



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship

Spring 2019 Newsletter

Vol. 4 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.

Creating Your FORCES Legacy

Tom Hughes, NRS Biologist
Central Region FORCES Program Manager

Since we launched collegiate FORCES, it has continued to be a vision of mine that FORCES will become a *legacy* program where our collective mission and commitment to NYS Parks will be passed on from one generation of students to the next. To my delight, I see this happening!

I have become even more excited over the years as I've witnessed the personal growth and accomplishments of our individual FORCES participants. There are so many amazing stories to tell! For example, see our *Steward Spotlight* on page 9. I wish we could spotlight all of our **100** FORCES Stewards from 2018 in a similar way. Please check out our FORCES *Who's Who* on our website for a snapshot look.

Our NYS Parks' natural resources, patrons and partners have benefitted so much from the gifted contributions of the FORCES Stewards and clubs. As one shining example, Erica Leicht (pictured above right) after her summer 2014 internship at Ganondagan SHS was inspired to create a FORCES club at SUNY Geneseo. We are forever grateful for that! FORCES of SUNY Geneseo is going strong and will host our 5th Annual FORCES Leadership Summit on April 14th (see page 3).



A sign decorates a restoration site at Letchworth SP (above). FORCES of SUNY Geneseo founder Erica Leicht (left). Photo: Geneseo FORCES



Success story! FORCES Alumnus Matt Brincka (second from left), pictured here at a FORCES awards banquet in 2010, now serves as our agency's Invasive Species Biologist. Photo: SUNY ESF



Attention FORCES Alumni

What is your legacy? We want to hear your stories and learn what you are now up to. Please send us an update!
Contact: Regina.Bulson@parks.ny.gov

Central Region Update

Mike Serviss, AHTF Project Coordinator, Alivia Sheffield, Piping Plover Project Coordinator & Tom Hughes, Natural Resource Steward Biologist

Light, temperature, and food are three of nature's clues that tells birds, including piping plovers, when it is time for them to head south to their wintering grounds. The Great Lakes piping plovers that nested at Sandy Island Beach State Park, took off in the very beginning of August. Merry Yellow-Dot, was seen in NJ in mid-August, and that is the last we have seen of our feathered friends.

So now what, you ask? Now the Piping Plover project preps, plans, and connects. We have been in and out of classrooms and libraries, presenting on this amazing endangered bird and their recent return to the area. We've held events where locals come and learn about the piping plover's habitat, migration, conservation status, and what the people in the community can do to help! We are also prepping for the upcoming nesting season, and May will come faster than we know it! We're making informational handouts, planning beach games, as well as devising a plan of attack for invasive species out on the beach. We hope our piping plover chicks return and lay nests of their own here at our park, and we'll surely be ready for them!



Piping plover chicks stretching their wings as they prepare for migration. Photo: OPRHP



Emily Parsons, Dan Klimkowski, and Bryn Giambona (left to right) record data prior to treating a common buckthorn tree. Photo: OPRHP

The American hart's-tongue fern conservation project was extremely active at Clark Reservation this fall. Nine students from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry contributed to the project between September and November. The crew was a mix of Federal Work Study students and interns from a variety of program areas. Our main task was the management of invasive common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) trees growing in proximity to hart's-tongue fern populations using a chemical-free treatment method. The crew used hand saws to cut the trees near the base of the trunk and thick, black plastic bags and zip ties to cover the stumps, which should prevent resprouting and eventually kill the trees. A total of 135 trees were treated and a positive linear correlation between treatment time and diameter at cut height was observed upon analysis of the data.

Furthermore, a map of common buckthorn density throughout Clark Reservation was created to help guide the selection of future treatment sites. The crew also assisted with several forest health and invasive species surveys. These surveys resulted in maps of the locations of ash trees infected with Emerald Ash Borer, sites with Asian jumping worms, and locations of the invasive tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). We are also happy to report that Clark Reservation appears to remain free of hemlock woolly adelgid and that our hart's-tongue ferns are doing very well indeed!

This past fall season, the field work of our 9 Invasive Species Mgt. Stewards concluded within the Bird Conservation Area (BCA) at Green Lakes. We also said our congrats and goodbyes to our outstanding Project Coordinator Dallas Ortel, as he took an environmental position in the private sector. Good luck Dallas!!!



FORCES Invasive Species Management Stewards Jennifer Strigle and Elisa Colon remove invasive tree-of-heaven from Green Lakes BCA. Photo: OPRHP

Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

For more information about 2018 FORCES Stewards, see the *FORCES Who's Who* publication on our website!

FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship

NEW YORK STATE Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
 FORCES mission is to engage New York State college students to simultaneously improve OPRHP resources and enrich student academic, recreational, and career opportunities.

2018 FORCES STEWARDS: THE FORCE



Emily Ammons
 Invasive Sp. Mgmt. Steward

Originally from Shrewsbury, MA, Emily attends SUNY Cortland and double majors in Biology and Mathematics. She enjoys playing with her dogs, reading, and learning new things. After she completes her undergraduate degree, Emily hopes to earn a master's degree and start a job where she can make enough money to spoil her dogs like they deserve!



Hannah Annunziata
 Invasive Sp. Mgmt. Steward

While attending Buffalo University, Hannah is working towards her Bachelors of Science in Environmental Geosciences. She grew up in Buffalo, NY and enjoys hiking, reading, and soccer. Hannah's goals include graduating a semester early and then after college, starting her career and beginning the next chapter of her life; hopefully doing field work and/or research.

The 5th Annual FORCES Gathering was held on September 30th at Glimmerglass State Park. Students attended natural history and career training workshops, enjoyed a tour of the historic Hyde Hall, networked with each other and Park staff, and celebrated our program accomplishments.

Our 2018 FORCES *Who's Who*, highlights 100 stewards from the Allegany, Genesee, Niagara, Finger Lakes, Central, Taconic, and Saratoga/Capital Regions! FORCES' institutional relationships are strengthening between SUNY Buffalo, SUNY Cobleskill, Siena College, Pace University, and Hudson Community College.

Student interest with FORCES continues to grow as we are in full swing with spring projects. With many staff members in place in various parts of NYS, we're looking forward to a busy summer season!

SAVE-THE-DATE: 4/14/2019

5th Annual FORCES Leadership Summit
 SUNY Genesee



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 Genesee



5th Annual FORCES Membership Gathering at Glimmerglass State Park on September 30, 2018.

Affiliated Institutions

SUNY Alfred
 SUNY Binghamton
 SUNY Brockport
 SUNY Cobleskill
 SUNY Cortland
 SUNY ESF*
 SUNY Genesee*
 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
 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

Featured Project: Three Gorges Project- Invasive Species Control and Restoration

Chenga Drury, Three Gorges FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region

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Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



Great Lakes
RESTORATION



The Three Gorges Project is a two year Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funded project that aims to identify and manage invasive species that are found within three local State Parks: Taughannock Falls, Buttermilk Falls, and Robert H. Treman State Parks. The project focuses on five critical invasive species that disrupt the ecology of the gorges and stream ecosystems: pale swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), porcelainberry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), and hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*).

Invasive Species Control

Invasive species management requires detailed surveying and mapping to determine infestation boundaries, and removal of targeted plants. Much of this work is completed by a seasonal FORCES Stewardship Corps, which engages college students in management work. During the 2018 summer season, 1,967 total acres were surveyed for invasive species by the eight person Stewardship Corps in all three parks. During Invasive Species Awareness Week (ISAW), the Corps members spoke to 407 park patrons while tabling. The Stewardship Corps worked with 20 different invasive species and 13 native species.

Monitoring Efforts

The Regional Environmental Field Team records plant species and abundance within management areas. This monitoring tracks both invasive and native plant populations to see how natural communities respond to management efforts. The monitoring techniques used are Stratified Random Plots and Time Meanders, completed biannually (Spring and Fall). Reference photos are also used as a method to track changing natural communities over time and are completed once a month, April-November.

Restoration Efforts

The goal of invasive species management projects are to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems. Areas within the Three Gorges that are disturbed by invasive species and management activities are restored using plants and seeds provided by the Finger Lakes Plant Materials Program. Species used for restoration are chosen based on what is observed at the site or at similar sites, and seeds are sourced from as close to the project area as possible - often from within the parks themselves! This allows plants used for restoration the greatest chance of successfully surviving in the planted area.

Currently, we are recruiting for the 2019 Stewardship Corps positions– please visit the FORCES Facebook and/or LinkedIn pages for more details!

“FORCES has been my favorite organization at Geneseo for the past year! I’ve improved in my networking and organizational abilities and grew to learn how to better delegate tasks to other e-board members.”

