



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship

Summer 2025 Newsletter

Vol. 10 Issue 2

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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.

“Photo” Synthesis - Plants and People

Tom Hughes, Environmental Stewardship Biologist
Central Region FORCES Program Manager

As we think about what connects us to our planet, it seems clear that plants are a big part of what drives our curiosity and appreciation for the environment. We need plants to survive, after all! Our teams of talented environmental staff, educators, and students are constantly working to protect and promote plants in State Parks. Please check out Fisher St. Claire’s “The Mosses of Robert H. Treman” in our ‘Steward Spotlight’ (page 2). It is our collective mission to preserve native plant biodiversity, and we have so many ongoing efforts to do so, including protecting eastern hemlocks from hemlock woolly adelgid (pages 6&10) and controlling invasive water chestnut in Sterling Pond at Fairhaven Beach State Park (page 8). Of course, these projects are just a snapshot of all that we are doing. We encourage you to dig a little deeper into this issue of our FORCES newsletter, and get to the root of all this excitement! Send us photos!



Flower power - yellow lady slippers and trout lilies bloom brilliant. Photos: OPRHP

Attention FORCES Stewards!!!

Next time you are out in the field, please keep a look out for nature’s beauty. We would love to see all the plants and flowers in our State Parks through your collective lenses. You never know when you are going to encounter something rare that we would love to know about!



In early June, Environmental Stewardship staff, FORCES Stewards and SUNY Climate Corps surveyed Lily Lake and botanized at Chenango Valley State Park. Photo: OPRHP

CSTEP Selfie

In April, students from SUNY Oswego’s Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program toured the Bird Conservation Area and grasslands at Green Lakes. Photo: OPRHP



Steward Spotlight: Fisher St. Claire

Conservation Steward, Finger Lakes Region

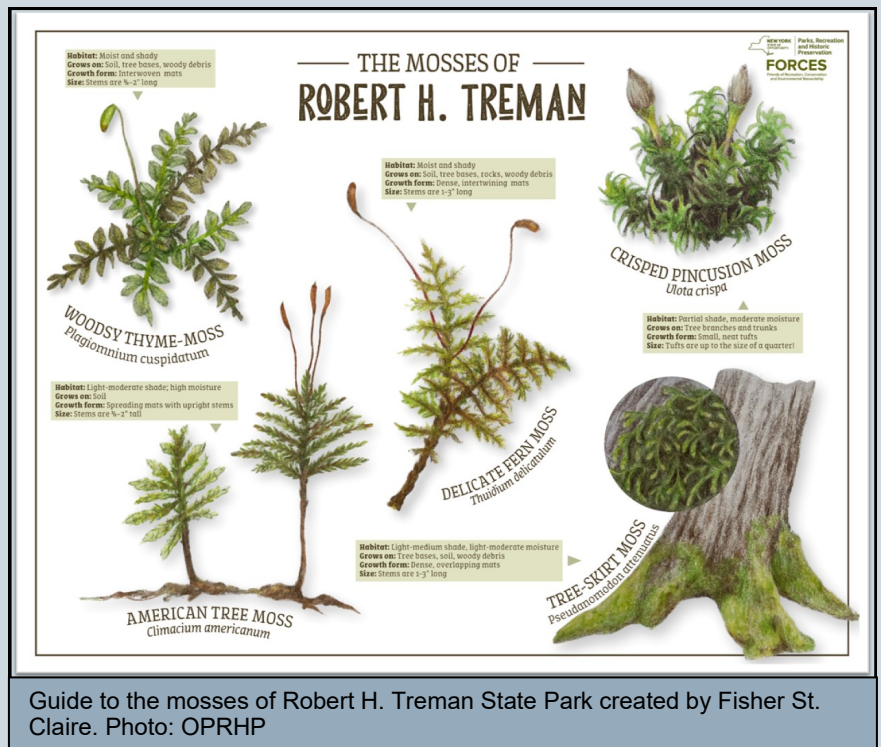


This spring, I embarked on my fourth and final semester with the FORCES program and knew I wanted to really get the most out of the experience. Along with population surveys, invasive removals, falcon monitoring, and countless other adventures in conservation, I gained a lot of insight into the practice of environmental interpretation. After attending a workshop led by Carlin Shew and reading a book on the subject, I wanted to get hands-on experience developing interpretive materials. To do this, I took on a project to create a visitor's scavenger hunt exploring the moss species at Robert H. Treman State Park.

