



In this issue:      Page:

Steward Spotlight.....	2
Faculty Highlight.....	8
Featured Project.....	10
Alumni Spotlight.....	11



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

### Outreaching Into The Next Century

Tom Hughes, NRS Biologist  
Central Region FORCES Program Manager

While FORCES is coming off its 15th year, as we celebrated in our last newsletter, in 2024 our NYS Parks' agency will be marking its 100th year since the founding of NY's parks and sites system! Please check out Commissioner Kulleseid's Barnstorming Centennial Launch Tour on the Parks blog—<https://nystateparks.blog/> There is an awesome video.

As we look ahead to what we are sure will be another remarkable year for FORCES, let's reflect on this past summer season. FORCES continued to outreach into the community and connect people with NYS Parks and natural resources. We further strengthened outreach with our partners, including but not limited to NYS PRISM (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management), Audubon NY, NYS DEC and collegiate institutions—e.g., SUNY ESF, SUNY Cortland and Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC). Speaking of outreach, we invite you to learn more about Chelsea Gendreau, FLCC's Conservation Education Outreach Coordinator in our 'Faculty Highlight' (page 8).

Of course, we continue to in-reach as well with our agency partners that are so important to the FORCES mission and goals. FORCES Stewards were out all season protecting Parks' biodiversity of native plants and wildlife. Many had the opportunity to work alongside the NY Natural Heritage Program staff— see 'Alumni Spotlight' with State Park Botanist Kyle Webster (page 11). FORCES also "planted the seeds" for conservation with many youth (future FORCES Stewards) through a partnership with *Ladders to the Outdoors* ('Central Region Update', page 6). Lastly, we want to give collective thanks to all the NYS Parks Corps (Student Conservation Association Americorps) that contribute so much to FORCES projects and programs. We are looking forward to working together again in 2024, our agency's Centennial!



The Ladders to the Outdoors team met throughout the summer to create opportunities for thousands of youth to enjoy NYS Parks.



Thank you Kelly Punch (right) for all your contributions to FORCES. Good luck!

**NYS Parks Celebrates 100 in 2024 !!!**



## Steward Spotlight: Raquel Mennella

American Hart's-Tongue Fern Project Crew Leader, Central Region



I am a SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) student majoring in Environmental Biology, currently in my senior year. I grew up in New Jersey and developed a strong connection with the outdoors through hiking and an appreciation for plants in their natural settings. This profound connection led me to pursue a degree in Environmental Science.

I initially attended my local community college, Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC), where I completed my associate's degree. During my time at RVCC, I had the opportunity to work as a forest ecology intern for the college. In this role, I collected botanical data for various ecology-related studies. One example of such research involved assessing the regional impacts of agricultural land use history on forest vegetation and soils. My experience at RVCC equipped me with valuable technical field techniques that would prove instrumental in my subsequent internship with the US Forest Service (USFS).

I spent a summer as a biological intern with the USFS in the Allegheny National Forest, where I applied my botanical knowledge to a study focusing on the community-level effects of wide-scale reductions in white-tailed deer populations.

Following my graduation from RVCC and after learning about the intriguing study and exceptional professors at SUNY ESF, I was convinced that transferring to SUNY ESF was the right move for me.

Upon completing my first semester at ESF, I secured a position with the SUNY Research Foundation as a Field Research Assistant. In this role, I assisted in data collection for a study that observes the effects of climate change on mountain ecotones in the Northeastern US. More recently, I had the privilege of getting involved with FORCES as the American Harts-tongue Fern Conservation Crew Leader. Throughout the past summer, our team transplanted over 400 ferns, conducted extensive invasive species removal for habitat management, and monitored fern populations.

Looking ahead, my passion lies in the field of plant conservation. My ultimate goal is to continue dedicating my time and energy to making a positive impact on native plant communities.

### Wishing a "FronD" Farewell to Sonnenberg Gardens



With the recent move of the Plant Materials Program (PMP) to Sampson State Park, the American hart's-tongue fern propagation project is returning to the Central Region and Clark Reservation State Park.

Thank you Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park for hosting our FORCES Stewards, Environmental Field Team staff and ferns for the last several years, and we wish you a "frond" farewell. You'll always be in our "hart's."