Miranda Neyerlin, SUNY Geneseo



Left to Right (top row): Adrianna Del Grosso, Gwyn Sofka, Adelia Baker, Johanna Little, Adam Sullivan, (bottom row) Garrett Boleslav, Chenga Drury, Carlin Wakefield, and Becky Sibner.
Photo: OPRHP

Niagara Region Update

Jillian Harris, FORCES Program Specialist

We had four FORCES Stewards this fall. Returning stewards included Zach Glaspy (Supervising Conservation Steward), Carley McMullen (Invasive Species Management Steward), and Renae Sentiff (Conservation Steward). New to the FORCES Program, Chris Freer, put in 120-hours towards his internship as an Invasive Species Management Steward. He mainly worked on gypsy moth egg mass surveys at Artpark State Park, a follow up project after a large defoliation event was noticed during the summer. He set up survey plots, counted new and old egg masses according to the DEC survey protocol, calculated the projected number for next year, and summarized his findings in a report. Chris also assisted in many other projects during his internship including releasing pheasant for recreational hunting, planting potential shellbark hickory seedlings and saplings, and native seed collecting and invasive species removals with the Aquatic Invasive Species Strike Team.



Chris Freer taking GPS coordinates of newly planted shellbark hickory saplings and seeds at Beaver Island State Park. Photo: OPRHP



Adam and Billy of the AISST spending some free time releasing pheasants at Wilson Tuscarora State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Zach Glaspy worked on a tick drag project guide for the next upcoming summer season. Zach researched the project extensively, pulling together the necessary information into a report and guide, determined cost estimates for materials, and created a list of priority parks and trails for the survey to be conducted. He also assisted in the planting of native tree materials at Beaver Island State Park with retired DEC staff member Mike Wilkinson.

Renae Sentiff, switched from previously an Invasive Species Management Steward to a Conservation Steward, and completed her 60-hour internship working on designing future pollinator habitats, distributing native seed in previously treated invasive species project sites, and working with the Orleans Niagara BOCES class on their pollinator garden at Beaver Island State Park.

The Orleans Niagara BOCES came back to Beaver Island State Park to work more on the pollinator garden there outside the nature center; weeding, applying mulch, and putting new plants in, preparing for the winter months. The Niagara Region Interpretive Office and FORCES Staff led the class on a hike through the old growth forest at DeVeaux Woods State Park, learning about the history of the park and the importance of old growth forests. The students then took time to measure multiple trees in relation to how timbering works.

The FORCES program in the region hit a high note at the end of 2018, with over 2,000 hours put in by FORCES stewards and volunteer events, a 35% increase from our first year. While the program is gaining momentum, our hope is that it will continue to grow as new students keep joining and experiencing the many opportunities we have to offer!



Angelina Weibel leads the conservation class from Orleans/Niagara BOCES on a guide of the old growth forest at DeVeaux Woods State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Taconic Region Update

Rebecca Policello, Natural Resource Specialist

This Fall was all about planting and tree care at Rockefeller State Park Preserve (RSPP). The winter storms of 2018 brought down a lot of trees, and with that, lots of canopy gaps opened for invasives to take hold. With the help of Conservation Steward Marisa Flannery, our crew planted and fenced swamp oaks, sycamores, and hackberries along the Pocantico River. The crew also wrapped young vulnerable trees with tree tubes or chicken wire to protect them from deer rub and winter deer browse. The chicken wire fencing wasn't as effective as we hoped, so next year we'll use burlap.

Vines were the next big target of the fall, especially surrounding the canopy gaps and newly planted trees. A grouping of redbuds was pruned to redirect the growth of branches upward and away from porcelainberry, and native grasses were planted around them to help reduce vine invasion. Along the Pocantico River, eight spicebush were uncovered from dense mats of honeysuckle, porcelainberry, and Oriental bittersweet. Marisa helped us get ready for winter by collecting wildflower seeds, planting propagated flowers, and squeezing in some last minute Japanese Angelica tree control. We don't know what we would've done without her during the busiest season at RSPP! We hope to have more FORCES interns from our neighbors at Pace University and surrounding colleges this coming spring and summer.



Marisa Flannery pruning Redbuds to keep low branches away from invasive vines! Photo: OPRHP



Rockefeller Staff Shawn Boland and Hunter Salmon and FORCES steward Marisa Flannery making wire cages to protect newly planted oaks! Photo: OPRHP

"I think being the FORCES Club President will benefit me in the future because I am planning to go into the environmental field and it allows for me to establish good contacts within the area."

Kylee Wilson, Le Moyne College

FORCES Staff Highlight:

Josh Teeter, FORCES Program Manager/Environmental Educator, Finger Lakes Regions



Josh presenting at the FORCES Gathering at Chenango Valley State Park. Photo: OPRHP

I have been the Environmental Educator for the Finger Lakes Region for almost nine years and involved with FORCES for about 8 years. I really enjoy both sets of duties. As the environmental educator, I lead trainings, give presentations, do design work, plan special events, get involved with a wide range of projects all over the state, and use any opportunity to promote New York State Parks and all they have to offer. In my FORCES role, I try to be as helpful as possible behind the scenes to support the program as well as work directly with students when I can.

