting out of Bear Brook and seeing the state. It is also perfect timing for NH State Parks to have extra hands to assist with campground and park preparation for the season. Crews rove parks within each region to complete priority projects including campsite and beach cleanup focusing on clearing down trees and debris from the winter, opening trail corridors around day use and campground areas, painting visitor use structures, repairing picnic tables, and other general tasks. Crews typically move campsites several times allowing for practice setting up and breaking camp, meeting project partners, seeing new ways of doing things, and challenging themselves to get everything to fit in the SCA van again. Following Spring Hitch, members return to structured trainings for nearly another month to continue preparing for the regular hitch season.

Hitches & Peer Leadership

During the 2023 season, the New Hampshire Conservation Corps fielded crews for 27 hitches throughout the state. A “hitch” is an 11-day project trip during which a crew serves and camps at or near the project site. The crews return to the Spruce Pond Camp NHCC program site located in Bear Brook State Park for three days off between hitches, with each member participating in a total of nine hitches over the season. There are three crews of per hitch and members are scrambled around each hitch, allowing all members to work together throughout the season.

NHCC field crews practice the peer-leadership model. Through this each member serves as a leader among their program peers as well as being led by their peers. All members led either two or three times. The Conservation Coordinator takes each member’s project and career interests into account while assigning leaders, so that members can both challenge themselves and walk away from the program with relevant experience. Equally important to the leadership role is that of active participant. NHCC promotes the concept of active participation by all members to further develop skills through initiative, sharing of ideas, and being a team contributor.

Below are brief summaries of the season’s hitch projects:

Trail & Visitor Use Facilities Improvements

Rollins State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Warner, NH

Partner: Erik Nelson—Central Region Manager, NH State Parks



NH Corps was excited to serve at Rollins State Park for the first time in years to help park staff address backlogged maintenance needs. This lovely small park is situated on the south slope of Mt. Kearsarge and the crew worked on the Rollins Trail, which leads to the summit. This wide trail is constructed with ledgepack gravel and has lumber culverts, which were deteriorated. The crew rebuilt two culverts (one in photo), cleared drains, built a water bar, and imported ledgepack to resurface the trail. In addition to the Rollins Trail, the crew tackled a variety of other park needs including rebuilding picnic tables, painting the park office, and existing picnic tables, and replacing a small deck. This was a great opportunity for the members to put their skills to use following the training season and they enjoyed the short hike to the summit to soak in the beautiful view most days.

Group Site Camping Shelters

Moose State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Gorham, NH

Partner: Jon Bergeron—Park Manager



It has become a program custom in recent years to begin the construction of two Adirondack style camp shelters during carpentry training and then return for a hitch to complete the structures. These were the first shelters at the newly created group campsites at Moose Brook and will complement the existing shelters at the nearby main campground. This is the perfect pairing of meeting a public desire for additional visitor use structures and member skill development through service. The shelters require group decision making and teamwork as they consult blueprints, make precise cuts, and use a wide variety of power tools. State Parks staff were very helpful as we navigated materials issues and dealt with a rainy week.

North Twin Trail Reroute (3 Hitches)

Pemigewasset Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest – USFS

Location: Twin Mountain, NH

Partner: Mike Mosley – Trails Manager



This was an exciting and highly rewarding project to address a river crossing issue on the North Twin Trail through a relocation. The trail crossed the river three times and with seasonal water levels it can be a treacherous hike. The idea of this reroute was to formalize part of an existing fisherman's trail and connect that to the trail further up. This new section of trail ultimately cut out the need for river crossings.

In addition to corridor and tread work, the crews built stone stairs, set stepping stones, and constructed a hybrid rock and lumber stair section to guide the trail up a steep bank while protecting from erosion and flooding. There were two areas where rigging was required to move large rocks to fill cavities in the trail on a sidehill, and this was an excellent learning experience for the crews to use rigging in a highly technical scenario. Overall, this was a fantastic project that was enjoyed by thirteen NHCC members. The worksite was along the Little River and provided beautiful lunch spots and views. A highlight was working with the Forest Service trail crew, which included two NHCC 2022 alumni!