Regional Biologist Mike Serviss and his 2023 Fern Crew—Bailey Thieben, Alexis LaFever, Ethan Winter and Rachel Arcaro. Not pictured— Max Prybyla, Laura Stark & Raquel Mennella (above). Photo: OPRHP



## Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

The 2023 summer FORCES crew consisted of 38 Stewards and five Jr. Conservation Stewards. It was a very busy summer as Stewards completed projects ranging from fisheries management to environmental education to trail maintenance to working in endangered species habitats. Many shouts of gratitude to each Steward for their hard work and dedication towards their projects. Joyce Lytle, FORCES Program Specialist in the Niagara Region, joined our team in May and hit the ground running, guiding several Stewards. We're delighted to add Joyce, a solid asset, to our FORCES Team.

Our 8th Annual Trainapalooza was held in early June at Watkins Glen State Park. Over 45 Stewards, SCA members, and Park staff from across the state joined together for a two-day training. The days were filled with educational workshops including and a scenic gorge hike.

Be sure to check our FORCES webpage in January for the *Who's Who* publication that will highlight all of our 2023 Stewards.



Trainapalooza participants at Watkins Glen State Park. Photo: OPRHP

### Contact Us

Amy Kochem  
FORCES Program Coordinator  
amy.kochem@parks.ny.gov  
Lorenzo State Historic Site  
17 Rippleton Rd  
Cazenovia, NY 13035  
(315) 976-4092

Carlin Wakefield  
FORCES Program Specialist  
Finger Lakes Office  
2221 Taughannock Road  
Trumansburg, NY 14886  
(607) 387-7041

Joyce Lytle  
FORCES Program Specialist  
DeVeaux Woods State Park  
Niagara Falls, NY 14305  
(716) 290-1530

Kelly Punch  
FORCES Program Specialist  
NYS Parks Corps/Social Media  
kelly.punch@parks.ny.gov

Find us on Social Media



FORCES NYS Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation. Use #forcesnys on  
Facebook, LinkedIn, and  
Instagram accounts!

### Affiliated Institutions

SUNY Alfred  
SUNY Binghamton  
SUNY Brockport  
SUNY Cobleskill  
SUNY Cortland  
SUNY ESF\*  
SUNY Geneseo\*  
SUNY Morrisville  
SUNY New Paltz  
SUNY Oneonta\*  
SUNY Oswego  
SUNY Potsdam  
SUNY Purchase  
SUNY Westchester  
Alfred University  
Canisius College  
Cazenovia College  
Clarkson University  
Colgate University  
Columbia College  
Cornell University

Eckerd College  
Endicott College  
Finger Lakes Community College  
Hartwick College\*  
Hobart & William Smith Colleges  
Houghton College  
Hudson Valley Community College  
Ithaca College  
Jamestown Community College  
Le Moyne College\*  
Medaille College  
Mercyhurst College  
Niagara Community College  
Niagara University  
Onondaga Community College  
Pace University  
Paul Smith's College  
Penn State University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. John Fisher College  
Siena College

Stetson University  
Syracuse University  
Tuft's University  
University at Buffalo  
University of Connecticut  
University of Rochester  
University of Vermont  
Vassar College  
Wells College\*  
**\*Denotes active FORCES Clubs**

Baker High School  
Honeoye/Middle High School  
Liverpool High School  
Orleans/Niagara BOCES  
Ossining High School  
Pittsford Mendon High School  
Pittsford Sutherland High School  
Sandy Creek High School  
Scarsdale High School  
Waverly Central School

## Central Region Update

Orchid Kinzie-Middleton, COAS Project Coordinator; Kennedy Sullivan, Piping Plover Project Coordinator; Cara Gannon, Environmental Educator Assistant; Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist; Tom Hughes, Natural Resource Stewardship Biologist

The Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail (COAS) Conservation Stewards had an extremely productive summer! At Chittenango Falls State Park, we focused a lot on management of invasive plants. Most days were spent working on the Creekside or Gorge Trail removing pale swallow-wort, European dewberry, Dame's rocket, and garlic mustard. We spent a lot of time doing invasive management to protect the native plants that act as a food source for the endangered Chittenango ovate amber snail. We removed more than twenty 60-gallon bags of European dewberry and pulled thousands of the other invasives. On the weekends, Stewards helped with tabling where we focused on informing the public about the unique species found at Chittenango Falls State Park, including the Chittenango ovate amber snail. Some COAS Stewards attended a visit to the Finger Lakes Region in August where they participated in aquatic invertebrate sampling and an interpretive hike at Robert H. Treman State Park. Overall it was a great summer with a hard working crew!

