



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship

Spring 2018 Newsletter

Vol. 3 Issue 1

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The FORCES mission is to engage New York State college students to simultaneously improve OPRHP resources and enrich student academic, recreational, and career opportunities.

FORCES Is For The Birds

Tom Hughes, NRS Biologist
Central Region FORCES Program Manager

Do you know what New York State’s official bird is? The eastern bluebird of course! Our FORCES Program and our partners are proud to contribute to conservation projects “for the birds” all around NY state, including the eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*).

This issue of our newsletter highlights several of our important agency and partner efforts. One of the most favorite activities for our FORCES Stewards around the state is to conserve and protect the eastern bluebird and its habitats, including building nest boxes (pictured right). FORCES Stewards play a significant role with *Audubon in the Parks*, our agency’s partnership program with Audubon New York, especially for maintaining and enhancing our Bird Conservation Areas (see “Featured Project” on page 6). In addition, every year FORCES Stewards volunteer at the Montezuma Audubon Center’s Wildlife Festival in Savannah, NY (see below). Of course, there are many other examples of FORCES projects involving our avian friends, including pheasant releases and Canada goose management (see “Niagara Region Update” on page 5).

With spring on the way, I wish happy birding to all!



FORCES Program Specialist Lindsay Dombroskie and SUNY ESF Federal Work Study Steward Lydia Stewart assist young conservationists with building eastern bluebird nest boxes at the 2017 NYS Fair. Photo credit: OPRHP



Are you interested in building your own bluebird nest box or assisting others? If so, then please plan on joining us at this year’s NYS Fair—August 22 to September 3, 2018.

Our FORCES family constructs over 1,200 boxes at The Fair each year, so we could use your help !!!



NYS Bluebird Society
<http://nysbs.org/>
Audubon in the Parks
<https://parks.ny.gov/environment/audubon-in-the-parks.aspx>
12th Annual MAC Wildlife Festival—May 5, 2018
<http://ny.audubon.org/about-us/centers-sanctuaries-chapters/montezuma-audubon-center>



Central Region Update

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

Another busy fall in the Central Region down in the books! In early September, approximately 20 adult endangered Chittenango ovate amber snails (COAS), tagged and raised in an ESF laboratory, were released at Chittenango Falls State Park. This project was a focused collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and the Seneca Park Zoo.



American-Hart's Tongue Fern Conservation Stewards Megan Gorss and Stephanie Chase collecting data for the population census. Photo credit: OPRHP

Mike Serviss, American Hart's-Tongue Fern (AHTF) Project Coordinator, continued with his research at Clark Reservation State Park. In doing so, he recruited SUNY ESF students, Megan Gorss and Stephanie Chase, to assist with a population census of the recently reintroduced AHTF.

Other projects included invasive species management at Green Lakes State Park's Bird Conservation Area, a YARE (Youth Aquatic Resource Education) workshop in Ithaca, and interpretive plans for the new environmental education center at Green Lakes State Park.

We said farewell to our Environmental Education Steward, Shannon Fabiani, as she took a position with Onondaga County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) as a Water and Ecology Specialist. We miss her lots but know that she'll have a successful career with CCE!

Environmental Field Team

Brigitte Wierzbicki, Plant Materials Program Coordinator

Fall in the Finger Lakes is a beautiful time of year for crisp outdoor work and cozy indoor activities! The Environmental Field Team merged outdoor priorities with planning to finish out another season. Whitney Carleton-DeGeorge (Stewardship Specialist), Becky Sibner and Kyle Webster (Stewardship Project Coordinators), Brigitte Wierzbicki (Plant Materials Program Coordinator), and Kira Broz (Wildlife Ecology Steward) teamed up for seed collecting, planting, applying for funding and grants, SEQR, and engaging our collegiate and citizen FORCES!

Our FORCES project highlights this fall include a pollinator meadow planting at Cayuga Lake State Park, where Kyle worked with FORCES interns and volunteers to revitalize a disused field into native wildflower habitat.