Rattle River Trail Improvement

White Mountain National Forest, Androscoggin Ranger District – USFS

Location: Shelburne, NH

Partner: Nate Peters – Dispersed Recreation Manager



The members on this crew were thrilled to get out into the backcountry. The Rattle River Trail is a 4.3-mile segment of the Appalachian Trail and the crew, working closely with the Andro trails staff, was tasked with triaging high priority maintenance needs caused by erosion and users widening the trail to avoid wet spots. The trail was gullied in several areas and the crew added drainage and retention structures to improve the tread, retain material, and get water off the trail. These included check steps, stepping stones, and gargoyles to guide hikers. The crew also built and maintained drain dips, water bars, and open drains. They also placed woody debris in areas to close side trails and guide hikers onto the trail. The crew's work will contribute to a decrease in trail erosion, cut down on social trails, and improve the hiking experience. It was a rainy two weeks, and while the crew ran into issues on their daily commute from the Rattle River Shelter, when the river was too high to safely cross, the challenges posed by the weather brought everyone closer together.

Pawtuckaway Group Site Camping Shelter

Pawtuckaway State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Nottingham, NH

Partners: Dave Richardson – Park Manager



Members brought their familiarity and skills from carpentry training and the earlier hitch constructing the Moose Brook shelters to Pawtuckaway to build the first shelter of this design in the park. The group site where the shelter was constructed is a peninsula and offers beautiful lake views on three sides and privacy from other campsites. The sites, which had uneven ground and posed challenges for multiple tents being set up, will now offer guests more options for camping as well as a communal meeting spot with cover from the elements. The shelter was positioned over a large, depressed area of ground that wasn't usable for tent camping and therefore adds to the site without taking away flat ground.

Campbell Pond Loop Trail

Antrim Conservation Commission – Town of Antrim

Location: Antrim, NH

Partner: Peter Beblowski – Commission Chair



This was NHCC's first partnership with the town of Antrim and was an opportunity for a crew to work with a conservation commission. There was an identified need for a trail around Campbell Pond, which is a beautiful, secluded pond surrounded by forest that is owned by the town and under a conservation easement with the Monadnock Conservancy. The pond area is utilized by a few hearty hikers and those willing to haul their canoes and fishing rods in. The goal of the trail was to offer the residents of Antrim a loop around the pond to see a variety of forest types while using a defined and enjoyable trail. The crew began by opening the corridor with chainsaws, brushsaws, and pole saws with at least one member realizing the brushsaw was her favorite tool! They then dug tread and began hauling lumber to construct 12 bog bridges and one decked native timber spanning bridge on the 1.7-mile trail. The crew persevered through one of the rainiest hitches of the season and dealt with a flooded campsite, muddy access road, and wet boots like champions. Peter kindly brought the crew produce from his garden and daily ice refills for their coolers.

White Cross Trail Improvements

Monadnock State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Jaffrey, NH

Partners: Will Kirkpatrick – Park Manager



This was the fourth consecutive year of service at the park, with the first year of this stretch having been awarded the national 2020 Coalition for Recreation Trails Award (Youth & Young Adult Service category) for the 5 hitches completed at Monadnock during the 2019 season. Having set a high standard for the program, this crew continued the legacy and accomplished a wide array of project work.

Leaders worked with Park Manager Will Kirkpatrick to complete several projects including repairing stone stairs, adding new stairs, defining the trail tread to keep hikers on the path, and cleaning drainage structures. The hitch started with the focus on resetting a failing staircase that was gradually sliding downhill. After this was completed, the crew set another nine stairs, constructed two small rock walls, and set a whopping forty-one gargoyle rocks to define the trail corridor. NHCC crews are always treated to the best at Monadnock, and the campsite and accommodations were terrific. The two NHCC Interpretive Rangers based at the park were able to hang with the crews and reconnect.