The first stage of the process involved learning moss identification, which is a whole world in itself! I learned from books, Finger Lakes Regional Biologist Charlie Ippolito, and online resources about moss diversity, physiology, and identification to key out some of the many species present in

the park. Next, I mapped the species I found in order to determine which ones visitors are most likely to encounter based on location and density. Finally, I picked the most charismatic mosses and created botanical drawings to highlight their identifiable characteristics. To make the final product, I compiled these drawings and necessary information about size and habitat.

This project completely opened my eyes to the wonderful diversity of life happening at such a tiny scale, and I was delighted to share this wonder with others! I'm so grateful for all this semester with FORCES has taught me—through this project, the connections I've made, and all of the work days I was able to experience. While this is my last semester as a FORCES Steward, I'm looking forward to staying involved with State Parks and continuing my passion for conservation work and education!



"I learned so much about plants, raptors, invasive species management, HWA, and deer surveys. This internship has helped me begin to make my goals of working as an environmental scientist a reality and I am so grateful and excited!"

~Samantha Little, Conservation Steward, Niagara University

Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

It was another incredible spring with lots of projects including raptor, salamander, shorebird, HWA (hemlock woolly adelgid), macroinvertebrate, and deer surveys, Canada goose population management, environmental education and so much more! Our Stewards showed up each day with positive attitudes and eager to get to work. The many hours of commitment, in all kinds of spring weather, from each of you are incredibly appreciated; you are valued!

Our 10th Annual Leadership Summit was held at Green Lakes State Park on April 6th. We celebrated 26 FORCES Stewards and SCA members with a potluck lunch, an interpretive lake hike, a lake ecology study, and discussing how Stewards can get the most out of FORCES.

Save the Date for our 10th Annual FORCES Fall Membership Gathering on Sunday, October 19th, at Verona Beach State Park!



10th Annual FORCES Leadership Summit at Green Lakes. Photo: OPRHP

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SUNY Brockport
SUNY Cobleskill
SUNY Cortland
SUNY ESF*
SUNY Geneseo*
SUNY Morrisville
SUNY New Paltz
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SUNY Oswego
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SUNY Purchase
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Alfred University
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Vassar College
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***Denotes FORCES Clubs**

Baker High School
Fayetteville-Manlius High School
Honeoye Middle/High School
Liverpool High School
Nottingham 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

Featured Project: Hunting for Herps at Hollister Spencer State Recreation Area

Abbey Welch, Regional Stewardship Project Coordinator, Finger Lakes Region



One of Harriet Hollister Spencer's many vernal pools. Photo: OPRHP

As anyone who has visited Harriet Hollister Spencer State Recreation Area (HHS) will know, this Park's property contains many unique traits and habitats that make it stand out. One very identifiable characteristic is its enormous vernal pool complex. With around 120 vernal pools and at least 20 ephemeral stream floodplains that cover over 12 acres of land: these small wetlands are rather ubiquitous throughout HHS. Vernal pool ecosystems support essential and invaluable habitat for several rare plants as well as many amphibian species that do not breed anywhere else. For these reasons, NYSDEC recently updated the state's protection status of these critical habitats to better conserve these often-overlooked wetlands for years to come.