~Orchid



COAS Steward Rhett Parsons with a scaly friend found along a trail at Green Lakes State Park. Photo: OPRHP



Piping plover brood. Photo: Matt Brown

The piping plover project once again had three nests between Sandy Island Beach State Park and DEC's Lakeview Wildlife Management Area. During June, the project team spent their time running after newly hatched chicks! Stevie Nicks (-Of,Lb:-X,-V) and Hawkeye (-O/Gdot,-L/O:-X,-L(262)) successfully hatched three chicks named Poppi Seed, Rye, and Pumpernickel. Unfortunately, our project lost our two other nests, but we were still excited for this new brood.

Our team spent almost every day monitoring the only Great Lakes piping plover brood in NYS over several

miles of beach. During this effort, our three chicks were able to fledge and migrate at the end of July! Eventually by August, all our piping plovers were gone for another successful season. In total, we had 10 piping plovers visit Sandy Island Beach State Park with six of those being nesting adults. We could not have protected our plovers without the help of our Stewards!

Besides piping plovers, our project helped SLELO-PRISM remove pale swallow-wort and yellow iris at El Dorado and Black Pond. The team also went to Zoo New York's summer program to teach about piping plover threats by playing a predator vs prey outside activity. We spent several early mornings conducting grassland bird surveys at Green Lakes State Park and black tern surveys over at Sandy Pond. To top it off, the project helped at Baltimore Woods MAPS Banding Station to assess songbird diversity and health.

The piping plover project had a very busy, but an amazingly birdy summer season!

~Kennedy



Monitoring for piping plovers. Photo: OPRHP

(Central Region Update continued on p. 5)



## Central Region Update (cont'd)

Orchid Kinzie-Middleton, COAS Project Coordinator; Kennedy Sullivan, Piping Plover Project Coordinator; Cara Gannon, Environmental Educator Assistant; Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist; Tom Hughes, Natural Resource Stewardship Biologist



Colin shaking hands with OPRHP's Commissioner, Erik Kulleseid. Photo: OPRHP

This summer the Green Lakes Environmental Education Center had two great FORCES Stewards, Colin Raymond, and Ed Heller! Colin came to us from SUNY Geneseo and Ed attends Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. The primary duties of our FORCES Stewards were to host the Environmental Education Center and be the welcoming face of our education team. They got the opportunity to interact with the public, answer questions about the park, and engage in roving interpretation. Colin started with us mid-May and was a huge help with our school field trip season. Colin even got the chance to meet OPRHP Commissioner Erik Kulleseid when he visited Green Lakes on his Centennial Tour.

Ed's highlight was being able to participate in a kayak program with us and serve as our "rescue" person when we were demonstrating T-rescues.

Thanks to our Summer Stewards we were able to keep the education center open 7 days a week. We can't wait to see what the future has in store for Colin and Ed!

~Cara



Ed kayaking. Photo: OPRHP



Park staff and FORCES members installing native trees along the shoreline of Grindstone Creek as part of a shoreline restoration effort. The goal of the project is to reduce erosion in the area. Photo: OPRHP

This summer the wildlife and stewardship projects focused on helping regional conservation projects, deer impact assessment, and nuisance wildlife management. FORCES Stewards and the Regional Stewardship Specialist assisted with the Chittenango Ovale Amber Snail Project population surveys and invasive management program. Additionally, the wildlife team assisted the Piping Plover Project by installing predator exclusion fencing at nest sites along Lake Ontario. The wildlife team also aided in native plantings at Selkirk Shores State Park. This was part of a grindstone shoreline stabilization program supported by the NYS OPRHP Plant Materials Program. This planting was the second one done this year as part of the shoreline restoration effort.