Androscoggin Backcountry Site Assessments

Androscoggin Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest – USFS

Location: Roving Androscoggin District south of Gorham, NH

Partner: Nate Peters – Dispersed Recreation Manager



The crew loaded up their backpacks, left hand tools behind and hiked the entirety of three wilderness areas of the Andro to complete backcountry campsite assessments. Armed with a Forest Service tablet, pre-loaded with maps and location pins, the crew reached 53 backcountry campsites in the Great Gulf, Caribou Speckled and Wild River Wilderness areas. The sites are user-developed campsites that are being assessed for use and impact so the Forest Service can update their information and plan for future projects to close sites. Once a site was reached the crew would complete an assessment and record the information. When a site with a fire pit was found the crew removed the pit and naturalized the area of disturbance. The crew set and broke camp several times and had the pleasure of hiking and experiencing some of the most beautiful areas in the White Mountains. The project was well suited for the crew as hiking in the backcountry was a goal for many when joining the SCA.

Cranberry Meadow Pond Trail Improvements

Monadnock Conservancy

Location: Peterborough, NH

Partner: Janine Marr – Land and Recreation Manager



NHCC was excited to return to the Cranberry Meadow Pond Trail in Peterborough to continue improving and developing the trail. The crew had several goals, beginning with rehabilitating and shoring up the boardwalk on which a 2021 NHCC crew helped construct the foundation. The boardwalk wasn't fully completed and there was a need to add cross bracing, clean up untrimmed boards, and replaced warped deck boards. While half the crew was accomplishing these improvements on the 418' boardwalk, the others went further down the trail to haul in lumber and construct 46' of bog bridging and a 20' decked native timber spanning bridge through a wet muddy area. The trail is a beautiful and easily accessible hike in Peterborough and the continued efforts by the Conservancy to improve access and safety have made it something that everyone can enjoy.

Salt Marsh Observation Platform

Odiorne Point State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Rye, NH

Partners: Meredith Collins – Seacoast Region Supervisor



Odiorne Point State Park offers many exciting experiences for visitors including the Seacoast Science Center, WWII era bunkers, and of course the waterfront views and beautiful picnic areas. A lesser-known area of the park lies across Route 1A and offers views of the salt marsh and trails through the unique coastal woodland. It was in this area where an SCA crew demolished a dilapidated observation platform and replaced it with a new and improved platform. This dovetails nicely with other improvements that the park has done including removing invasive species, restoring a historic cemetery, and trail improvements. The platform was designed with a more robust foundation than the previous structure, which had collapsed in the middle. It was built to ADA accessibility standards and is nestled under large white pine trees tucked in the shade near the marsh. From the platform, visitors can see the hay saddles on which the salt marsh hay, rich in nutrients, was historically stacked to dry. The crew loved this project and saw tons of wildlife while working on the platform and swam in the nearby ocean daily.

Saco Backcountry Campsite Assessments & Rehabilitation

Saco Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest – USFS

Location: Presidential-Dry River Wilderness

Partners: Becky Huncilman – Backcountry Wilderness Supervisor



This opportunity to day trip into backcountry areas of the Saco Ranger District was an exciting change of pace for the crew. The crew tackled a list of needs provided by project partner Becky Huncilman including demolishing a decommissioned bridge on the Rocky Branch Ski Trail, assisting with lumber removal on a demolished bridge on the Nanamocomuck Ski Trail, clearing brush surrounding the Black Mountain Cabin, and opening 4.5 miles of corridor along the Sawyer Pond Trail. Weather posed challenges throughout the hitch and some modifications of the work plan were necessary, however the crew's motivation didn't waver, and they greatly appreciated Becky's daily presence and guidance. Their campsite at Anise Field alongside the Swift River was a major highlight as well.