Cayuga Lake Pollinator Meadow: Kyle leads volunteers in planting native plugs grown out by the EFT's Plant Materials Program. Photo credit: OPRHP

Becky engaged Ithaca College Conservation Biology students – working on invasive removals, stream quality assessment, salamander surveys, and seed collection. She also collaborated with SUNY Cortland Conservation Biology students to monitor for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid at Fillmore Glen State Park.

We've begun planning for new opportunities to engage our FORCES volunteers and interns, including planning for upcoming wildlife surveys, environmental stewardship projects, and partnerships!

Upcoming Events

For more information email
amy.kochem@parks.ny.gov
 or visit www.nysparks.com/events

- 3/31/18 Once in a Blue Moon Walk
Letchworth State Park
- 4/7/18 First Saturday Hike
Taughannock Falls State Park
- 4/8/18 **4th Annual FORCES Summit
SUNY ESF**
- 4/23-27 Screen-Free Week (daily events)
Selkirk Shores State Park
- 4/27/18 Arbor Day Celebration
Letchworth State Park
- 4/28/18 Women in Nature
DeWitt Fish and Game Club
- 5/5/18 I Love My Park Day
<https://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day>
- 5/5/18 Montezuma Wildlife Festival
Montezuma Audubon Center

Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

The 3rd Annual FORCES Gathering was held on October 1, 2017 at Fillmore Glen State Park. Thirty-seven students from SUNY Geneseo, Wells College, Niagara University, SUNY Oneonta, Ithaca College, and SUNY ESF joined together with park staff to develop their networking skills, attend career trainings, and celebrate program accomplishments.

Our 2017 FORCES Who's Who, containing a record number of stewards (75), was published on the FORCES website this past fall <https://parks.ny.gov/environment/documents/FORCESWhosWho2017.pdf> FORCES is thriving more than ever with an array of stewards each season, six functioning collegiate clubs, and a presence in 37 institutions across the state. Students are gaining the meaningful experiences they're seeking and projects are being completed in our parks.

Save the date for the 4th Annual FORCES Leadership Summit on Sunday, April 8th at SUNY ESF!



3rd Annual FORCES Membership Gathering October, 2017, Fillmore Glen State Park. Photo credit: OPRHP

Affiliated Institutions

SUNY Alfred
 SUNY Binghamton
 SUNY Brockport
 SUNY Cobleskill
 SUNY Cortland
 SUNY ESF*
 SUNY Geneseo*
 SUNY Morrisville
 SUNY Oneonta*
 SUNY Oswego
 SUNY Purchase
 Alfred University
 Bucknell University

Cazenovia College
 Clarkson University
 Columbia College
 Cornell University
 Finger Lakes Community College
 Hartwick College*
 Hobart & William Smith Colleges
 Houghton College
 Ithaca College
 Keuka College
 Le Moyne College*
 Niagara Community College
 Niagara University
 Onondaga Community College

Pace University
 Paul Smith's College
 Rochester Institute of Technology
 St. John Fisher College
 Syracuse University
 University of Buffalo
 University of Rochester
 Vassar College
 Wells College*

*Denotes active FORCES Clubs

Taconic Region Update

Julia Jardine, Conservation Communicator

In Rockefeller State Park Preserve, the fall was almost busier than the summer, with our final Volunteer Field Days of the season. Our stewards did a lot of last minute invasive removal and plantings while the weather was still amiable. We removed numerous patches of Japanese angelica tree (*Aralia elata*) along Swan Lake, Pocantico River trail and Brother's Path. Plantings included joe pye weed, asters, swamp milkweed, woodland sunflower, and swamp white oak at Swan Lake and Rockwood. TV News Channel 12 even showed up for one of our volunteer planting days by the lake.

<http://westchester.news12.com/clip/13851016/video-volunteers-landscape-at-rockefeller-state-park-preserve>

On Pace Makes A Difference Day, we had over 20 college students learn about and remove porcelainberry. Many of the students had never heard of invasive plants or had never been to the Preserve which is less than 2 miles from their campus. Not only did they have a great time, but they were all excited to come back with their friends.