At Green Lakes State Park, the wildlife team monitored deer impact on the understory of various tree stands. This was done by planting red oak in open areas of the forest and within deer exclusion fencing. The team monitored rate of herbivory on the oaks to help estimate deer browse in the area. The team also monitored deer browse through the 10-Tallest Survey Method in these plots as well. This monitoring program is useful in

determining if deer management in the area is successfully reducing the negative impacts of deer browse, and which areas are most impacted by deer (Continued on p. 6).



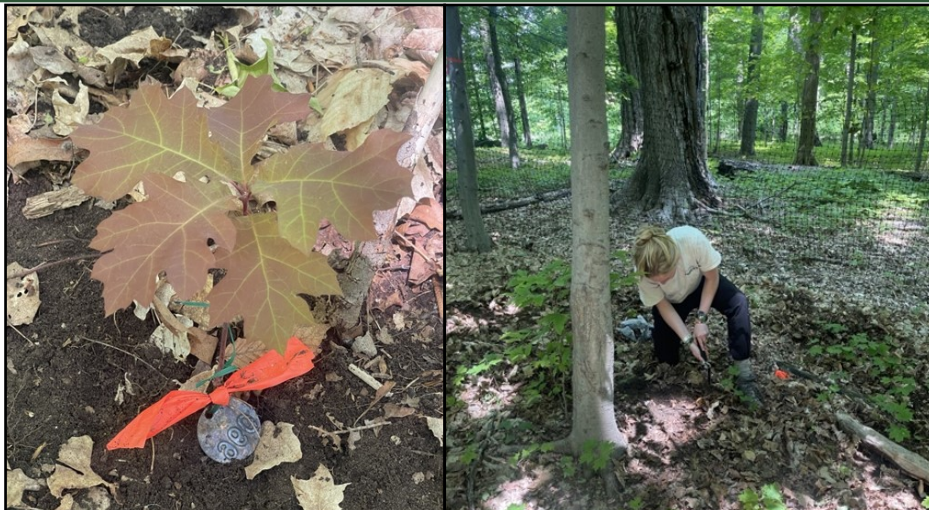
## Central Region Update (cont'd)

Orchid Kinzie-Middleton, COAS Project Coordinator; Kennedy Sullivan, Piping Plover Project Coordinator; Cara Gannon, Environmental Educator Assistant; Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist; Tom Hughes, Natural Resource Stewardship Biologist

Finally, the wildlife crew monitored various beaver dam sites around the Central Region. One dam was removed from a wetland at Green Lakes State Park to reduce flooding on adjacent private land. The dam had been abandoned for a while, with no evidence of beaver activity in the area.

Overall, the stewardship program was busy assisting projects with their conservation efforts and attending to the wildlife needs of the Central Region.

~Delaney



Orchid Kinzie-Middleton plants red oak in a deer exclusion fence for the Sentinel Oak Program. The fencing acts as a control in the experiment, which monitors deer browsing impacts. Photo: OPRHP



Ladders to the Outdoors FORCES Stewards Matias Romano and Sankalp Gautam with American hart's-tongue fern at Clark Reservation Nature Center. Photo: OPRHP

This past summer, FORCES and the Environmental Field Team partnered with *Ladders to the Outdoors* (LTO) and Environmental Educators Katie Mulverhill and Cara Gannon to provide recreational, stewardship and nature exploration opportunities throughout Central & Finger Lakes Region's parks.

**LADDERS  
TO THE  
OUTDOORS**



Youth from numerous community organizations within the greater Syracuse area participated, including groups from Boys & Girls Club, Huntington Family Center, Kool Kidz, Southwest Community Center, PEACE, Inc., YMCA, Rise Above Poverty and more. The Central Region Ladders to the Outdoors Leadership Team created a diverse menu of activities and programs for groups to experience that included kayaking, archery, nature arts & crafts, fishing clinics, birding, yoga in the park, birds of prey demos and overnight camping at Green Lakes State Park. Special thanks given to Central Region LTO Coordinator Staffon Donerlson and LTO Crew Leader Anyka Tetu!

