



FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship

Summer 2016 Newsletter

Vol. 1 Issue 2

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Grand Canyon of the East; Letchworth State Park. Photo Credit: Michael Gill.

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

Celebrating Our Stewards

Tom Hughes, NRS Biologist

Central Region FORCES Program Manager

As we enjoy our summer season and continue all our work with FORCES projects and initiatives, I am extremely grateful that we have so many dedicated and enthusiastic students and young professionals involved with our FORCES program.

Each morning I wake up, my phone lights up with a steady chatter of text messages...a not-so-subtle reminder that our Stewards are all heading out to projects and programs. Our Stewards' eagerness to share their plans, daily accomplishments and creative ideas is so motivating and energizing to me that I don't even need my morning coffee!

In this summer edition of our newsletter, you will learn about all the great initiatives that our dozens of FORCES Stewards have been involved with this past spring and summer. Their contributions are truly remarkable!

While I am impressed with the growth of our FORCES program over the years, I am exceedingly more impressed with the individual growth we see every day with each and every one of our FORCES Stewards. We are witness to the evolution of our next generation of conservation professionals, environmental resource managers, park employees, and much more.

I give thanks to our Stewards for all that they do, and I'll see you at the Great New York State Fair!



FORCES Stewards gather for a two day training event; Trainapalooza held at Ganondagan State Historic Site. Photo credit: FORCES OPRHP.

Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator



Send us your Selfies!

We are always looking for great pics for our FORCES photo album. I know you are out there working hard, having fun, and taking some amazing shots of our beautiful State Parks. Please share them with me. It is through your collective lens that we see all of us together as a FORCES family.

amy.kochem@parks.ny.gov

Central Region Update

Patricia Shulenburg, FORCES Program Specialist

Over 50 students are completing volunteer hours and internships in natural resource stewardship projects in the Central and Finger Lakes Regions this spring. Highlights include native seed collection and propagation, eastern hellbender conservation and public outreach at Chenango Valley State Park, trail maintenance at Robert V. Riddell State Park, cell phone tours, American hart's-tongue fern conservation at Clark Reservation State Park, invasive species management, restoration of an extensive grassland and Bird Conservation Area at Green Lakes State Park, and conservation of the Chittenango ovate amber snail.



Cam Heasley and Dave Warner install snow fencing at the Sandy Island Beach State Park Bird Sanctuary to protect piping plovers. Photo credit: FORCES NYS OPRHP.

FORCES also launched a piping plover monitoring program to promote the recovery of this endangered shorebird after a nearly 30 year regional extinction. Partners include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NYS DEC, The SCA, The Dune Foundation, and Audubon New York.

Finger Lakes Region Update

Becky Sibner, FORCES Program Specialist



Stewards remove fluff from milkweed seeds on a freezing winter afternoon. Photo Credit: FORCES NYS OPRHP.

Every semester seems to be busier than the last, and spring 2016 was no exception. We had 8 stewards from Ithaca College, SUNY Cortland, and Cornell University who worked on lesson plans, archiving, emerald ash borer management plans, *Laricobius nigrinus* surveys (the biological control for hemlock woolly adelgid), seed cleaning, egg addling, boundary sign installation... the list goes on. We're thrilled to report that 4 of our spring stewards were offered seasonal positions with NYS Parks for the summer! We again hosted a lab with Ithaca College this spring, and conducted hemlock health surveys and benthic macroinvertebrate surveys at Buttermilk Falls State Park. We also strengthened our partnership with Cornell University's Invasive Species Research Institute, and outlined a research project about the effectiveness of our control methods for pale swallow-wort.

Ganondagan Historic Site

Brigitte Wierzbicki, Lead Cons. Steward

The busy season is underway at Ganondagan State Historic Site. The conservation team, with assistance from stewards and volunteers, is working on the Seneca ethnobotanical Otgeo'jō:ni:h "Green Plants" Trail, seed collection, native landscaping, and mapping invasive species.

Mary Benincasa, Dan Ruede, and Emily Westfall have teamed up in restoring and expanding the Otgeo'jō:ni:h Green Plants Trail and the ethnobotanical project.

Junior Conservation Steward Kinsey Ashe has been focusing on the Cultural Garden and is she is creating a lesson plan identifying the wildlife in this habitat.

Grassland Stewards Kira Broz, Wyatt Jackson, and Emma Kubinski are removing and recording invasive species across 200 acres of the northeast section of Ganondagan.