Dylan Finley clears mile-a-minute from area between Brother's Path and Deer Run. Photo credit: OPRHP



Steven DiFalco (Former Natural Resource Specialist), Dylan Finley, and Brian Keating plant an oak tree by Swan Lake at Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Photo credit: OPRHP

At our last volunteer field day, we had 14 volunteers help us remove Japanese angelica tree from between Brother's Path and Overlook. (The Japanese angelica grows in forest gaps created when a mature tree dies. The Preserve is losing many trees to non-native pests and diseases. Deer are eating the native tree seedlings, so the thorny invasives that deer avoid, such as the non-native angelica tree, are taking over the gaps.)

The days got colder and Steven DiFalco, our Natural Resource Specialist, left to pursue his Masters in Natural Resources from University of Connecticut. We wish him good luck and warmly welcome our new Natural Resource Specialist, Rebecca Policello, who has many plans to get students involved in the upcoming spring, summer, and fall.

"This internship will add greatly to my future career, as I am interested in cultural work and real world learning and practice is so important. This, along with all the other internships I have held with FORCES, gives me a lot of experience in a variety of different positions and skills. Overall this will all help in future work, as it gives me a variety of perspectives as well as knowledge."
Paula Merkle, Ithaca College

Niagara Region Update

Jillian Harris, FORCES Program Specialist

FORCES in the Niagara Region has been growing at a steady pace throughout 2017. Six stewards from Niagara County Community College, SUNY at Buffalo, and Niagara University worked on projects and volunteer events during the fall season. Projects included invasive species removals along the Niagara Gorge and native tree plantings at Beaver Island State Park. Just prior to hunting season, FORCES Stewards Seanna Chilson, Cassidy Okon, Ivette Leon, and Renae Sentiff helped to release pheasants at Wilson Tuscarora State Park.

The highlight project of the fall was with the Niagara University's Women's Rugby Club at Beaver Island State Park. Eleven women planted eight trees of four various species, in a started restoration effort to combat the dying ash trees infested with the emerald ash borer (EAB). The women also helped cut back a large patch of buckthorn and collected garbage on the beach.



Niagara University Women's Rugby Club at Beaver Island State Park.
Photo credit: OPRHP



FORCES Program Specialist, Jillian Harris and Niagara University FORCES Campus Ambassador Ivette Leon, releasing pheasants at Wilson Tuscarora State Park.

Four of the six stewards are returning for the spring semester, when many projects and events are planned from Earth Day hikes to goose egg oiling. Seanna will also begin working with Kevin McNallie at the WNY Native Landscape Resource Center, helping him collect and propagate seed to be used for landscape and restoration efforts!

SAVE-THE-DATE: 4/8/2018

4th Annual FORCES Leadership Summit SUNY ESF's Gateway Hall



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY

Parks, Recreation
and Historic
Preservation

FORCES
Friends of Recreation, Conservation
and Environmental Stewardship

A full day of networking, discussions, strategic planning, food and fun! Open to FORCES Club officers, future FORCES Club officers, and FORCES Ambassadors.
Location: SUNY ESF, Syracuse, NY

I LOVE MY PARK days

www.ptny.org

Saturday, May 5th is *I Love My Park Day*
Register to give your park some love at
<https://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day>

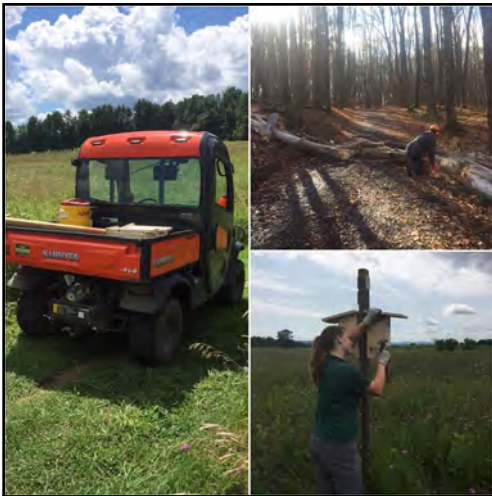
Featured Project: Green Lake State Park Bird Conservation Area

Dallas Ortel, Bird Conservation Area Project Coordinator



View of the Bird Conservation Area grassland habitat. Photo credit: OPRHP

The Green Lakes State Park Bird Conservation Area (BCA) covers over 1,000 acres of land including old growth forest and over 220 acres of grassland habitat. This grassland habitat represents the largest concentration in the New York State Park System, which offers opportunity for a diverse set of bird species. Due to the special nature of this area, FORCES Stewards worked diligently during the summer months to protect and maintain this area of Green Lakes State Park. The BCA Team typically consisted of 2 to 5 FORCES Stewards and the Project Coordinator. The aim for this project was to protect and maintain bird conservation efforts through environmental resource management.