I can honestly say that I have the perfect job for me. I can also say that for a long time I wasn't sure what I really wanted to do. So how did I get to where I am? I tried things. Lots of things. I've had over 20 different jobs that were very different from one another and I have volunteered my time in many ways. The main reason that I continue working with FORCES is that I really enjoy helping students find a wide variety of opportunities and experiences that will be meaningful to their studies and potential future careers. I say potential careers because sometimes students figure out things that they don't want to do or discover completely new avenues to pursue.

The experiences that really helped me get where I am today start with attending and later working at a summer camp program that my father ran for the Town of Owego, taking a backpacking class at Broome Community College, going on a winter camping trip with Binghamton University's Outdoor Pursuit department, attending a yearlong program at Wilderness Awareness School in Duval, Washington, working at a small nonprofit nature center and completing a three month environmental educator internship with the DEC.

All of these experiences were extremely valuable to my professional growth and every one of them had or still has an element of volunteering; even my park career began with volunteering. I continue to volunteer my time and I continue benefit from my time volunteering. This past year my work was recognized three times. I received a quarterly employee award from the Finger Lakes Region of State Parks for work related to hosting a First Day Hike (over 800 people attended in 2018), the Leadership award from the New York State Tourism Association and an Environmental Educator award from the New York State Outdoor Education Association. Thinking about why I received the awards it is easy for me to see how they are all in some way connected to experiences related to volunteering. Hopefully if you are reading this you will continue your involvement with FORCES and take advantage of as many opportunities as you can. Someday in the future, on a cold day in January, you might find yourself reflecting on how certain volunteer experiences have really benefitted you as well as providing material for a newsletter article.

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Faculty Highlight: Dylan Horvath

Steward of Natural Areas, Binghamton University



As I said good bye to a group of visitors after a tour of our Binghamton University Nature Preserve, I looked down at the trail to see a tiny painted turtle hatchling, about the size of a quarter, determinedly working its way down to the water. I excitedly called people back to see it; having a blast listening to “oohs” and “aahs”. One of my favorite aspects of my job is showing people cool critters such as porcupines, ravens or snapping turtles.

When I was a graduate student at Binghamton University (BU), in addition to my work as a student, I volunteered at the university’s Nature Preserve which is 182 acres out of 600 acres of natural areas. I left for a couple of years doing wildlife biology in projects working with birds, bats, and wolverines. Then I was asked to come back to Binghamton to apply to be their first Steward of Natural Areas. Little did I realize that my volunteer work at BU would help lead to a unique job making a living doing what I had done as a volunteer.

Of course, I do quite a bit more than I did as a volunteer. At Binghamton University, I teach a course on natural history, maintain the trails of our nature preserve and other natural areas, coordinate volunteers, lead nature walks, teach others to lead nature walks, assist courses and research, and pretty much anything one can think of involving our natural areas. Working a job I really care about can

sometimes be stressful, but most of the time, there are wonderful parts of my job in the variety of duties (I don’t have a typical day), working outside, and especially working with great students. One of my latest goals is to connect student volunteers with local and state parks, where FORCES can play an important part.

“FORCES students are great, have truly added to our events at Green Lakes and are willing to help in whatever way they can. Our Board for Fayetteville Recreation praised the FORCES students at our monthly meeting.”

Michele Middleton, Village of Fayetteville Recreation Committee



Saturday, May 4th is *I Love My Park Day*
Register to give your park some love at
<https://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day>

Steward Spotlight: Carley McMullen

Carley McMullen, Invasive Species Management Steward, DeVeaux Woods State Park



In Spring of 2018, I attended an Earth Day event at Niagara University. As I walked past rows of tables, I found my way to the New York State Park FORCES booth. I met Jillian Harris from DeVeaux Woods State Park there and eventually worked with her for the next six months.

My work as a FORCES Steward has given me experience in my field of study and opportunities to continue my career. I graduated in May of 2018 from Niagara University, located near Niagara Falls, New York.

I obtained a degree in Biology with a concentration in Environmental Science. Throughout my undergrad, I was a member of an environmental club called Niagara University Goes Green and participated in a few Earth Day events hosted at NU.