Brandyn Balch is mapping invasive species cover at Seneca Lake State Park using the same techniques as the grassland stewards. He is removing invasive species populations and is focusing on areas of future wetland restoration.

Ganondagan State Historic Site Staff 2016

Whitney Carleton, Project Coordinator
Alexis VanWinkle, Supervising Steward
Kyle Webster, Supervising Cons. Steward
Brigitte Wierzbicki, Lead Cons. Steward



Allendale Columbia students join Whitney Carleton-DeGeorge to plant native Virginia iris in the Cultural Garden. Photo credit: FORCES OPRHP.

Upcoming Events

8/17 Live Music
Ganondagan State Historic Site

8/18 Moonlight Hike
Clark Reservation State Park and
Green Lakes State Park

8/19 Kayak Lesson
Delta Lake State Park

8/19 Bats of New York
Green Lakes State Park

8/20 Summer Concert Series
Taughannock Falls State Park

8/20 Kayak Lesson
Selkirk Shores State Park

8/20 Kayak Lesson
Selkirk Shores State Park

8/25-9/5 Blue bird box building
The Great New York State Fair

8/27 Movie Under the Stars
Taughannock Falls State Park

9/3 First Saturday Hike
Watkins Glen State Park

9/4 Auto Show & Flea Market
Fillmore Glen State Park

9/4 Campfire Cooking
Green Lakes State Park

9/25 National Public Lands Day
Glimmerglass State Park

10/2 FORCES Gathering

For more information email
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FORCES Programs 2016

Patricia Shulenburg, FORCES Program Specialist

The second annual FORCES Leadership Summit was held on April 10, 2016 at Hartwick College's Pine Lake Environmental Campus. This event brought together 29 students from 8 academic institutions to provide strategic planning for the program, enhance connectivity among parks staff and institutions, and celebrate member achievements.



FORCES Leadership Summit held at Hartwick College Pine Lake Environmental Campus. Photo Credit: FORCES NYS OPRHP.

We also teamed up with Red Bull (FORCES Corporate Partner) to bring Alex Mason, a world champion slackline professional, to provide demonstration and instruction for our participants during teambuilding exercises using the high ropes course.

Bruce Gillman, Professor, FLCC, leads an interpretive hike on plant identification. Photo Credit: FORCES NYS OPRHP.



Trainapalooza was held at Ganondagan State Historic Site on June 2-3, and 39 students and staff attended the two day training event. Effective program planning, bird identification, communicating with park patrons, plant identification, and invasive species removals were topics included in the workshop.

FORCES Member Awards

Leadership Awards: Alexa Tumbarello, Diana Jagde, Brandyn Balch

Service Awards: Kyle Webster, Connor Pierce, Rebecca Cosgrove

Active FORCES Clubs

Hartwick College
Le Moyne College
SUNY ESF
SUNY Geneseo
SUNY Oneonta
Wells College

Affiliated Institutions

Cazenovia College
Cornell University
Finger Lakes Community College
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Ithaca College
Niagara University
Onondaga Community College
Pace University
SUNY Binghamton

SUNY Brockport
SUNY Cobleskill
SUNY Cortland
SUNY Morrisville
SUNY Oswego
SUNY Plattsburgh
SUNY Purchase
Saint John Fisher College
Syracuse University
Tompkins Cortland Community College

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. James Kernan

SUNY Geneseo Department of Geography



Greetings FORCES folks! I am an assistant professor of geography at SUNY Geneseo specializing in biogeography, and I study wildfire, invasive species, and conservation. It has been a thrill to be the advisor of SUNY Geneseo FORCES this past year.

A few years ago, I became involved in an initiative to form a partnership between SUNY Geneseo and Letchworth State Park related to a new Nature Center in the park. Serendipitously, a student contacted me a few months after discussions began, and told me about a great program called FORCES. I agreed to be the advisor, and a group of highly motivated students launched Geneseo FORCES, and were officially on the books as a student organization in fall 2015.

It has been a wild ride since then, and FORCES has blossomed into one of the largest, most active student organizations on campus. They hold programs nearly every weekend at Letchworth State Park, Genesee Valley Conservancy (a regional land trust) lands, and the Roemer Arboretum on our campus. They also ran an event for an afterschool program for underrepresented youth, and helped

raise over \$16,000 for the Nature Center at Letchworth.

FORCES was one of three student run organizations (out of more than 200) recognized with a campus

Volunteer and Service Award this spring, and President Brandyn Balch received a leadership award at the FORCES Summit. Geneseo FORCES also won the 2016 Livingston County Environmental Management Council Earth Day Award for its commitment to environmental education.