Earlier this year, Finger Lakes Environmental Stewardship Team (FL-EST) staff began a project that aimed to fully map and survey the vernal pools at HHS to improve our understanding of the health and biotic integrity of these communities. This included a variety of survey initiatives such as water quality monitoring, vegetation surveys, amphibian egg mass counts, and macroinvertebrate surveys. Of these four aspects, the latter two proved to be the largest undertaking. With so many vernal pools and ephemeral stream floodplains to be surveyed within the span of just over a month during peak amphibian breeding season, it was quickly apparent that this would be an all-hands-on-deck scenario. With the help of many volunteers including FORCES Program Stewards, SCA educators, Conservation Stewards and other park staff: these surveys were able to be fully completed without a hitch. Volunteers were trained to identify different egg masses, adult and juvenile amphibians, and macroinvertebrates that they might encounter as well as the basics surrounding the FL-EST's survey protocols. With all of the data that was collected, the FL-EST hopes to use their results to better understand how they can further conserve and protect this habitat at HHS for the many species that call it their home.



Juvenile toad. Photo: OPRHP



Salamander larvae. Photo: OPRHP

Throughout these surveys, there was evidence of several amphibian species breeding in the vernal pools such as wood frogs and spotted salamanders; as well as a wide variety of macroinvertebrates from detritus feeders like fairy shrimp and case-making caddisflies, to predators like dragonfly nymphs and hellgrammites. The amphibian egg mass data has revealed a total of 38 vernal pools and floodplains that were productive by NYSDEC standards this spring, as well as an additional 21 that had some amphibian egg masses within them. This means that not only these productive pools are eligible for direct conservation, but also all others within the same vernal pool complex.

Our team sends out a huge thanks to everyone that helped us complete this wonderful work!

Alumni Spotlight: Mark Kicher

Arborist Representative, Bartlett Tree Experts



I first learned of opportunities with NYS Parks and the FORCES program in the spring of 2013 when I was a sophomore at Morrisville State College. I had connected with Amy Kochem during an event at the Roger's Center in Sherburne. We discussed potential career paths within Parks and what I was interested in at the time. Following my Junior year at Morrisville in the spring of 2014, I applied to a Central Region Invasive Species Strike Team position and later interviewed with Tom Hughes and Amy. I was hired as the team supervisor and my journey with FORCES and NYS Parks began. During that summer the team and I were able to visit and work at 16 separate State Parks and Historic Sites mapping and mechanically removing invasive plant species. We were involved with many projects including education days, trail walks, the State Fair and school programs. I was grateful for the opportunity, and I knew FORCES would help guide my future.

Following my graduation from Morrisville in the spring of 2015 I quickly returned to NYS Parks and was hired into another Stewardship position at Green Lakes State Park as the Bird Conservation Area Supervisor. This position was focused on maintaining and restoring a 400-acre parcel located within the park back into open native grass that was bordered with wooded edges and rolling hills. I worked in this position for about six months before leaving Parks to take a position as a climbing arborist in Worcester, Massachusetts. My move to New England was exciting as I expanded my career and met new people. I loved working in the outdoors and took many lessons I learned from NYS Parks along with me.

In the spring of 2016, I received a call from Tom Hughes that there may be opportunities with Parks and FORCES in the upcoming summer if I was interested. I made the decision to move back to the Syracuse area to take a permanent position as a Park Worker 3 at Green Lakes State Park. It was a very unique position as I was still focused on the environmental stewardship of the park while working with the general maintenance staff. I had a broad range of duties from mowing, plumbing, carpentry, tree removal, environmental education, recruitment and still working with Tom and Amy on various small projects. I have always held the FORCES program in a special place, the people I was able to work with and the opportunities that it gave me are priceless.

I left NYS Parks in the winter of 2019 to take a position as an Arborist Representative with Bartlett Tree Experts, and I am still in that position today. My wife, three children and I still live in the Syracuse area and frequently hike the parks that I started my career journey in. It was a joy to be a part of the FORCES program, and I couldn't thank them enough for the experience!