Left: The Kubota is a key piece of equipment for carrying tools and supplies. Top right: Dallas Ortel, BCA Project Coordinator, clears a trail of a fallen tree. Bottom right: BCA FORCES Steward Cassie Rogers installs new bluebird boxes. Photo credit: OPRHP

A large majority of the work conducted in the season was invasive species management. Invasive plants pose hazards to the healthy development of both the old growth forest and grassland habitats. Priorities were generally given to bittersweet, garlic mustard, and pale swallow-wort due to their prevalence within the BCA and their ability to spread on a quicker scale. Other common invasives managed within the BCA include honeysuckle, autumn olive, buckthorn, barberry, Tree-of-Heaven, coltsfoot, Japanese knotweed, and multiflora rose. Without the aid of FORCES Stewards, management of this large span of land would be near impossible. Stewards often managed invasives using manual and mechanical methods such as trowels, hand pruners, gas-powered trimmers, and a brush cutter.

Several other projects were addressed within the BCA such as hazard tree management, trail clearing and repair, and bluebird box replacement. Hazard trees from storm damage or the infestation of Emerald Ash Borer were a common occurrence to find in the very



FORCES Steward Sierra Jech cuts a large patch of Asiatic bittersweet with a gas-powered trimmer. Photo credit: OPRHP

western section of the BCA. With the loss of a dedicated trail crew at the park this year, the BCA team often stepped up to take care of the trails within the park. Several days of the season were spent fixing and resetting trail marker posts and clearing debris from storms. Trail maintenance helps to improve aesthetics of the park and maintains patron safety. In addition, every bluebird box was replaced this year, many of which were broken, severely weathered, or infested with ants or dead birds. Roughly 15 new boxes were made by this year's team to be set in place early next spring.

Steward Spotlight:

Andriana Del Grosso, Conservation Steward



I love the Finger Lakes Region for its natural beauty and its numerous sites for outdoor recreation. I enjoy participating in FORCES because it gives me the opportunity to help with projects that promote conservation within the parks as well as valuable educational opportunities to further my own knowledge of environmental science and local ecology. I participated in FORCES first in the summer of 2016 and returned again in the fall of 2017 as a Conservation Steward. When I first became involved with FORCES I worked primarily as a Conservation and Invasive Species Management Steward, but my most recent responsibilities have been focused on conservation projects within the parks.

Last fall I devoted a good portion of my time to working on an ongoing project that seeks to assess how the application of herbicide for invasive species management affects populations of eastern red-backed salamanders. Lindsay Dombroskie, the FORCES Program Specialist for the Finger Lakes Region, coordinates the

project and several other stewards have helped with assessments since we started surveying summer 2017. The assessment sites are based out of Taughannock Falls State Park, where herbicide has been applied, and Jennings Pond, a satellite section of Buttermilk Falls State Park that is ecologically similar.



Surveying red-backed salamanders at Taughannock Falls State Park. Photo credit: OPRHP

It was rewarding to follow the project throughout the fall. I learned field research and data collection skills that I think will be useful for applying both academically and professionally. Being able to personally handle the salamanders in order to collect data was a great experience and an experience that is rarely accessible in a classroom setting.

This fall I also helped collect monarch pupae to sample for parasites for the Monarch Health Project, collect seeds from native plants for future use in the parks, and survey for hemlock woolly adelgid and elongate hemlock scale at Taughannock.

"I formed connections with park regulars, with trees I planted (like Henry the Hemlock), and most of all with my coworkers, a wonderful group of people whom I learned from every day. I'm leaving Rockefeller State Park Preserve with some nostalgia for the memorable 3 months that I was here, but also with a greater confidence that I can make a difference helping the environment."