I joined the parks after graduation as an Invasive Species Management Steward to gain experience working in the parks. My main project as an Invasive Species Mgt Steward was to track where *Ailanthus altissima*, commonly known as tree of heaven, was present in the Niagara Region.

Tree of heaven is dangerous to an environment because it outcompetes native species. It looks very similar to some native plants, but to some it has a distinctive peanut butter smell when its leaves are crushed. It is also known to host an invasive pest called *Lycorma delicatula*, or the spotted lanternfly. The spotted lanternfly is harmful because it threatens agricultural and forest health. By locating parks with tree of heaven, it can then help develop future management strategies for when the spotted lanternfly reaches the Niagara Region. My work to find tree of heaven in the Niagara Region was critical in finding the first invasions of the pest. Due to this, I spent the majority of my time on this project. However, I also helped remove other invasive species, created seed bombs with local college students, and replaced native plants in flower beds.

My internship this past summer with FORCES has helped me to continue my work with State Parks. In the winter of 2019, I will be returning to DeVeaux Woods State Park through the Student Conservation Association (SCA). The SCA works toward conserving the environment by bringing environmental stewards to parks all around the United States. After hearing about the program through Jillian Harris at DeVeaux, I applied to the Invasive Species Management Steward position.

I'm excited to continue working with invasive species at DeVeaux Woods State Park. My knowledge about them has grown tremendously since last spring and I look forward to this opportunity to learn more. Both the SCA and State Parks promote spreading knowledge about environmental conservation, which is essential to gain support and make change. Making the community more informed on key issues is an important task that I enjoy doing. I am grateful for my time spent at DeVeaux and I look forward to this new part of my life as a member of the Student Conservation Association. I strongly believe this path will open new doors for me and make me proud when I think back on it in the future.

"I got to experience a wide range of field work activities and became a much more informed naturalist in the process!"

Julia Isnardi, Ithaca College

Finger Lakes Region Update

Lindsay Dombroskie, FORCES Program Specialist

Juliana Isnardi returned to FORCES this fall to complete an internship for credit as a Forest Health Steward. She had previously volunteered as a Conservation Steward during the summer. Juliana began her fall internship at the Great New York State Fair, assisting fair-goers with building bluebird nest boxes. She then used skills she acquired in the summer to identify jumping worm samples from threatened American hart's-tongue fern populations at Clark Reservation State Park. Following the DEC confirmation of spotted lanternfly near Keuka Lake State Park, she surveyed the park for a likely host plant called tree-of-heaven. Another concerning insect in our region is the emerald ash borer (EAB) which attacks ash trees, so Juliana assessed ash in the campground loops of Sampson State Park as part of surveys initiated previously by Becky Sibner to better respond to the spread of EAB. Given how wet the fall was, it was a perfect opportunity for Juliana to learn more about mushroom identification and the various roles fungi play in forest health.



Bottom photo: Juliana and Garrett survey for hemlock woolly adelgid at Keuka Lake State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Juliana also worked with Chenga Drury and her steward, Garrett Boleslav. They completed a series of fall salamander surveys using the SPARCnet protocol at Taughannock Falls and Jennings Pond. The data will be used to supplement the monitoring required for the Three Gorges Project. They also surveyed for HWA (hemlock woolly adelgid) together at Keuka Lake State Park. In addition, Garrett further explored his interest in forest health by collecting ash seed from Buttermilk Falls State Park for long-term storage.

The fall season also consisted of outreach and educational activities. These opportunities included a visit to South Hill Elementary school to talk about hemlock woolly adelgid, teaming up with Girl Scouts at Watkins Glen State Park to learn about and remove pale swallowwort, and joining the FORCES club at Wells College to help host a Winter Wilderness Survival Fair. Chenga

and Lindsay teamed up to host a group from the Cornell POST (Pre-Orientation Service Trip) program that manually removed pale swallowwort seedpods at Taughannock Falls State Park.

The upcoming spring term will be busy with college career fairs, working with spring stewards, and recruiting for summer stewards. Returning steward Alicia Musk analyzed BMI (benthic macroinvertebrates) samples from Fillmore Glen at the Community Science Institute lab over the winter term—and welcomed her first born, Henry, on January 23rd 2019! Spring stewards will include returning students such as Mark Hassett who will volunteer as an Environmental Education Steward, and Garrett Boleslav who will expand on his interests as a Forest Health Steward for credit. There will be new faces as well, such as Cheyenne Carter (Conservation Steward) who will focus on bird and herpetofauna topics for credit and Meaghan McElroy (Communications Steward) who will assist with the creation of educational signage.