The FORCES Roots Alumni Network mission is multifold: preserve the legacy and connections of FORCES Alumni; connect past, present, and future FORCES Stewards; and provide professional development opportunities for those who share a passion for our New York State Parks-and the environment as a whole.

We want the Roots Network to amplify the passions of our Stewards, share FORCES Family stories, and help each other grow personally and professionally in the field we care so much about. If you are interested, we encourage you to join the FORCES Roots Alumni Network group on LinkedIn and connect with fellow Stewards there. Share job opportunities, highlights from your current positions, and relevant events amongst good friends.

Central Region Update

Mike Serviss, Environmental Stewardship Biologist, Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist, and Kennedy Sullivan, Piping Plover Project Coordinator

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) was one of our main focuses in Central Region this spring. We finished up HWA surveys at ten parks in April. HWA has now been detected at 11 of 15 Central Region State Parks that contain hemlock trees or forests. New additions to the HWA list this season included Lorenzo State Historic Site and Verona Beach State Park. Early detections at both parks were also first detections in Madison and Oneida counties, respectively. Unfortunately, since our first State Park detection of HWA in the region in 2019, the destructive forest pest has spread throughout almost the entire region over the past 6 years. All hope is not lost, however, as we continue to manage HWA by releasing predatory biocontrol insects in partnership with the New York State Hemlock Initiative and chemically treating hemlocks in strategic locations. This spring, hemlocks at Clark Reservation and Mexico Point State Parks received chemical treatments to help slow the spread of HWA and protect habitat for both common and rare or endangered species that rely on hemlock forests.

Additional work in the region included early season invasive species management. The SUNY Morrisville Invasive Species Lab returned to Clark Reservation State Park for a 9th consecutive year to help remove common buckthorn and other invasive shrubs! We also collected data on hundreds of reintroduced American hart's-tongue ferns that we planted over the last ten years to help recover populations of this threatened species in central New York. The ferns are surviving and growing beyond expectations, and we hope to see increased reproduction over the coming years.

We also warmly welcomed back two members of our Environmental Stewardship Team this spring: Raquel Mennella and Ethan Winter. Raquel returned for a third term with Parks and serves as an Invasive Species and Plant Conservation Coordinator. Ethan returned for a second term with Parks and serves as a Wildlife Technician. Welcome back Ethan and Raquel!

~Mike



Left: Raquel Mennella, American Hart's-Tongue Fern Technician, Right: Ethan Winter, Wildlife Technician.
Photos: OPRHP



This spring, the Central Region Wildlife Team made significant strides in managing Canada geese and assessing forest health across four New York State Parks. Their proactive efforts focused on ensuring a balanced environment for both park visitors and wildlife, addressing concerns like human-wildlife conflict and potential water quality degradation from large goose populations.

Through a combination of hazing and egg addling, the team successfully managed goose populations in high-traffic areas, treating eight nests and 40 eggs at locations such as the Erie Canal and Battle Island Golf Course. A notable innovation this spring was the deployment of remote-controlled cars, offering a humane and effective way to deter geese from golf courses without relying on firearms. The team also remained vigilant, monitoring Canada geese at Green Lakes State Park for avian influenza (cont'd p. 7).

Central Region Update (Cont'd)

Mike Serviss, Environmental Stewardship Biologist, Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist, and Kennedy Sullivan, Piping Plover Project Coordinator



Treated Canada goose nest from Battle Island State Golf Course. Photo: OPRHP

Complementing these efforts, FORCES Stewards from SUNY ESF collaborated with park staff to continue vital long-term forest health monitoring. By tracking red-backed salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*), a sensitive indicator species, in eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) stands at Selkirk Shores, Mexico Point, and Robert V. Riddell State Parks, they discovered over two hundred individuals in six surveys. This

encouraging finding suggests the ecosystems remain healthy and resilient.