- Dylan Finley, Vassar College

"I enjoyed getting to work on various projects and having the freedom to pick and learn about different aspects of environmental management. - Millet DeAngles, Binghamton University"

Finger Lakes Region Update

Lindsay Dombroskie, FORCES Program Specialist

The fall 2018 Finger Lakes FORCES Stewards consisted of Jake Barney, Adriana Del Grosso, Madeline (Maddie) Mathers, Paula Merkle, Zach Strebel, and Millet DeAngles. While each Steward had projects that they were primarily responsible for, there was overlap which provided varied and enriching experiences. For instance, Zach and Millet assisted Maddie with her aquatic sampling, Maddie and Paula worked together to support an Environmental Field Team (EFT) pollinator project, and Adriana frequently collaborated with Jake Barney who was working on EFT projects with Stewardship Project Coordinator, Becky Sibner. Becky also teamed up with FORCES Program Specialist Lindsay Dombroskie to facilitate various lab sessions with college classes. Read more about it in the EFT update of this issue.

Adriana completed a work-study as a Conservation Steward. Some highlights included assisting EFT with the pollinator meadow installation at Cayuga Lake State Park, collecting green ash seed from Allan H. Treman State Park for long-term storage in preparation for emerald ash borer spread, and completing the seasonal salamander monitoring that was initiated in the summer at Taughannock Falls State Park and Jennings' Pond. Her experience with FORCES is featured under the "Steward Spotlight" section of this issue.

Maddie did a 120-hour internship for credit working as a Conservation Steward. She completed a brook trout habitat suitability assessment at Fishkill in Robert H. Treman State Park. She conducted elements of a physical, chemical, and biological water quality assessment, calculated habitat suitability indexes, and summarized her findings in an academic poster.



FORCES Stewards conduct a chemical water quality assessment. Left to right: Zach, Millet, Maddie. Photo credit: OPRHP



FORCES Stewards collecting green ash seed. Top to bottom: Adrianna, Jake.

Zach and Millet joined FORCES later in the fall as Invasive Species Management Stewards. Their ability to function independently as a team enabled them to complete a hemlock woolly adelgid survey and initiate a burning bush removal project at Chenango Valley State Park. FORCES looks forward to working more closely with Binghamton University in the future.

Paula completed preliminary planning for her project at Newtown Battlefield through her role as a Culture and Communications Steward. Paula gathered resources about the Haudenosaunee and combined them into a reference document. She has also been investigating potential cultural interpretation applications for the park. Paula will continue this effort in the spring term.

Student Conservation Association (SCA) New York State Parks Corps members were active in the Finger Lakes Region working with FORCES Program Manager Josh Teeter. The Finger Lakes Region SCA (Leah Mould, Kerry Egan, and Jules Cooch) provided information about the SCA and AmeriCorps Programs as

options along the career development pathway at the FORCES Membership Gathering this year. They continued their outreach work throughout the fall by providing environmental education programs for schools visiting Ithaca area parks. Leah also worked on a wildflower guide for the gorges, and Jules and Kerry redesigned the Watkins Glen brochure.

Partner Highlight: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Robyn Niver, Endangered Species Biologist

Hi! My name is Robyn Niver and I am an endangered species biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. My office is located in Cortland, NY and I get to work on rare species across the State of New York (and beyond). One of the best parts of my job is interacting with young people, like FORCES students, that care so much about natural resources. This has happened frequently during summer surveys for the Chittenango ovate amber snail at Chittenango Falls State Park. We are very excited about our latest progress with the snail funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – Cody Kessler on has established a second captive population at Rosamond Gifford Zoo!! We look forward to new outreach opportunities with NYS Parks and the Zoo in 2018.

Some other species that also occur on NYS Parks lands include the American hart's-tongue fern, piping plover, and Karner blue butterfly. Our office doesn't get to do too many on-the-ground surveys for these species but we help coordinate and fund efforts by our partners to monitor and manage them. It's been very exciting to see the return of the piping plover to the eastern shore of Lake Ontario over the past few years. Our working group has relied on volunteers to patrol the beaches looking for birds and if they show up, these monitors have worked with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYS Parks to educate beach-goers about the species.