Their dedication is year round, and they have ten work days scheduled in Letchworth over the summer. Geneseo FORCES is doing great things throughout our community, and has been an inspiration to many people, including myself!



FORCES SUNY Geneseo wins Livingston County Earth Day Award. Photo credit: Ben Beagle, Livingston News.

SUNY Geneseo

Brandyn Balch, Club President

This spring, FORCES of SUNY Geneseo maintained its momentum to finish strong with 592 volunteer hours and 637.5 recreation hours logged for the semester. This brings our organization totals to exactly 1000 volunteer hours and 861.5 recreation hours.

Our camping trip was a blast! Drum circles, star gazing, hiking, Brandyn's (world famous) BBQ chicken skewers, naps in the sun-- and, of course, 30 volunteers removing barberry for FIVE HOURS on Saturday! Letchworth management was quite impressed with the piles of barberry waiting for them at the roadside. We also led a hike with The Bridge, an after school program out of downtown Mount Morris for underprivileged youth. Eight children ages four to thirteen were engaged with the environment in ways they had never experienced before, and were able to appreciate the beauty of Letchworth for the first time. These are only two of

the many fantastic events we led this spring.

During the spring, we were awarded with not one but TWO prestigious volunteerism awards; the SUNY Geneseo 2016 Volunteer and Service Award, and the 2016 Livingston County Environmental Management Council Earth Day Award. Not bad for our first year!

Upcoming summer volunteer events include the Ganondagan Native American Dance and Music Festival, Letchworth State Park pale swallow-wort control, and an ash seed collection workshop.



Spring camping trip at Letchworth State Park. Photo credit: FORCES SUNY Geneseo.



SUNY ESF

Kyle Webster, Club President
Brigitte Wierzbicki, Club VP

Hello All from ESF FORCES!

We've had an exciting end to our spring semester at ESF. Many club members have successfully graduated (congrats!) including 4 out of 5 of our officers. We are grateful to have had some dedicated club members step up and fill the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Social Media Chair. And another big thanks to the hard work of our current and upcoming Treasurers, Cara Keogh and Sam Benedict, in preparing our budget proposal and nearly tripling our funding from ESF!

This spring we had many fun and productive events in our state parks. Together with Le Moyne FORCES we potlucked, sharing a bounty of great food, and hid our uniquely decorated geocaches throughout Green Lakes State Park. We also enjoyed a great camping trip, in our brand new club tents, at Ganondagan State Historic Site. There,

members identified and tagged over 250 ash trees for future surveying and monitoring for emerald ash borer (EAB) by park staff. Later that evening we were joined by Tom Hughes and his daughters for a fun cookout and campfire outside the bark longhouse. ESF FORCES also donated over 55 milkweed, 60 beebalm, and 20 white snakeroot seedlings, grown in the ESF greenhouses from seed collected at Green Lakes to Ganondagan for use in restoration plantings.

Next fall I look forward to seeing what new and creative events the club puts on. In the meantime, I hope everyone enjoys their summer!



Ash tree survey crew. Photo credit: FORCES SUNY ESF.

Hartwick College

Caitlin Hawley, Club President

This 2016 spring semester Hartwick College FORCES took on a few projects involving Robert V. Riddell State Park, Silverlake in New Berlin, NY, and Mine Kill State Park.

We removed invasive multiflora rose on April 16th at Mine Kill State Park. A big group of Hartwick FORCES cleared a path for one of the hiking trails at Mine Kill! We also went kayaking for a fun recreational activity after!

The next event was a Greek Life Clean-Up Henderson Trail day in Robert V. Riddell State Park. We had over 80 volunteers from Hartwick College Greek Life clean up the Henderson trail that leads up to Mud Lake. It was a great opportunity, and we got a lot done with the amount of hands that volunteered.

The last event we had was a bird-box build in New Berlin, New York for a man named Bill Hoogterp. Bill is opening a new nature reserve and asked for

help on getting started with the new preserve around Silver Lake. Out of our eight volunteers we built four bird boxes for the nature reserve!

Next semester we are excited to have plenty more invasive species removals and more volunteer events than this semester with our continued support from Hartwick and the State Parks!



Multiflora rose removal at Mine Kill State Park. Photo Credit: FORCES Hartwick College.



The spring 2016 semester was the first full semester that Le Moyne FORCES was recognized and funded as a Le Moyne organization. Throughout the semester we gained both interested students and faculty. When the weather finally cooperated we were able to go out and enjoy the community!