~ Tom



Orchid Kinzie-Middleton and Tom Hughes (not pictured) introduce youth from the Southwest Community Center (Syracuse) to the fish in Sterling Pond at Fair Haven Beach State Park. Photo: OPRHP



## Finger Lakes Region Update

Carlin Wakefield, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region

This summer, the FORCES Program had a group of 8 wonderful Stewards spread across the Finger Lakes and working on a variety of interesting and helpful projects for the region. Out of the Ithaca area, we had two Conservation Stewards Emily Polanish from Ithaca College and Trinity Cullen from SUNY ESF. In the Rochester area, we had Conservation Stewards Braden Alessi from Binghamton University and Tristan Thibault from St. John Fisher College. We were also fortunate to have a Jr. Conservation Steward this year, Ayushi Nath, from Pittsford Central School District. Up in Wolcott, NY at Chimney Bluffs State Park we hosted Trail Education Stewards Jared Foster and Jenna Parrish from SUNY ESF, as well as Isabel Stowel from St. John Fisher College who educated patrons and encouraged them to stay on marked trail areas.



FORCES Conservation Stewards, Emily Polanish, Ayushi Nath, Tristan Thibault, Braden Alessi, and Trinity Cullen identifying benthic macroinvertebrates at Ganondagan State Historic Site. Photo: OPRHP

We had some notable work events this summer including a Pollinator Bioblitz and educational event held at the Taughannock Falls Overlook Pollinator Meadow plantings, the annual Environmental Field Team (EFT) invasive water chestnut removal at Fair Haven Beach State Park, as well as the FORCES Statewide Benthic Macroinvertebrate ‘train-the-trainer’ event held at Robert H. Treman SP. One large project that the entire FL team got involved in was the installation of “beaver baffle” devices at Mark Twain State Park. Our team submerged long corrugated tubes into three dammed pond areas to let a set amount of water flow through the dams and mitigate flooding hazard at Mark Twain State Park. This was a big team effort that involved getting down and dirty in the muck and swamp. Everyone worked hard and got the job done, thankfully with great success according to the park managers!

Emily and Trinity worked on a wide variety of projects over thirteen different State Parks that included benthic macroinvertebrate assessments of water quality, Assessing the Vegetative Impact on Deer (AVID) research, and tick surveying for the New York State Tick Blitz in collaboration with Cornell University and the Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector Based Diseases. They also assisted Research Partner, Dr. Andrea Davalos, from SUNY Cortland with invasive jumping worm surveys as well as collected data from pale swallow-wort biocontrol study plots at Long Point State Park. They monitored our eastern red-backed salamander cover boards, hung and monitored spotted lanternfly traps around the region, and participated in the annual Environmental Field Team (EFT) invasive water chestnut removal at Fair Haven Beach State Park. The students loved getting out on the water for a paddle!

Out of Rochester, Ayushi and Tristan worked for a two-week period at the end of June into early July, each putting in 40 hours of work at Ganondagan State Historic Site. They conducted water quality assessments of Great Brook and Trout Brook, measuring both physical and biological stream factors, they learned to identify invasive species, toured the Seneca Art and Culture Center, and assisted with weeding and transplanting in the Creator’s Garden. They also monitored wildlife trail cameras to edit and voiceover a camera trap compilation video posted on our FORCES Instagram page (@forcesnys) (Continued on p. 8).



Conservation Steward, Emily Polanish, surveying for Asian Longhorned and Lone Star ticks during the New York State Tick Blitz in partnership with Cornell University. Photo: OPRHP

## Finger Lakes Region Update (Cont'd)

Carlin Wakefield, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region



FORCES Stewards, SCA, and EFT Staff installing a 'Beaver Baffle' to level out ponds at Mark Twain State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Conservation Steward, Braden Alessi, worked the whole summer and assisted with the above projects at Ganondagan State Historic Site, additionally spending a lot of time tending the Three Sister's Garden. Braden also was able to work with the Finger Lakes Environmental Field Team in other capacities this summer, including participating in the NYS Tick Blitz, assisting the Plant Materials Program out of Sonnenberg Gardens, joining the water chestnut removal, and installing the "beaver baffle" device.

A big thanks to our Finger Lakes crew this summer. We are thankful to say it was a fun and productive season and we are looking forward what fall will bring!