I'm routinely impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication FORCES students have shown whether it's helping count snails or gathering leaves to feed the captive population. I am proud to be a face of the Service for these students and hope that some will pursue a career of protecting fish, wildlife, plants, and the places they rely upon.



Robyn Niver assisting with the Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail (COAS) surveys at Chittenango Falls State Park. Photo credit: US Fish and Wildlife Service



FORCES Stewards, SUNY ESF, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and NYS Parks staff at Chittenango Falls State Park. Photo credit: US Fish and Wildlife Service

"My position of natural resource assistant was more than I could have ever asked for. I knew the job was temporary but the knowledge and relations I made are long lasting."

- Brian Keating, Paul Smith's College



Robyn Niver, Cody Kessler, and COAS volunteers assist with COAS surveys at Chittenango Falls State Park. Photo credit: US Fish and Wildlife Service

SUNY Geneseo

Steve Sicari, Club President



The SUNY Geneseo FORCES club continued work on the invasive vinca infestation at Wolf

Creek in Letchworth State Park. This groundcover plant was pulled and then the area was raked to prepare the soil for a native seed mix. Once the seed was sown, the area was fenced to keep out foot traffic from the nearby trail. Next steps include educational signage and follow-up removal of any lingering vinca plants. We continued our tradition of running bi-annual events with the Bridge Day Care service for at-risk children. This is one of the most rewarding and impactful events that Geneseo FORCES conducts.



SUNY Geneseo FORCES members in beautiful Stony Brook State Park on their first recreational event of the Fall 2017 semester. Photo credit: SUNY Geneseo FORCES

Geneseo made a new relationship with Genesee County Park and Forest, holding a service event there cleaning up their nature center, and also continued invasive species projects with Genesee Valley Conservancy and Stony Brook State Park.

“I think this stewardship with FORCES will benefit me in future professional opportunities because it allowed me to network with a lot of people that are working in the field I’m interested in.” - Zachary Strebel, Binghamton University

Le Moyne College

Erica Mackey, Club President

Le Moyne FORCES did a lot of activities on campus! Our first event was Pumpkin' Galore where we painted and decorated pumpkins, mini flower pots, and enjoyed food. In November, we volunteered with Tiny Homes For Good with a Le Moyne Alumni. We helped with the building of the outside walls of a tiny home. Everyone who came to help had a lot of fun!



Jane Soprano, local wildlife rehabilitator with a barn owl. Photo credit: Le Moyne FORCES

Jean Soprano, a local wildlife rehabilitator from Kindered Kingdoms, came to campus and did an avian show and talked about what she does on a daily basis. We had a huge turnout and everyone really enjoyed seeing the birds.



Next semester we look forward to going to more parks, doing Earth Jam on campus, and learning new skills!

Wells College

Shania Dauphinais, Club President



In August, Wells College FORCES club members volunteered at the New York State Fair. We helped the public build bluebird nest boxes and educated them about bluebirds and nest box maintenance. We also

worked on increasing our membership. We look forward to expanding our club interest in the spring by hosting a survival fair at our college to educate our campus on a variety of environmental topics.

Stephanie Minarik, Letitia Hatch, Shania Dauphinais, Shannon Simmons, Courtney Brindisi assist with bluebird nest box construction at the NYS Fair. Photo credit: Wells FORCES



SUNY Oneonta

Taylor Held, Club President



ONEONTA FORCES club members at Robert V. Riddell State Park.
Photo credit: Oneonta FORCES

The SUNY Oneonta FORCES Club had the opportunity to participate in volunteer work and learn about their surrounding area this past fall semester. Some club members came to Robert V. Riddell State Park to pick up litter. We brought the collected bottles to a redemption center to help raise money for hurricane relief.



We had many guest speakers at our club meetings! After visiting Robert V. Riddell State Park, we had the pleasure to have Patricia Kent, daughter of Robert V. Riddell, talk about her family history and the history of the park. Also, Amy Kochem and the Invasive Species Strike Team came to our club meeting to give the club members a better insight on FORCES and the importance of the Strike Team in New York State Parks. We are looking forward to being more involved in the State Parks near Oneonta this upcoming semester!