Girl Scout Troop 60683 made short work of a pale swallow-wort patch at Watkins Glen. Photo: Michelle Hoit



Cornell University POST members remove 31 bags of pale swallow-wort pods from Taughannock Falls State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Partner Highlight: Orleans/Niagara BOCES

Jay Kaplewicz, Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, Orleans/Niagara BOCES



Over the past year, our partnership between New York State Parks and Orleans/Niagara BOCES Niagara Career and Technical Education Center's Conservation and VIP Landscaping and Grounds programs, led by Paul Dewey and Jay Kaplewicz, has grown and become very productive with the help of FORCES Program Specialist Jillian Harris.



Jay Kaplewicz, teacher at Orleans/Niagara BOCES, and Renae Sentiff, FORCES Conservation Steward. Photo: OPRHP

In spring of 2018, students from both classes joined NYS park staff to complete a large amount of landscaping work around the Discovery Center at Niagara Falls State Park to help prepare for the busy tourist season the State Park sees each year. Students pulled weeds, cleaned up garden bed edging and spread a large amount of mulch in all of the garden beds around the Discovery Center. Students learned in the classroom about proper landscaping techniques and then got an opportunity to perfect their skills while working at the state park.

In the fall of 2018, students from both classes again joined NYS park staff to add to an ongoing pollinator garden installation project outside of the Nature Center at Beaver Island State Park. Previous Conservation and VIP Landscaping and Grounds classes had starting the project in 2017 adding one new garden bed and revitalized a few old garden beds. The students in fall of 2018 added another even larger bed to the garden and did maintenance on existing beds. They also planted a large variety of native shrubs and perennials in an effort to enhance pollinator habitat and increase the variety of native food sources for pollinators at the state park. Students learned about native plants and pollinators and the struggles they've been facing in recent years, then practiced their native plant identification skills while working in the state parks.



A BOCES student uses a tiller to create an extension to the pollinator garden. Photo: OPRHP

Both projects and this partnership give students an excellent opportunity to experience what it is like to work in NYS Parks, while having an opportunity to meet, network, and talk with current NYS Park employees about possible future careers. These projects also provide an opportunity for students to gain valuable CDOS hours required for graduation. We look forward to continuing this partnership for future years to come and continuing our twice a year trips to work in the state parks.

"I really enjoyed how much freedom I was allotted during my internship. It allowed me to figure things out on my own which were in turn, great learning experiences. I really felt that this FORCES internship gave me the experience I was looking for going forward."

Mark Hassett, Ithaca College

Wells College

Stephanie Minarik, Club President



Wells College FORCES Club had done multiple campus wide educational events throughout the Fall 2018 semester. There was a hike to the waterfall with foliage assessment as well as final de-stressor event involving coloring,

using crayons and the dead leaves to create impressions on the paper. The highlight event with the most people attending however was the Winter Wilderness Fair. During this event we had multiple stations set up: a first aid-kit making station, invasive species table, a winter gear preparation game, and a paracord bracelet making station. It was a successful semester with a lot of involvement from the campus as well as participation in some of the events.



Students attending the Wells College Winter Wilderness Fair. Photo: Wells FORCES

Le Moyne College

Kylee Wilson, Club President



This semester was very eventful for our club. We volunteered at a wildlife rehabilitation center by refinishing avian perches, preparing food for the animals, and by collecting newspapers and phone books to be used as needed. Jean Soprano gave a wonderful talk at Le Moyne and brought along some avian friends to teach our college community about what she does and why it is important. Some of our members volunteered at the NYS Fair to help the community build bluebird boxes, as well as answering any questions the fairgoers had for us. We hosted a fantastic environmental trivia night at Le Moyne to engage our students in what is happening in our world while simultaneously having a great time. We have students using the battery recycling receptacles that were placed around campus which we are so excited about! Lastly, we hosted an end of the semester meeting about how to have a more sustainable holiday as well as a look forward into next semester.



Le Moyne FORCES volunteering at a local animal shelter. Photo: Le Moyne FORCES

“One of the greatest skills I think someone can have is listening skills and I think working with this group of club officers this past semester has helped me hear ideas instead of just doing what you think is best. Everything I expected from this position I saw happen and developed. It is a great community to be a part of and lead.”

Emily Verbeck, SUNY ESF

SUNY Geneseo

Miranda Neyerlin, Club President



This past semester, FORCES at Geneseo did a great deal of community service! In total, we completed

270 recreational hours and 173 community service hours. Among other things, we removed invasive species in Letchworth State Park, planted native species with the Genesee Valley Conservancy and assisted in landscaping an outdoor learning center at the Genesee County Parks and Forest. Ben Gajewski from Genesee Valley Conservancy, came in and spoke to us about land easements. We also camped at Letchworth State Park with a number of international students who reported this was their first time ever camping! It meant a great deal to us to be able to share in the beauty of NYS with students from as far away as Vietnam! We hope to continue this tradition of including international students on our future FORCES endeavors!