~Delaney



DESP Wildlife Staff (l to r) Ethan Winter, Kennedy Sullivan, and Delaney Kalsman. Photo: OPRHP

Our spring season started off by recruiting as much help as we can muster on the beach with a volunteer orientation hosted through one of our partners, Onondaga Audubon. This generated a full force of support (14 interested people!) when locals came out in April to erect our symbolic fencing and ATV deterrent fencing. We welcomed Makayla Cobb, Sam Young, and Sophia Goff as our 2025 season FORCES team. Jillie McLeod, a full-time Onondaga Audubon technician, also joined the team! With this, SUNY Jefferson Community College took the time to clean up our shoreline to prepare for Piping Plovers!

Monitoring officially began on April 1st, with SUNY ESF Birding Club coming out one day to help. Hawkeye, a returning male, flew back on April 24th. Unfortunately, a female did not fly in on time to begin a nest this season. Hawkeye is still determined to find a mate, sticking around with our team at Sandy Island Beach SP. Even without a nest, our team continued normal operations by focusing on education and outreach. Stewards traveled across the Central Region by tabling at Derby Day, the Oswego River Festival, Green Lakes SP, Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and Zoo New York. Memorial Day Weekend brought bad weather, so our team (and Hawkeye) did not have to worry about huge visitation on the beach! They all are rockstars and have done a great job helping out this season!

~Kennedy



The 2025 Plover Staff and Stewards along with local volunteers. Photo: OPRHP

Partner Highlight: New York State Outdoor Education Association (NYSOEA)

Carlin Shew, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region and NYSOEA Central Region Director

“Have you heard about NYSOEA?” was the question that opened the doors to a world of professional growth and inspiration for myself and many others in the FORCES network over the years. The New York State Outdoor Education Association (NYSOEA) is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization supporting outdoor and environmental education, outdoor recreation, and interpretive services since 1968. The mission of NYSOEA is to promote interdisciplinary lifelong learning in, for, and about the outdoors and seeks to inspire appreciation of the environment by all people.



After getting involved with NYSOEA during my position with New York State Parks, I realized the goals of both myself as a FORCES Program Specialist and NYSOEA connected closely. NYSOEA aims to promote public awareness of the value of outdoor and environmental education and interpretation, while fostering a lifelong appreciation and sense of stewardship for the environment. They also work to assist members in expanding their knowledge and skills in utilizing the environment for responsible educational purposes. In my role with FORCES, these are goals and values I hold professionally and personally. Each day I work with FORCES Stewards, or connect with a park visitor, I am striving towards helping foster their connection to nature, and a sense of stewardship for our Parks. The connections I have made with NYSOEA have helped me grow the skills required to meet these goals.



NYSOEA Board of Directors, 2024. Photo: Shew

I delved headfirst into my first years with NYSOEA, joining the board of directors, leading regional events and presenting at the annual conference. Each event that I was lucky enough to attend through NYSOEA was packed with moments of connection—small and large. Group discussions and one-on-one chats with some of the most inspiring educators I have had the pleasure to meet. It seemed to me that every individual I connected with in NYSOEA was a friendly face and an open book, eager to share their passion and experience. These opportunities lead me to mentorship and sustained connections with naturalists who I continue to learn and seek inspiration from to this day. I always leave a NYSOEA event with my head *and* my heart full!

On June 22nd, NYSOEA Western Region Director and OPRHP Environmental Educator, Elijah Kruger, and I co-hosted a meet-up event at Fair Haven Beach State Park. Outdoor education lovers, including current FORCES Stewards, staff, and alumni gathered on the shore of Lake Ontario. Participants launched kayaks onto Sterling Pond from the Park's brand-new kayak rental shack located just on the right side of State Park Rd. as you enter the Sabin Point beach area. The vehicle entrance and kayak fee was provided by NYSOEA. Paddlers immediately started recognizing and enjoying the sights and sounds of the park. From tiny sunbathing painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta*), swans, swallows and kingfishers flying—the fauna of the park provided the perfect amount of entertainment and curiosity. Many laughs were had as binoculars were passed boat to boat, inspecting anything that caught their attention (cont'd p. 9).