SUNY ESF

Kaylee Townsend, Club President

ESF FORCES was able to kick off the semester at the New York State Fair building bluebird nest boxes for the public, and helping with education and the conservation of the birds. Secondly, while participating in Fall Fest, we recruited new members as we built crafts using natural materials. Thirdly, we created and decorated a banner to use for future table events on the ESF campus.



ESF FORCES club members designing a promotional banner.
Photo credit: ESF FORCES

Josh Teeter shared his experiences working for State Parks and how he came to be where he is today. We also went to Clark Reservation State Park as a club, and new members learned about how to remove invasive species and to identify hemlock woolly adelgid.

A goal for this spring is to reconnect with Le Moyne College, along with other FORCES clubs in the surrounding schools. We are planning to have a potluck in the near future and complete a project with Le Moyne at Green Lakes State Park. Another goal is to do more outreach with the public, and to help at local schools with science and learning the importance of conserving natural resources.



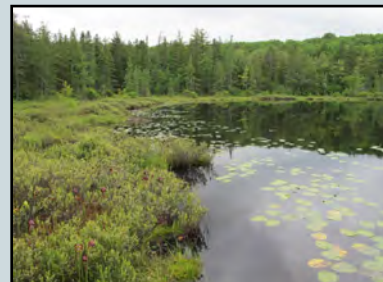
Hartwick College

Liz Karson, Club President

The Hartwick College FORCES Club continued its involvement with projects at Robert V. Riddell State Park in partnership with the college's Pine Lake Environmental Campus.



This fall, several students had the opportunity to interact with the Western Invasive Species Management Strike Team, as the team removed non-native plants from Pine Lake campus and in RV Riddell as part of ongoing efforts to manage the park as an Invasive Species Prevention Zone (ISPZ). Maintaining the park as an ISPZ is critical to protect the unique Mud Lake bog, which is a popular hiking destination for Hartwick FORCES.



Mud Lake at Robert V. Riddell State Park. Photo credit: OPRHP



FORCES Staff Highlight:

Rebecca Policello, Natural Resource Specialist, Taconic Region



Hi, I'm Rebecca Policello, the new Natural Resource Specialist at Rockefeller State Park Preserve! I earned my Bachelors of Science in Biology from Marywood University and specialize in forest health. I have over four years experience with invasive species management and have research experience with eastern red-back salamanders, beech bark disease, and the pollination of invasive plant species.

In my last position at Teatown Lake Reservation, I worked extensively on invasive species management, water quality monitoring, forest plots, forest pest surveys, and student mentorship. My interests include pollinators, plant health, microbial ecology and environmental outreach.

I am planning a lot of different monitoring projects this year for FORCES stewards to be involved in! Daily work will focus on invasive plant removal of species including black swallow-wort, Japanese angelica tree, Oriental Photinia, mile-a-minute, and Amur cork tree. I also plan on joining the Monarch Larva Monitoring Program, expanding "10-tallest" forest monitoring plots, increasing volunteer work days, and monitoring the ecology of Japanese angelica tree thickets.

To learn more about these projects or to see how you can get involved, please email me at Rebecca.policello@parks.ny.gov

Student Conservation Association NYS Parks AmeriCorps

Madeline Simpson, FORCES Program Specialist (SCA)



Hi, I'm Madeline Simpson, a 2018 Student Conservation Association NYS Parks Corps member for the Central Region. While I consider Fort Worth, Texas my hometown, I have spent the majority of my life living abroad and attending international schools. In May, I graduated from Oklahoma State University where I received my Bachelors of Science in Applied Sociology with an emphasis in

Environmental Issues. For the next 8 months, I will be a FORCES Program Specialist, serving with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation staff to provide critical environmental education and stewardship to New York's natural areas. As a recent graduate entering the "real world", my goals are to gain experiences and lessons on important and essential subjects such as environmental conservation and sustainability. I am excited to be working closely with collegiate students and assisting and providing hands-on stewardship opportunities throughout the Central Region.