Geneseo FORCES on their camping trip at Letchworth State Park with international students. Photo: SUNY Geneseo

Hartwick College

Rebecca Nathan, Club President



Last semester, besides attending the FORCES annual gathering at Glimmerglass, we hosted a NYS Trivia night! We had a solid group of people attend and provided snacks and some of the FORCES reusable bags and T-shirts as prizes for the winners. It was

a really fun night and got to learn many fun facts about New York and the NYS Parks.



Winners from the NYS Trivia Night! Photo: Hartwick FORCES

SUNY ESF

Emily Verbeck, Club President



After a few students volunteered at the New York State Fair this past fall, ESF FORCES started the semester off with a hike at Green Lakes State Park where our officers were able to meet new and old members. We had fun team

building with everyone through ice breaker games, tree identification, and food. We hope to make this a bi-annual event each semester.

As the semester carried on, we volunteered more at Green Lakes and Clark Reservation helping staff plant rain gardens or



ESF FORCES at Green Lakes State Park. Photo: ESF FORCES

identify emerald ash borer. Wicked Woods, one of our members favorite events, came back this year at Green Lakes where we had a great turn out for volunteers. We had a couple dedicated students show up to our biweekly meeting during midterms where they were surprised with donut bobbing!

Finger Lakes Environmental Field Team

Chenga Drury, Three Gorges FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



The Environmental Field Team (EFT) welcomed fall stewards– Garrett Boleslav, Elizabeth Padgett, Lina Clifford and Nesa Rampersad. The EFT participated in the Annual 2018 Roundtable event at Robert H. Treman– facilitating sessions about the conservation efforts taking place in the gorges and plant ID quizzes. Kyle Webster graciously facilitated an aster and goldenrod workshop to aid in future monitoring surveys and seed collections.



Kyle Webster leading the Aster/Goldenrod Workshop in the Bobolink Unit at Gananondagan Historic Site. Photo: OPRHP

Our FORCES fall project highlights include:

- Garrett Boleslav (Ithaca College), an Invasive Species Steward, worked within the realms of the Three Gorges Project. He assisted with continued surveying and manual removals of pale swallow-wort and stiltgrass in Buttermilk Falls, Robert H. Treman, and Taughannock Falls State Parks.
- Lina Clifford (SUNY Geneseo) and Nesa Rampersad (FLCC), Environmental Stewards, assisted with wildlife surveys, plantings, and GIS out of the Environmental Field Office (EFO) under the supervision of Kira Broz.
- Elizabeth Padgett (Finger Lakes Community College) worked in the greenhouses at Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park under the supervision of Brigitte Wierzbicki.
- Shelby Perry, Lydia Kiewra, and Zoe Hutchins, Excelsior Conservation Corps (ECC) members, worked on project specific signage for a month at the Finger Lakes Headquarters office at Taughannock Falls State Park and the EFO.

Please email the Environmental Field Team if you are interested in an internship or volunteer opportunities:
EnvironmentalFieldTeam@parks.ny.gov

Announcement: Our FORCES Stewardship Corps (Leads and Members) and Forest Health Technician descriptions are now available on the FORCES Facebook and LinkedIn pages! Look for other job opportunities from our team on the State Parks website!

2018 FORCES Stewards

Cornell University

Alicia Musk, Environmental Health and Safety Steward
Emma Kubinski, Stewardship Project Technician
Jane Suhey, Environmental Educator

Finger Lakes Community College

Charlie Ippolito, Riparian Restoration Steward
Nessa Rampersad, Environmental Field Team Steward
Elizabeth Padgett, Plant Materials Program Assistant
Garret Boleslav, Invasive Species Management Steward

Hartwick College

Brynn Marion, Geology Steward

Houghton College

Alexis Reitler, Conservation Steward

Ithaca College

Paula Merkle, Conservation Steward
Mark Hassett, Outdoor Adventure Leadership Steward
Lavran Pagano, Conservation Steward
Landon Silverman, Conservation Steward
Juliana Isnardi, Forest Health Steward
Thomas Minett, Conservation Steward
Patrick Robertson, Conservation Steward

Le Moyne College

Abby Sheflin, Conservation Steward

Niagara County Community College

Zachariah Gaspy, Supervising Conservation Steward
Elizabeth Connolly, Natural Resource Management Steward