## Faculty Highlight: Chelsea Gendreau

Conservation Education Outreach Coordinator, Finger Lakes Community College  
Adjunct Instructor, Environmental Conservation and Horticulture Department, Finger Lakes Community College

Hello! My name is Chelsea Gendreau. I have a Master's Degree in Sustainable Natural Resource Management from Unity College in Maine, with an undergraduate degree in Wildlife Management from SUNY Cobleskill. Currently, I am the Conservation Education Outreach Coordinator at Muller Field Station, which is located at the south end of Honeoye Lake and operates as a field station for Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC; Canandaigua, NY). My role at Muller includes coordinating our robust, grant funded K-12 outdoor education program with surrounding school districts, supervising several of FLCC's field-based internships, and helping to facilitate various community outreach efforts such as monthly presentations and guided outdoor experiences. I also teach Wildlife Management as an adjunct instructor within the Environmental Conservation and Horticulture Department at FLCC.

As an adjunct instructor, I strive to provide a well-rounded learning experience for all students. I include several different field trips throughout the semester that provide them with an immersive experience that represents real-life application of the topics that are discussed in class. One of our trips includes a visit to Ganondagan State Historic Site. This trip highlights both the current and historical importance of local Seneca people and is a great example of land and habitat management. FLCC students have helped NYS Parks Staff plant wetland plants in a restoration area, collect and spread native seed, and remove black locust from a grassland restoration area. Environmental Educator, Elijah Kruger, has shared a wealth of knowledge with FLCC students pertaining to Ganondagan history, habitat management, and restoration. I love the opportunity to bring students here and have them participate in some hands-on work that provides them with a sense of giving back!





# Niagara Region Update

Joyce Lytle, FORCES Program Specialist, Niagara Region



Restoration Stewards monitoring Buffalo Harbor Seabins. Photo: OPRHP

Summer was jam packed for both the FORCES Restoration and Conservation Stewards. They used ArcGIS Field Maps to successfully map the over 100 trees planted in Niagara Falls State Park by the Niagara Region Fall 2022 Tree Planting Program. This map will be used to monitor the health and success of the trees planted over the years.

Conservation Stewards also worked with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper to monitor and switch out the seabin baskets installed at the Buffalo Harbor. The seabins are intended to capture garbage from the harbor.

All four Stewards went out on a rainy summer day to survey previously placed herptile monitoring boards on Grand Island State Park and found the cutest blue spotted salamander.



Steward Ciaran Edwards mapping fall 2022 Tree Planting on ArcGIS. Photo: OPRHP

Conservation Stewards spent some of the summer building, setting and monitoring both beneficial parasitoid and invasive species traps to monitor and provide data for Conservation staff.

Stewards participated in the FORCES-wide benthic macroinvertebrate survey at Robert H. Treman State Park. A little rain couldn't ruin our day! After the survey led by FORCES founder and Central Region Natural Resource Steward Biologist, Tom Hughes, Environmental Educator, Josh Teeter, led us on an invigorating, beautiful and informative hike through the gorge. What a fun day!



Restoration Stewards out with Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Coordinator Dave Spiering doing bird and habitat surveys at Buckhorn Island. Photo: OPRHP



Conservation Stewards Anna and Lindsey checking out the invertebrates at Robert H. Treman State Park. Photo: OPRHP

The summer culminated with The Project Expo on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Both teams presented to a packed house both in person and via WebEx. Stewards presented 10-15 minute power point presentations to the group reviewing the projects they worked on this summer. This is but a snippet of all the Stewards were able to accomplish this summer.

Thank you Summer 2023 FORCES Niagara Region Stewards, we look forward to seeing what you do next!