Ben, Jensen, and Kathryn volunteer to check in participants at the 10th annual Women in Nature program. Photo credit: FORCES NYS OPRHP.

One of our first events that we had was a bird watching outing with one of Le Moyne's biology professors. We went to various locations around Onondaga Lake to learn and see a variety of species in the environment. Three of our officers, both current and future, attended the 2nd Annual FORCES Summit at Hartwick College's Pine Lake campus in Oneonta, where we met people from other FORCES organizations and were able to learn from them things that they have done that have been successful. Our next event was at Green Lakes where we had a potluck with ESF FORCES and then we split up into groups to hide geocaches throughout the park. Another event we took part in was volunteering at the Women in Nature event at the Pompey Rod & Gun Club where multiple members helped with various activities at the program. We also participated in I Love My Park Day at Green Lakes. For our final event we had a booth at Le Moyne's Earth Jam where we made terrariums out of mason jars. Many people loved them and gained interest in our organization for the upcoming semester.

With three out of the four officers graduating, the upcoming fall semester is in good hands with a new set of officers who have been active members and are looking to grow the organization even further. They're planning events that will interest many at various State Parks and on Le Moyne's Campus.

This semester, FORCES members from Wells College took part in a variety of different activities. We visited Fillmore Glen State Park to help clean hedgerows around campsites and clear woody debris from the main lawn. Seven students participated in I Love My Park Day at Fillmore Glen, and we worked to clean leaf debris out of culverts along the hiking trails. FORCES members conducted an ash tree survey at Long Point State Park to identify the trees and practice recording measurements of diameter at breast height (DBH). Members of FORCES and the Wells community attended a Sustainability Series talk by Tom Hughes and Josh Teeter that addressed citizen science in the state park system and the role of the organization.

Club bonding took place at Robert H. Treman State Park as students shared a picnic lunch and hiked along the Rim Trail. Wells FORCES also traveled to Taughannock Falls State Park to help transplant native wildflower species with FORCES Program Specialist, Becky Sibner. In the fall semester, Wells FORCES members look forward to participating in FORCES at the New York State Fair in August. We also plan to continue invasive species mapping and removal on campus, as well as hosting nature hikes and fun events for the Wells students and the surrounding community of Aurora.



Wells College FORCES volunteers work on trails for I Love My Park Day held on May 7, 2016. Photo credit: FORCES Wells College.



SUNY Oneonta

SUNY Oneonta continued working on their educational program “Young Scientists”, partnering with Oneonta Middle School. Topics this semester included capillary action in plants, creating a biome in a bag, and a sounds of nature hike at Robert V. Riddell State Park.



Allison Rickard, Alanna Bergstrom, and Jason Fanton attend the FORCES Summit at Hartwick College’s Pine Lake Environmental Campus. Photo credit: FORCES NYS OPRHP.

A few words from our students...

“It is a great atmosphere and it is fulfilling work, where I can learn and make a difference at the same time. I feel benefitted because of the experience this gives me for future employment.” –Paula Merkle

“I am very lucky to have had this experience with NYS Parks. I met some really great individuals, learned a variety of new skills, and this internship helped me land a position after graduation!” –Courtney Pitman

“This position appealed to me because I wanted something to take my skills from the classroom and apply them to real world situations... This internship taught me more than I would’ve expected, from surveying skills to basic knowledge about native and invasive species in the area. I truly enjoyed this and wish I would’ve gotten an internship with FORCES earlier in my college career. I was able to meet and work alongside some truly great people.”- Zack Connor, Spring 2016

SAVE the DATE Fall Gathering October 2nd, 2016

The FORCES Gathering is an event for students to develop networking skills, attend career trainings, and celebrate program accomplishments in a social setting.



Left: Students and staff play twister at the 2015 FORCES Gathering. Right: Students network before career trainings. Photo credit: FORCES OPRHP.

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Steward Spotlight: COAS Update by Cody Gilbertson

Natural Resources Conservation Steward
MS Candidate Conservation Biology, SUNY ESF

In captivity, we are able to support 240 endangered Chittenango Ovate Amber Snails (COAS) with the help of the NYS parks employees, volunteers, and FORCES stewards. Our summer is off



Kaitlyn Shanahan, Selene Munoz, and Lukas Evans provide caretaking for COAS. Photo credit: Cody Gilbertson.

to a great start with COAS population surveys, outreach events, and COAS habitat management.