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Faculty Spotlight:

Jason J. Dombroskie, Senior Extension Associate, Cornell University



Jason with a butterfly net, trying to stay upright in the high winds near the summit of Mt. Washington.
Photo credit: Jason Dombroskie

As the Manager for the Cornell University Insect Collection & Coordinator of the Insect Diagnostic Lab, I have collaborated with NYS OPRHP and the FORCES program on many occasions. My favorite events are public moth nights, where lights are used to attract moths while I provide educational programming to park patrons. While large showy moths are exciting and more likely to spark someone's interest in insects, the species I am most interested in are often small, brown, and easy to miss. Ultimately these events help promote interest in the community of the 3000+ species of moths estimated to occur in NY.

I began working with FORCES stewards in the summer of 2017, and this collaboration has continued to be beneficial for everyone involved. Most recently, FORCES staff worked with me to find new moths in New York State in fall 2017. They checked pheromone traps at Taughannock Falls State Park designed to catch clearwing moths, which are another data-deficient group in NY. While we caught a lot of what we were looking for, we also encountered something unexpected—a new record for NY! The rare detritivore *Mea skinnerella* had not previously been recorded to occur in NY and FORCES had helped find it through careful trap maintenance (and not throwing out the little stuff). Another surprise awaited us at Sandy Island Beach State Park in mid-October; we obtained the first NY record of *Eucosma montanana*, a specialist on wormwood.

Since I began working in NY State Parks in 2012, they have yielded many rare species and other new species for the state. These include *Bucculatrix speciosa*, a goldenrod feeder, and *Platynota semiustana* a generalist on forbs.

I want to thank FORCES for your enthusiasm and dedication to biodiversity research! I look forward to working with you for a long time to come. Happy mothing!



Eucosma montanana, one of several new moth records for New York State. Photo credit: Jason Dombroskie



FORCES Steward Jasmine Grewal catches a Common Wood-nymph while searching for Juniper Hairstreak at Sampson State Park.
Photo credit: NYS OPRHP

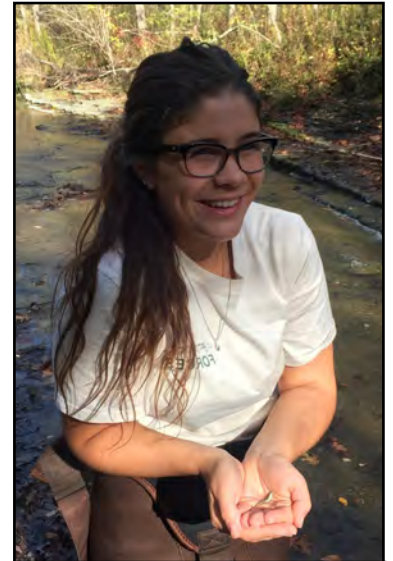
The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



Maddie Mathers and Paula Merkle assists with planting a pollinator meadow at Cayuga Lake State Park.



Niagara University students participate in a Hike and Strike in the Niagara River Gorge.



Maddie Mathers conducts a water quality assessment for Brook Trout on Fishkill (creek) at Robert H. Treman State Park.



FORCES Program Specialist, Jillian Harris and Niagara University FORCES Campus Ambassador Ivette Leon, releasing pheasants at Wilson Tuscarora State Park.



Left: A member of the Niagara University's Women's Rugby team plants an ash tree at Wilson Tuscarora State Park.



Brigitte Wierzbicki leads a native plant ID at the FORCES Gathering at Fillmore Glen State Park.



Left: Niagara University FORCES Campus Ambassador Jose Gomez, cutting buckthorn during Niagara University's Hike and Strike.



Ithaca College Conservation Biology students conduct salamander surveys at Buttermilk Falls State Park.



Macroinvertebrate sampling at the FORCES Gathering at Fillmore Glen State Park.



Millet DeAngles and Zach Strebel remove invasive burning bush at Chenango Valley State Park.

Photo Credits: OPRHP



Friends of Recreation, Conservation
and Environmental Stewardship



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A tagged Chittenango ovate amber snail released in September at Chittenango Falls State Park. Photo credit: OPRHP

The FORCES mission is to engage New York State college students to simultaneously improve OPRHP resources and enrich student academic, recreational, and career opportunities.