Roving Trail Maintenance

Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)

Location: Androscoggin Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest – USFS

Partners: Alex DeLucia – Director of Trails



NH Corps was excited to contribute to the ongoing "level one maintenance" of trails on the White Mountain National Forest. Among the long list of infrastructure improvement projects that happen on trails, a perennial high priority need is the reopening of corridor to make trails visible, to keep hikers on the trail thereby protecting the areas nearby, and to improve the hiker experience. The crew began on the York Pond Trail and worked to the junction with Kilkenny Ridge Trail, a 2.4-mile section. Next came the Kilkenny Ridge Trail from South Pond to Rodger's Ledge, a 4.5-mile section. The crew found the project to be very satisfying to see their work at the end of the week and how much of a difference clearing corridor can make. The accommodations at AMC's Camp Dodge facilities were a major highlight and a welcomed break from camping in tents.

Saco River Dam Renovation (2 Hitches)

Crawford Notch State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Harts Location, NH

Partner: John Dickerman – Park Manager; Erik Nelson – Central Region Supervisor



Rebuilding the Saco River Dam Bridge was one of the largest undertakings of the season and was a thrill for all members involved. Located across from the Willey House visitor center and park headquarters at Crawford Notch State Park, the dam was built to create a lovely pond with picnic areas alongside and a walkway was constructed atop the dam to allow visitors to cross the river. The bridge atop the dam connects the park HQ and parking areas to trails and picnic areas on the other side, while also offering an awesome structure for folks to stand on to take in the views of the rock faces and peaks all around. The first crew began on the ramp nearest the road and each day removed only the portions of the structure that they would replace that day, allowing the public to still access the bridge in the evenings. The foundation of the bridge that creates the dam was sound and did not require replacement, so SCA's work focused on replacing decking, posts, and railings. Some minor modifications to the plans were necessary and provided the crews opportunities to troubleshoot and think creatively about solutions. The far end of the bridge does not have railings (seen in foreground of photo on right) is the spillway for the pond and the second crew lifted the 10x10 stringers with jacks to replaced failed piers and releveled the deck. Ultimately, the crews rebuilt 235' of the bridge and filled two 40-yard dumpsters with debris. While difficult to see in the photos, there are two tension wire rails on the top of the posts that allow better views. The crews had a blast working on the project and found the accommodations luxurious by trail crew standards. Three weddings were witnessed by the crews, and numerous anniversaries were celebrated by visitors that had been married at the spot, adding to the sense of being in a celebrated and beloved setting.

Backcountry Site Monitoring

Pemigewasset Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest – USFS

Location: Lincoln, NH

Partners: Mike Benson – Backcountry Wilderness Manager; Mike Mosley – Trails Manager



The Pemigewasset Trail Crew had previously documented thirty illegal campsites located in the wilderness areas of the Pemi District. The crew then monitored the sites, hiking to each site, to “brush in” and close the disturbed areas. This was done by dragging brush and dead trees into the campsites to renaturalize them and discourage further illegal camping. The crew recorded the updated site conditions in the Samsung tablet that the project partner provided. They also closed off both entrances to the Franconia Brook bushwhack trail. The crew was hiking in the Pemigewasset wilderness and crossing the Pemi River most mornings to hike further into the wilderness to reach the sites. They hiked a total of 102 miles over the course of the hitch. The members enjoyed the opportunity to hike and explore the wilderness areas and particularly enjoyed the second week's campsite which was located next to the river. The daily hiking is challenging but highly rewarding and this hitch was a highlight for the crew.