Summer 2023 Niagara Region Stewards. Photo: OPRHP



# Featured Project: Spotted Lanternfly

Skyla Hays-Taber, Invasives Technician, Central Region



One of the SLF traps assembled and used by our parks, at the Rolling Hills campground in Green Lakes State Park. Photo: OPRHP

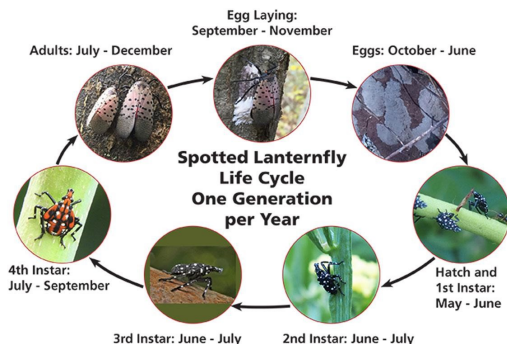
We have continued our vigilance for the boundless spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) a.k.a. SLF, as they make their procession across the Northeastern and Midwestern states. In hopes of early detection, traps have been set up in some of our State Parks, such as Green Lakes, Chenango Valley, and Clark Reservation, which are checked biweekly by our regional Invasives Technicians and other Environmental Field Team Staff.

If you are not familiar, the spotted lanternfly is a large planthopper insect native to subtropical areas in Southeast Asia. It has become an invasive pest throughout the world. Their invasion here was first detected in Pennsylvania back in 2014, likely through an international shipment. There's been a boom in their expansion and population in the past couple of years in particular.

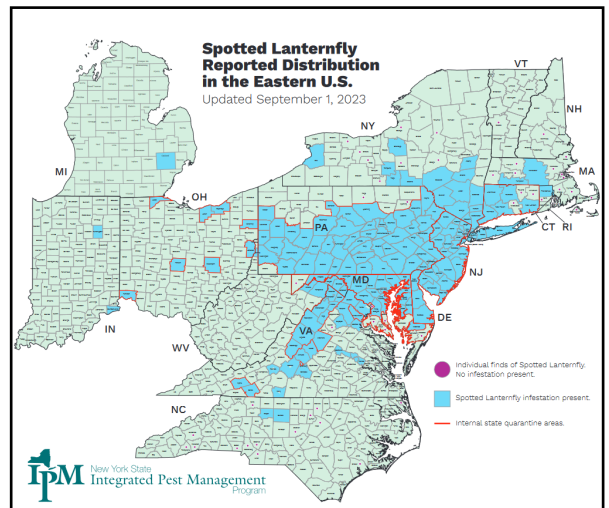
The problem this species presents is with their feeding behavior, where they swarm and feed on the sap of their preferred tree hosts, and then excrete a sticky 'honeydew' substance. This invites disease and other pests to the host tree, and the honeydew can also quickly harbor black sooty mold, causing further damage to surrounding organisms. Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is a prolific invasive tree species originating from the same areas as the SLF, and happens to be their preferred host species, further encouraging their spread. SLF also favors our grape vines, walnut trees, and other fruiting trees such as apples. The projected damages to wineries and orchards is quite high. They lay egg masses with a dried, clay-like

appearance on their host trees and other surfaces like brick and stone, which also helps them boost their population and subsequent invasive abilities.

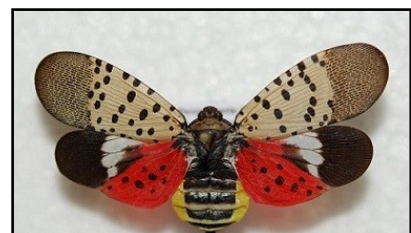
While populations have been reported in counties throughout Central and Southern NY, we have not had any detections in our traps and their corresponding parks this season. However, we do have a lot of happy spiders that have set up webs within our traps to capture tasty bycatch meals. It may be only a matter of time before the SLFs start making themselves at home, so we continue to be on the lookout, and urge others to report any sightings of the SLFs and their eggs and destroy them. Adults and nymphs may be stepped on or otherwise physically crushed, and egg masses can be scraped off (credit cards or plastic scrapers work well), then crushed and submersed in an alcohol solution. Always check your vehicles when leaving areas with known infestations as they are pretty good at hitching a ride and have spread largely due to this.



Spotted lanternfly life cycle. Photo: Oregon St. University



US National Park Service, diagram with photos of SLF life stages. New York State IPM, most current map of eastern states and counties with confirmed presences. Photo: US EPA



Spotted lanternfly adult. Photo: NYSDEC



## Alumni Spotlight: Kyle Webster

NYS Parks Botanist, OPRHP

FORCES launched me into the conservation field during the summer of 2014, as I was transferring from the Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) to the SUNY of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF).