The entire COAS population is only found in one location in the world; Chittenango Falls State Park. These thumb width sized snails are federally threatened with a wild population of approximately 300 individuals. As part of the US Fish and Wildlife service recovery plan for this species, establishing captive colonies can provide backup if the wild population were to go extinct and may help to augment the current population.

Providing proper diet is a large part of supporting our captive snail colony. Part of my graduate research work determined what type of detritus was preferred by COAS. Our team (referred to as “Snailers”) helps collect the types of leaves consumed so that we are stocked up. Obtaining leaves is difficult in the winter when the ground is frozen or during late summer when leaves have decomposed. We change each of the 13 COAS terrariums in the lab weekly by cleaning out containers, accounting for all snails, and refreshing their food (specific types of dead leaves).

Not only are COAS only found in one location, they are also challenged with pale swallow-wort (PSW), an invasive plant that takes over native vegetation. It is critical to manage PSW so that native vegetation supporting COAS is not displaced. Removal of plants within the habitat is extra tedious and time consuming because we have to inspect every plant for possible snails. Additionally, we make sure no snails are stepped on while we are working within the habitat which can be a precarious pursuit!

Early action of reducing PSW in and around the habitat will help minimize effects on COAS.

Working with such a small animal has opened my eyes to a world oftentimes overlooked. Some invertebrate conservation has caught the attention of the public and receives some support. However there are many species that continue to decline and receive little to no attention. Spreading the word about our unique local snail species will hopefully continue the interest and conservation support needed to protect COAS into the future.



Above: Adult COAS snail. Photo credit: Cody Gilbertson. Left: New COAS hatchlings bred in captivity. Photo credit: Cody Gilbertson.



USFWS Biologist Sandra Doran (left) identifies COAS while Patricia Shulenburg (OPRHP), Chelsea Smith (Rosamond Gifford Zoo), and Sara Peterson (Cazenovia College) sort snails. Photo credit: Cody Gilbertson.

For more information about 2016 FORCES Stewards see *The Force Behind FORCES* publication coming soon to our website.

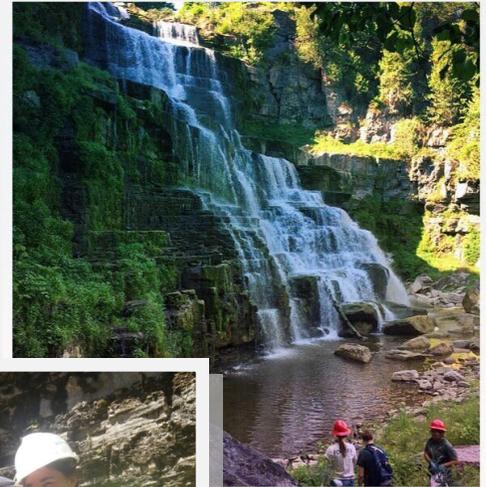
The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



Above: Alexis Pike and Sara McNamara test water for nitrates and turbidity. Right: SUNY ESF students decorate recycling bins for Green Lakes State Park.



Above: Red Bull athlete Alex Mason demonstrates slacklining at the FORCES Summit. Left: SUNY Morrisville surveys for hemlock woolly adelgid.

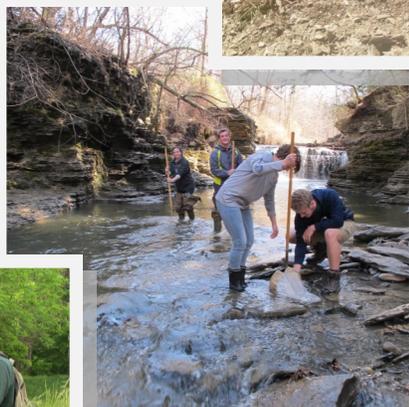


Above: FORCES stewards prepare for COAS population surveys. Photo credit: CJ Cerio. Left: Cornell University Outdoor Odyssey cleans up the gorge trail at Robert H. Treman State Park.



Above: Mike Ferri (SUNY Cortland) oils Canada goose eggs at Chenango Valley State Park.

Photo credits:
FORCES
NYS OPRHP



Above: Ithaca College samples for macroinvertebrates. Left: Elijah Kruger (Letchworth State Park) instructs bird identification at Trainapalooza.



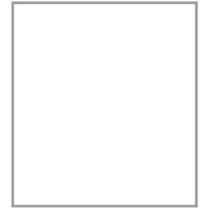
SUNY Oswego students tackle amur honeysuckle at Fair Haven Beach State Park.



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation
and Environmental Stewardship



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Photo Credit:
Jennifer Williams

Buttermilk Falls State Park

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