Seacoast Region Parks Improvements

Odiorne Point & Rye Harbor State Parks, Fort Stark State Historic Site – NH State Parks

Location: Rye, NH

Partners: Meredith Collins – Seacoast Region Supervisor



Several projects were tackled by this crew as they jumped around the seacoast parks and soaked up the early September sunshine. Based out of Odiorne Point State Park in Rye, the crew began by demolishing a collapsing observation platform overlooking the marsh at Odiorne (this was a second, separate platform from the earlier hitch at OPSP). They hauled the lumber to a staging area where they loaded it onto a trailer to be hauled away. The crew then continued its demolition work by removing the old toll booth at Rye Harbor State Park. The large booth had been boarded up since the mid-2010's and was replaced by online payment. Also demolished was a bridge at Awcomin Marsh in preparation for the crew to rebuild it. That new bridge spanned 10' and was built by the crew to connect the trail to a viewing platform overlooking the marsh and Duddy Stream. To complete the hitch, the crew spent time at Fort Stark State Historic Site cutting back brush from the chain link fencing surrounding the harbor control post, bunkers, and batteries. This natural debris removal totaled more than 5,800 ft².

Saco District Roving Trail Projects

Saco Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest, USFS

Location: Conway, NH

Partner: Cristin Bailey – Trails Manager



It is always a pleasure when a crew gets to work with Cristin Bailey and the Saco District trail crew. During this hitch the crew worked on several projects including relocating a 350' section of the Fireline Trail in the Moat Mountain biking trail network, completing a 600' trail reroute on the Wentworth Trail in Sandwich, clearing corridor on the Church Pond Trail, pruning half an acre of an apple orchard on the historic site of Brickett House, and finally working on drainage, blowdowns, and level one trail maintenance on the Mt. Kearsarge North Trail. For a large portion of the hitch the Saco Trail Crew worked alongside the SCA crew, offering priceless instruction and support as well as morale boosting energy. The crew loved camping at Mead Explorer Base camp in Sandwich for part of the hitch and found it a peaceful and restoring site in the evenings.

Old Bridal Path Rock Stairs

Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)

Location: Franconia, NH – White Mountain National Forest, USFS

Partner: Deva Steketee – Project Manager



It was an honor to contribute to the extensive multi-year effort to restore the Old Bridal Path Trail alongside the AMC, USFS, professional contractors, volunteers, and other conservation corps that worked on the trail this year. This crew joined the project later in the season and were able to hike the beautiful stairs that had been constructed throughout the summer, which was both awe inspiring and informative into the techniques being used and the expectations for quality. Our crew set numerous hand-split steps, most of which were split by the AMC crew but one of our members spent a day splitting steps as well, which involved using a rock drill along with feathers and wedges. The crew also spent a fair amount of the hitch making crush, hauling rock, revegetating, and brushing in impacted quarry sites. The crew worked alongside an AMC crew, and they were helpful in getting the SCA folks up to speed on the worksite, standards, and general process. This was a unique learning opportunity to work on professional grade rock work on one of the most popular trails in the region.

White Lake Loop Trail Bridges

White Lake State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Tamworth, NH

Partner: Erik Nelson – Central Region Supervisor



The loop trail around the lake in White Lake State Park is a popular family friendly hike that takes hikers through a variety of forest types with views of the lake, mountains, and wildlife. The trail is situated only a few feet higher than the lake and therefore floods seasonally and has issues with standing water and muddy areas. The crew's goal was to raise the tread by constructing various styles of bridging to improve the hiking experience for visitors while also protecting the surrounding areas, as hikers were widening the trail to avoid mud. The crew first built two spanning lumber bridges, 16' and 20', before building 18 bog bridges totaling 145' and clearing several blowdowns. Getting the lumber to the sites was a major consideration, and park staff assisted in hauling the lumber on boats and delivering it right to the worksites. The crew helped with this and loved the opportunity to boat across the lake while being able to look back at the trail from a different vantage point.

North Mountain Trail Stairs

Pawtuckaway State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Nottingham, NH

Partner: Dave Richardson – Park Manager



Returning for the third hitch this season to Pawtuckaway, this was a unique opportunity to work on trails in the park. This was a rock work project on the North Mountain Trail and centered around the construction of a large rock staircase. The trail was undefined and eroded and presented hikers with a slippery rock slab to traverse, which led to the creation of a user trail around the area. The crew worked to move large rocks, using rigging equipment, that were heavy enough to lock into place without being fully set into the ground. The rock slab prevented digging on the right side of the stairs and the crew worked to lock steps in place by sheer weight and high contact with other rocks. They then built a rock water bar above the staircase to reduce erosion and protect the stairs. The staircase offers a clear path up the trail and directs the public to the safest path up.