While studying at FLCC, I jumped on every opportunity to take plant related courses. Not knowing the many ways you could pursue a career in botany beyond horticulture, I thought I wanted to work in horticulture, perhaps going on to study landscape architecture. Then I took a field botany course, and it was a lightbulb moment, opening my eyes to an exciting career path in plant conservation.

I started taking more conservation related classes, which eventually connected me to FORCES and an internship opportunity at Ganondagan State Historic Site, in Victor, NY. I spent the summer working as a Conservation Steward, developing a management plan for successional old fields and forests impacted by pale swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*). That internship gave me an opportunity to learn about the ten ways to break a tractor while applying the principles of restoration ecology and conservation biology to invasive plant management.

Interning at Ganondagan gave me a hands-on glimpse into field work and, importantly, connected me to the ESF FORCES Club, other students, and Parks staff in Syracuse. Once at ESF, I joined the club and got involved, serving as Vice-President and President of the club in 2015 and 2016. It was gratifying to connect with people who shared similar interests, getting folks involved, connected, and excited about the conservation work happening in Parks.

Working with the ESF FORCES club led to a position as an Invasive Species Management Steward at Green Lakes State Park, where I worked with a team to manage the Bird Conservation Area. That opportunity in turn led me back to a position at Ganondagan, coordinating a grant funded project to restore grassland bird habitat in areas I had started managing in 2014 as a FORCES Steward. My position there grew as the Finger Lakes Environmental Field Team and FORCES grew, and eventually I was one of the people connecting FORCES Stewards to the conservation field, getting people excited about botany, restoration, and Parks.

After almost 8 years working with Parks and FORCES, I moved into a position with the NY Natural Heritage Program as the State Parks Botanist. I'll forever be grateful for the opportunities, connections, and experiences the program exposed me to, and I look forward to continuing working FORCES for many years to come!



Kyle mapping a rare rock rose (*Crocianthemum* sp.) at Brookhaven State Park. Photo: OPRHP



Kyle presenting in 2014 as a Conservation Steward from Finger Lakes Community College (left). Kyle back at Ganondagan State Historic site in 2018 giving a soggy tour of Great Brook (right). Photos: OPRHP





# The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



FORCES Stewards, SCA, and EFT Staff posing after the Pollinator Bioblitz event at the Taughannock Falls SP Overlook Gardens.

Photos: OPRHP



Blue spotted salamander on Grand Island SP.



FORCES Stewards learning about the formation of the gorge at RH Treman State Park.



FORCES Stewards in the Niagara Region.



FORCES Stewards, SCA, and EFT Statewide staff after the FORCES Benthic Macroinvertebrate event at Robert H. Treman State Park.



A special day when the Conservation and Restoration Stewards and staff got out in the field to pick up beneficial parasitoid traps at Golden Hill.



Stewards removing yellow iris at Sandy Island Beach State Park.



NYSOPRHP, NYSDEC, and USFWS members install predator exclusion fencing at Sandy Island Beach State Park and Monteiro Point as part of the Piping Plover Project.



Steward Ciaran Edwards mapping Fall 2022 Tree Planting on ArcGIS.



FORCES Stewards around the campfire at Trainapalooza at Watkins Glen State Park.





**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

New York State  
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Central Region  
Lorenzo State Historic Site  
17 Rippleton Rd  
Cazenovia, NY 13035  
(315) 976-4092

**FORCES Newsletter**  
Fall Edition 2023

**FORCES Team**

**Amy Kochem**

FORCES Program Coordinator

**Tom Hughes**

Natural Resource Stewardship Biologist  
FORCES Program Manager, Central Region

**Josh Teeter**

Environmental Educator  
FORCES Program Manager, Finger Lakes Region

**Carlin Wakefield**

FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region

**Joyce Lytle**

FORCES Program Specialist, Niagara Region

**Kelly Punch**

NYS Parks Corps SCA AmeriCorps  
FORCES Program Specialist, Central Region

**Joshua DiPaola**

Natural Resource Specialist, Taconic Region

**Adele Wellman**

Environmental Educator, Allegany Region

**Tom LeBlanc**

Naturalist, Allegany Region



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