NYSOEA Meet-up attendees, Fair Haven Beach State Park. Photo: Shew

Partner Highlight: New York State Outdoor Education Association (NYSOEA) Cont'd

Carlin Shew, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region and NYSOEA Central Region Director

As the group paddled up Sterling Pond exploring the meandering marsh, flora-lovers enjoyed identifying floating vegetation including introduced species like waterchestnut (*Trapa natans*) and spatterdock (*Nuphar advena*), as well as native species like flowering American white waterlily (*Nymphaea odorata*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), and our native hibiscus- the swamp rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos* L. ssp. *moscheutos*). After about two hours of paddling, participants finally made it back to shore where they shared a picnic lunch overlooking Lake Ontario before going their separate ways, either home or to continue enjoying the area's appealing swimming, and nearby trails at Chimney Bluffs State Park. Regional NYSOEA meet-ups are a great way to meet and stay in touch with fellow naturalists in your area.



Swamp rose mallow. Photo: Shew



The best way to truly experience what NYSOEA has to offer is to attend the annual conference! **The 57th annual NYSOEA Conference** will be on November 6th-9th, 2025 at Fresh Air Fund's Sharpe Reservation in Fishkill, NY. Attendees can experience the conference for the day, or spend the weekend with educators from all over New York State and beyond. Network with peers, attend workshops, and participate in group natural history outings, all while supporting outdoor education. This year's conference theme is "Nature is Everywhere" with workshop strands including Planting Seeds for a Better Future, Teach your Niche, Urban Ecology, Outdoors is for All, and Creative Flow.

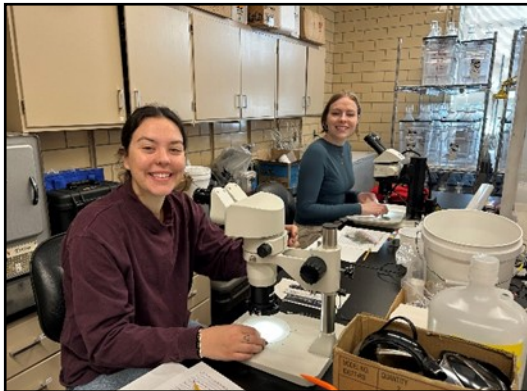
This year, NYSOEA is meeting their goal of engaging classroom teachers and youth leaders by offering Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) credits and offering teacher scholarships. Student scholarships are always offered for NYSOEA Conferences, so if you are interested in attending, but not able to cover the conference fees, look out for the easy-to-fill scholarship application. Registration and scholarships will be coming soon, so be sure to stay up-to-date on all things NYSOEA Annual Conference 2025 by signing up for email alerts. We hope to see you there! <https://www.nysoea.org/annual-conference-2025.html>

"This internship boosted my confidence and helped me accept that learning is a continuous process. Overall, the experience expanded my understanding of potential career options within conservation. A highlight was the camping trip for Trainapalooza, which pushed me out of my comfort zone and strengthened my connection to the team and the work we did."

~Patty McHugh, Conservation Steward, Ithaca College

Finger Lakes Region Update

Carlin Shew, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region



"Gold Team" Friday Stewards Zoe and Maddie, processing HWA at the New York State Hemlock Initiative Lab. Photo: OPRHP

FORCES in the Finger Lakes Region had a fruitful spring semester! 10 spring Stewards were welcomed onto the team, eight of them consistently working Mondays and Fridays. The Monday Team consisted of Fisher St. Claire, Lily Marks, Patty McHugh, Ben Newsome, and Nicole Schroeders from Ithaca College. Zoe Paradis Sten from Ithaca College and Maddie Blake from Binghamton University worked on Fridays. These teams dedicated full days throughout the semester that they spent assisting environmental stewardship in the Finger Lakes, spearheading survey work, as well as supporting new and recurring collaborations throughout our State Parks. The early months brought chilly days where students focused on training and orienting to the position, but as the weather warmed, our work picked up quickly. Additional students, Aly Richards from Ithaca College and James Donovan from University at Buffalo worked independently, informally assisting crews throughout the semester.