Arethusa Falls Trail Timber Stairs

Crawford Notch State Park – NH State Parks

Location: Harts Location, NH

Partner: John Dickerman – Park Manager and Erik Nelson – Central Region Supervisor



Before & After



Autumn is a lovely time to be serving on the Arethusa Falls Trail, especially when the main project site is within earshot of the falls! This crew made the daily trek to the section of trail that descends to the falls just below the junction with the Arethusa Falls and Ripley Falls/Frankensteen Cliff Trail. This section is very narrow and benched into the side hill. Due to erosion and the deterioration of existing timber structures, the footing is challenging, and hikers had to traverse 3' drops, slippery rock slabs, and exposed roots. All of this led to traffic jams as hikers waited on opposing traffic and safety concerns. The crew identified the worst areas and felled spruce trees to begin constructing retaining structures that would both hold material and provide better walking surfaces. In the end, the crew built 4 timber crib step boxes, 3 timber check steps, a 20' timber retaining wall, reset a rock culvert, built an 8' bog bridge, hardened 160' of tread, removed hazard trees with staff assistance, and cleared blowdowns.



Service Data



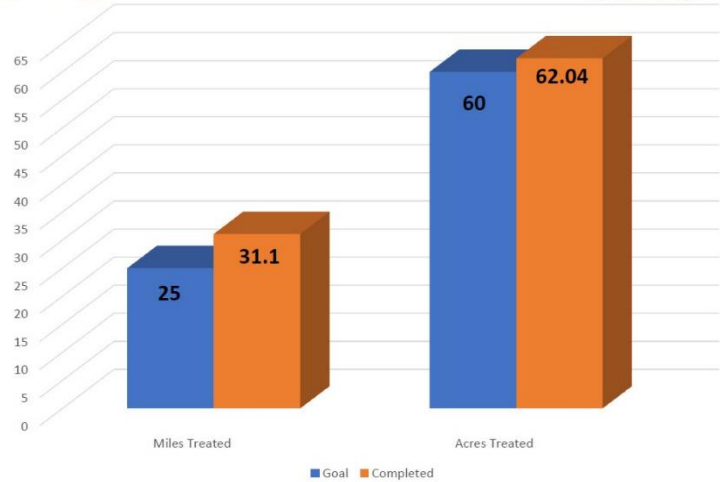
Approximate project locations



AmeriCorps Targets



AmeriCorps



Spruce Pond Camp Improvements:

- 5 Buildings Painted including nearby CCC Museum at BBSP Depot
- 1 Winter Cabin Stairs Rebuilt
- 1 Summer Cabin Foundation Reset
- 15 Acres of Brush Cleared & Chipped
- 34 Hazard Trees Removed Along Road
- 19,000 ft² of Building Roof Maintenance/Sweeping



Open Space Maintenance & Improvement

- 33 Acres of Natural Debris Removal from camp sites, view sheds, parks
- 32,600 ft² Shoreline Improvements
- 83 Backcountry Sites Assessed
- 35 Illegal Campsites Closed & Revegetated

Carpentry

- 3 Camping Shelters Built
- 1 Observation Platform Built
- 4 Kiosks Built
- 418' of Boardwalk Rehabilitated
- 235' x 4' Saco River Dam Bridge Rebuilt

Trail Maintenance

- 8,870' of New Trail
- 14.5 Miles of Trail Cleared
- 1,907' of Tread Resurfaced/Hardened
- 84 Rock & Timber Stairs Built
- 127 Rock Gargoyles Installed
- 31 Bog Bridges Built
- 14 Spanning Bridges Constructed
- 55 Drainage Structures Maintained
- 33 Drainages Structures Built

...and many more accomplishments totaling in

18,126 Total Field Crew Hours!