Niagara University

Ivette Leon, FORCES Campus Ambassador
Carley McMullen, Invasive Species Management Steward
Cassidy Okon, Invasive Species Management Steward
Renae Sentiff, Conservation Steward

Onondaga Community College

Harrison Warner, Conservation Steward
Alexander Chavez, Conservation Steward

SUNY Binghamton

Danielle Moyer, Environmental Interpretation Steward

SUNY Brockport

Cindy Brownson, Conservation Steward
Andrew Leonardi, Stewardship Project Technician

SUNY Cobleskill

Kali Oaks, Conservation Steward

SUNY Cortland

Cassie Kelm, Invasive Species Management Steward
Jeremy Collings, Invasive Species Management Steward
Emily Ammons, Invasive Species Management Steward
Georgia Shaw, Environmental Interpretation Steward

SUNY ESF

Abigail Snow, Community Conservation Steward
Stephanie Chase, Conservation Steward
Megan Gorss, Conservation Steward
Aaron Krinsky, Natural Resources Management Steward
Hunter Flood, Conservation Steward
Elisa Colon, Conservation Steward

SUNY ESF *continued*

Alexandria Berry, Sandy Island Beach Dune Steward
Julian Tucci, Conservation Steward
Spencer King, Trails Steward
Mariano Arias, Conservation Steward
Julia Greco, Sandy Island Beach Dune Steward
Mat Miele, Conservation Biology Steward
Haley O'Brien, Rare Species Conservation Steward
Sean Korbass, Conservation Steward
Jennifer Strigle, Conservation Steward
Hajar Faal-Mohammad-Ali, Invasive Species Mgmt. Steward
Bailey Park, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Rebecca Rolnick, Environmental Education Steward
Miranda Gregory, Conservation Steward
Daniel Kimkowski, Invasive Species Management Steward
Mason Molesso, Invasive Species Management Steward
Bryn Giambona, Invasive Species Management Steward
Aaron Goodell, Invasive Species Management Steward
Autumn McClinton, Invasive Species Management Steward
Emily Parsons, Invasive Species Management Steward
Max Heimburg, Invasive Species Management Steward
Grace Trentini, Natural Resource Management Steward
Ben Hart, Natural Resource Management Steward
Alisha (Fern) Crossway, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Miles Neidorf, Invasive Species Management Steward

SUNY Geneseo

Veronica Medina, Conservation Steward
Emily Timkey, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Lina Clifford, Environmental Field Team Steward

SUNY Morrisville

Lily Palmer, Conservation Steward

SUNY New Paltz

Lindsey Thurston, Conservation Steward

SUNY Oneonta

Alexandra Sakoulas, Land Management Steward

Texas A & M University

Jessica Fite, Environmental Interpretation Steward

University of Auburn

Gabrielle Kipa, Environmental Interpretation Steward

University of Buffalo

Seanna Chilson, Conservation Steward
Marta Szumski, Invasive Species Management Steward
Harrison Watkins, Conservation Steward
Hannah Annunziata, Water Quality Steward
Chris Freer, Invasive Species Management Steward

Virginia Tech

Courtney Whisenant, Environmental Interpretation Steward

Wells College

Stephanie Minarik, Conservation Steward
Curtis Davis, Conservation Steward

Non-Collegiate Stewards

Natasha Curran, Invasive Species Management Steward
Emma Williamson, Conservation Steward
Ashlee Boughton, FORCES Project Steward
Shannan Doody, FORCES Project Steward

The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



Le Moyne FORCES help build avian perches at a local wildlife rehabilitation center.
Photo: Le Moyne FORCES



Alicia Musk identifies BMI to family level with the help of the Community Science Institute.



Carley McMullen and Chris Freer surveying for gypsy moth egg masses at Artpark State Park.



Snow day! FORCES Stewards take a moment to enjoy the sledding hill at Taughannock Falls State Park.



FORCES Stewards and staff enjoy the tour of historic Hyde Hall at Glimmerglass State Park during the FORCES Gathering.



Participants paint piping plovers at the Paint and Learn event at the Pulaski Public Library.

Photos: OPRHP



Juliana Isnardi and Garrett Boleslav encounter a record number of salamanders under a single board at Taughannock Falls State Park.



SUNY ESF FORCES working in a bioswale at Green Lakes State Park planting sprouts established by the Plant Materials Program.



Friends of Recreation, Conservation
and Environmental Stewardship

New York State
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Central Region
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FORCES Newsletter
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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.