Each week brought a new and exciting task for our Stewards- be it researching overwintering mortality of hemlock woolly adelgid in our parks, getting to tour NYSHI (New York State Hemlock Initiative) at Cornell, assessing deer abundance at Taughannock Falls by looking at pellet-group counts, or surveying for Eastern red-backed salamanders—the students explored multiple projects across 12 parks in the region. Stewards also assisted different regional teams including helping trails crew with brush trimming at Sampson, assisting horticulture with weeding and mulching the bath house at Stony Brook, and supporting Environmental Stewardship staff with vernal pool surveys at Harriet Hollister Spencer.



"Green Team" Monday Stewards Fisher, Lily, Patty, Ben, Katie, and Nicole posing at Taughannock Falls State Park's sledding hill. Photo: OPRHP

Collaborations this semester were plentiful, including hosting our annual Ithaca College (IC) lab section at Buttermilk Falls State Park where students broke into groups to survey for benthic macroinvertebrates (BMI) in the creek to assess stream health, as well as monitor hemlock canopy health and adelgid density in the forest along the Bear Trail. This collaboration between FORCES and IC has been ongoing for almost a decade; a big thank you as always to the wonderful Anne Stork, Environmental Studies & Sciences Professor. We also began a partnership with Chemung County Cornell Cooperative Extension for the first time this year. Local middle school and high schoolers- largely homeschooled, and one Boy Scout troop from Elmira and Horseheads,

NY came out to Mark Twain State Park to assist our FORCES Stewards in cleaning up the turtle nest areas along the Catherine Valley Trail and pick up garbage. Chemung CCE Coordinator, Jeremy Wainwright Kraus is a FORCES alumnus, making this project collab a full circle win for the program (cont'd p. 11).



FORCES Green Team assisting Horticulture Technicians Max McCune and Maureen Nevins with weeding and mulching the landscaping beds around the new bath house facility at Stony Brook State Park. Photo: OPRHP



Finger Lakes Region Update Cont'd

Carlin Shew, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region

Finger Lakes FORCES also had some High School student engagement this semester! Two rounds of students from Corning Painted Post School District came out to join for one day for a job shadow learning experience. One of the main projects these high school shadow students (as well as our steward interns) worked on this spring was the peregrine falcon monitoring at Taughannock Falls Gorge. Our students' diligent survey work caught the unfortunate nest failure in late April within a day of it happening. While nest failure is always a sad update to pass along, it was critical to have FORCES Stewards' survey data as Park staff communicated to the DEC and confirmed the nest failure in anticipation of spring maintenance work. We are hopeful for a successful nest next year.



Job shadow students Josh and Wyatt from CPP High School survey peregrine falcons at Taughannock Falls State Park. Photo: OPRHP

FORCES spent a lot of time at Fillmore Glen State Park this semester, with several notable events including *Bloom into Spring*, a spring ephemeral flower event designed to get people the skills they need to identify all the exciting spring flowers at Fillmore Glen. Another goal of the event was to encourage participants to report those flowers on the iNaturalist 'Biodiversity of Fillmore Glen' project page. To do this, we held a **BioBlitz**! A BioBlitz is a concentrated effort to find and identify as many living species as possible within a specific area in a specific time frame. FORCES and SCA Parks Corps Stewards came together to assist this event, which was a success. Big shout out to the Friends of Fillmore Glen and The Moravia Area Garden Club (MAGiC), who sponsored this event and helped with setup and cleanup! The following weekend was *I Love My Parks Day* (ILMPD) where FORCES hosted our annual invasive species cleanup and native species planting along the creek walk near the Fillmore Room Pavilion.