Crew Experience Highlights

“While the crew went out for ice cream, another customer spotted a crew member wearing his SCA uniform. This customer shared how her daughter was in the SCA and how grateful she is for everything the SCA does.”

-Liam Smith

“During a workday, a wedding took place across the Willey Pond. The members applauded as the bride and groom kissed and the entire wedding crowd waved at the members. Another highlight was a surprise visit from state parks architect, Tom Mansfield. He elaborated upon his plans for the bridge and helped deconstruct the old one.”

-Willey House Dam Bridge Crew

“As a crew leader, witnessing the team celebrating and being proud of each other’s accomplishment was a highlight for me and I assumed the team felt the same pride.”

-Rollins SP leader Thu Le

“We had wonderful weather and all slept multiple nights without a rain fly sleeping beneath the stars and waking to the sun rise over the lake. Our last night at the campground was a full super moon that we all walked to the shore and watched illuminate the sky and reflect off the lake.”

-Matt Pilliod, Pawtuckaway Crew Leader

“The last highlight I would like to mention was while we were hiking down the trail. While hiking down we passed a group of ladies that we saw earlier during the day. The kind hikers clapped and cheered for us as we were hiking down with our equipment, and it brought a smile on the crew’s face.”

-Arethusa Falls Trail Crew



Scenes from Bear Corps! At the end of the season, once both Field Crews and Interpretive Rangers had returned to Spruce Camp, everyone came together for a spirited day of friendly competitions and games. This was to thank and celebrate the accomplishments of the members over the course of the programmatic season.

Partner Comments of Project Value

“The crew has restored safe access opportunities to our park visitors to a location that has been closed for safety for many years! This brings safe visitation opportunities back to a unique and important area of Odiorne Point.”

-Meredith Collins (Seacoast Region Supervisor, NH State Parks)

“In the spirit of many hands make light work having the NH Corps crew work alongside park staff to prepare the parks is integral to park operations. The NH Corps brings chainsaw skills which park staff don't always have. Their ability to work independently is an asset.”

-Johanna Lyons (NH State Park Planning and Development Specialist)

“Increased the parks capacity for our youth group site which leads to further education of our youth and their programs.”

-Jon Bergeron (Moose Brook State Park Manager)

“This project eliminated multiple unnecessary river crossings and created a sustainable relocation. Ultimately, this will improve water quality and waterbody condition and will improve visitor experience.”

-Mike Mosley (Trails Manager, Pemigewasset Ranger District WMNF)

“Campbell Pond is a former town water supply. It was discontinued as a water supply in 1988. The property which consists of 266+/- acres is in town ownership but the property was placed in permanent conservation (can never be developed) in 2005. The open space is a resource that few people get to see and use. By providing a safe trail which has been accomplished by the SCA hitch, it allows more people to use and value this incredible open space resource.”

-Peter Beblowski (Chair, Antrim Conservation Commission)

“This is extremely technical rock work to rehabilitate the Franconia Loop Trails to withstand the impacts from high visitor use and built to withstand storm damage that has been increasing due to a changing climate. The SCA-NH Crew added crew capacity to continue this ongoing project and we look forward to working with them again in 2024.”

-Alex DeLucia (Director of Trails, AMC)



Acknowledgments

Special Thanks to our External Trainers

David Birdsall & Ian Irwin – Game of Logging Chainsaw Training (*Northeast Woodland Training*)
David Graham– Trail Skills & Carpentry (*SCA Massachusetts alum, SCA crew leader & 2x NHCC Project Leader*)
Kaitlin Raven – Trail Skills (*NHCC alum, ACE, USFS, Montana Conservation Corps staff*)
Rob Hopkinson – Trail skills (*former SCA Massachusetts Corps staff, SCA crew leader & longtime instructor*)
Trevor & Theo – Wilderness First Responder (*Aerie*)
Matt Coughlan – Rigging Skills (*Recon Trail Design LLC owner & former SCA NHCC staff*)
A.J. Dupere – Tree Identification (*Urban Forester, NH Division of Forests and Lands*)