We had a star group of students this semester, many of whom graduated in May. Sincere thanks to everyone who attended our virtual project expo in May to learn about the students' independent projects! Stay tuned for another expo in August. Congrats to Ben Newsome, FORCES Alumni and IC grad, who accepted a seasonal job with Horticulture this summer! All in all, Spring 2025 was a beautiful and productive semester. Looking forward to continuing the good work this summer!



Left: Mattix Lufrano identifies a trout lily. Right: Jenna Canipe and ILMPD participants carrying some of the ~100 native plugs we planted. Photos: OPRHP



Ithaca College Students sorted & collected benthic macroinvertebrate specimens at Buttermilk Falls along the Bear Trail. Photo: OPRHP

Faculty Highlight: Jessica Sarauer

Associate Professor, Environmental and Renewable Resources, SUNY Morrisville

Hello! My name is Jessica Sarauer. I am currently an assistant professor of Environmental Science at SUNY Morrisville. I'm originally from Wisconsin where I got a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Northland College. Before arriving in New York, I also got a Master's Degree in Biology from Bemidji State University (Minnesota) and a Ph.D. in Natural Resources from The University of Idaho. Along the way I worked for the National Park Service at Grand Teton, Voyageurs, and Bryce Canyon and was a fisheries observer in the Bering Sea.

At SUNY Morrisville I can use my education and experience to provide hands-on learning opportunities for my students. At Morrisville I teach a variety of courses related to the environment including Environmental Technology, Agricultural Science, Soil Science, Advanced Soil and Water Conservation, Surface and Groundwater Management, Natural Resource Planning and Management, Tropical Ecology, and Invasive Species Management.



Most courses at Morrisville have lab sessions where we can put the classroom concepts into action. One of my favorite lab activities for my Invasive Species Management class is at Clark Reservation State Park. At Clark Reservation my students get to work alongside NYS Parks staff to learn about conserving a threatened species (American hart's-tongue fern) through the lens of invasive species management. Students get to see the fern, learn from an expert of its importance, and actively help conserve its habitat by removing invasive shrubs. In addition to invasive species removal, my students get a chance to explore the geology of Clark Reservation, experience active hemlock woolly adelgid management, and learn about NYS Parks careers and volunteer opportunities. Biologist Mike Serviss makes the service-learning lab exciting and educational. Many students identify the Clark Reservation lab as their favorite, and I look forward to working with Mike each spring!

SAVE-THE-DATE: 10/19/2025

**10th Annual FORCES Membership Gathering
Verona Beach State Park, Verona, NY**



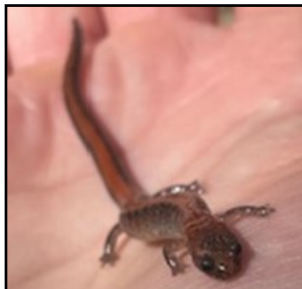
**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

A full day of networking,
discussions, food, and fun!
Open to FORCES Club Officers,
FORCES Stewards, and SCA
members.

The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



Piping plover volunteers after a long field day!



Red-backed salamander.



Hawkeye at Sandy Island Beach State Park.



FORCES Stewards and Chemung Cornell Cooperative Extension meetup at Mark Twain State Park along the Catherine Valley Trail, cleaning up the turtle nesting area and trash pick-up.



Spring 2025 Finger Lakes Stewards.

Photos: OPRHP



OPRHP Environmental Educator, Conrad Baker, talking bugs at Trainapalooza, Watkins Glen State Park.



Carlin Shew, FORCES Program Specialist, FL region teaches the plant workshop at Bloom into Spring event.



Tom Hughes holding up a macroinvertebrate at the FORCES Leadership Summit at Green Lakes State Park.



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

New York State
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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.