Special Thanks to the NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources & State Parks

Sarah Stewart – DPCR Commissioner
Brian Wilson – Director, NH State Parks
Michael Houseman – Operations Supervisor, NH State Parks
Johanna Lyons – Planning and Development Specialist, NH State Parks
Tom Mansfield—Architect, NH State Parks
Tara Blaney – South Regional Supervisor, NH State Parks
Brian Parise – Great North Woods Regional Supervisor, NH State Parks
Erik Nelson – Central Region Supervisor, NH State Parks
Christina Pacuk—Bear Brook State Park Manager

Student Conservation Association

Bryan Young – SCA Director of AmeriCorps
Jeremy Burns – National Program Manager, State AmeriCorps
Theresa Ramirez— Senior Manager, Agreements
Jason LaValley – Senior Billing Coordinator
Thanks to all other SCA departments and colleagues that support and guide the NHCC.



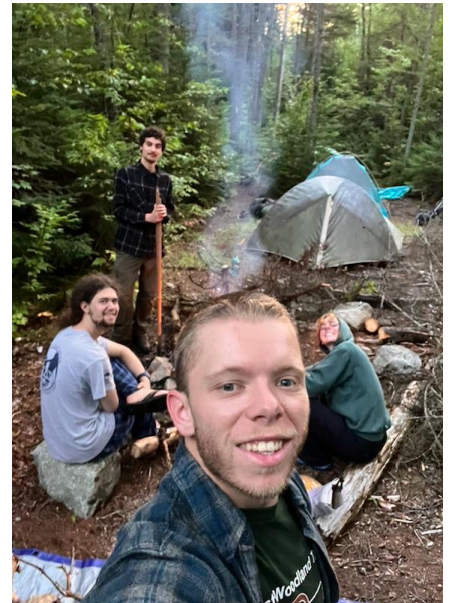
**2023 SCA New Hampshire
AmeriCorps Conservation Crew Members**

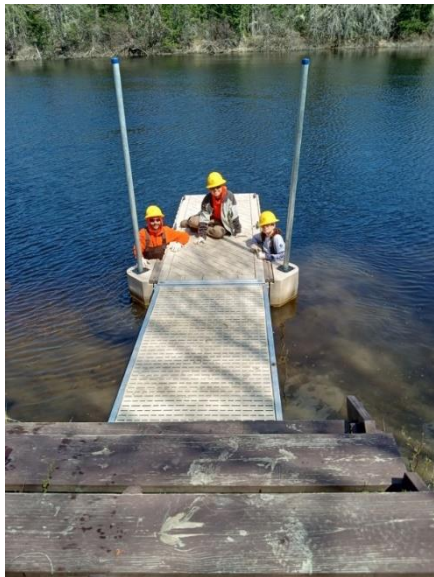
Nate Deely	Deerfield, NH
Roxanne Smith	Richardson, TX
Maddie Dortch	Carlisle, PA
Thu Le	Manchester, NH
Mike Fasanella	Rocky Point, NY
Kiley Cruse	Princeton, TX
Matt Pilliod	Moretown, VT
Cam Meelia	Mansfield, MA
Kiara Kavanagh	Fallbrook, CA
Hannah Weir	Dallas, TX
Elenore Alves	Hopedale, MA
Colin Thompson	Valparaiso, IN
Euphrates VanVoorhees	Williamsburg, VA
Gunther Keller	La Marque, TX
Logan Lasswell	Olympia, WA
Liam Smith	Decatur, GA
Project Leader: Ned Darling	New York City, NY
Project Leader: Ian Ruggiero	Manchester, NH
Coordinator: Zach Colatch	Northfield, VT



Photos:







Report prepared by Zach Colatch. For any questions, please contact zcolatch@thesca.org.
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