



FORCES

Friends of Recreation, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship

Spring 2021 Newsletter

Vol. 6 Issue 1

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FORCES masked up for Halloween at Plant Materials Program. Photo: OPRHP

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

FORCES Masked Up, But Not Down

Tom Hughes, NRS Biologist
Central Region FORCES Program Manager

Growing up an avid angler and fishing all the time with my dad in western New York, I often used the phrase, “It’s the quality not the quantity that counts.” As FORCES embarked like so many others on this journey of life within a pandemic, I thought that we would experience a major decrease in the “quantity” of participants in our program. However, to my delight, that has not been the case. Our FORCES Stewards and staff continue to mask up, and our participant numbers are right on track— be sure to check out our 76 FORCES Stewards for 2020 in our “Who’s Who” (coming soon to our website) and page 12 of this newsletter.

So admittedly, I did not count on this unexpected quantity for 2020. What I was counting on was the “quality” of FORCES Stewards and their contributions we have come to expect over the years. I was surely not disappointed. In this issue of our FORCES newsletter, you will learn all about our Stewards’ accomplishments, conservation successes, projects and experiences during our fall and winter seasons. I was so captivated and excited to read all about Regional Conservation Steward Kelly Rife’s personal journey (page 5). Kelly—we wish you the absolute best as you embark on your next chapter with the Student Conservation Association AmeriCorps! It is truly special that FORCES was able to provide so much for your professional career. We are grateful for all our FORCES participants and their stories of success.

I am additionally grateful for the quality of our FORCES Team and all their dedicated and amazing efforts. Through these challenging times we can count on our FORCES Program Coordinator Amy Kochem to lead us. You can get a long overdue introduction to Amy in our FORCES Staff Highlight on page 7. Thank you Amy! Thank you to all our FORCES Team and supporting staff—you are so appreciated!

Reflecting here, maybe I need to rethink my quality versus quantity notion. With so many benefiting from FORCES, I’d sure like to count on that number continuing to grow— perhaps my new phrase? “With quantity comes quality!” - spoken like a true angler;)



Send us your Selfies!

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

Niagara Region Update

Alexandra Tillman, FORCES Program Specialist



Kelly, Tad, and Maddie releasing pheasants for sanctioned hunting at Wilson-Tuscarora State Park. Photo: OPRHP

This past fall, the FORCES program in the Niagara Region tackled a wide array of projects, even with the difficulties of operating during a pandemic. We had seven Stewards that worked within four groups including Trail Management, Evangola State Park Conservation, Regional Conservation, and Greenhouse Assistance.

Our Trail Management Stewards were Tad Townsend and Madison LeMere. They began their time with trail maintenance at many parks, using hand tools and brush cutters when needed. This increased the functionality of some recreational areas in the parks while ensuring the safety of the patrons was always top priority. Their largest undertaking was the creation of trail system signage at Knox Farm State Park. They used a Garmin-360 degree camera to trace the existing trail system in the park and to note where way- markers were needed. They then worked with agency staff to create trailhead maps and markers that will be installed this winter.

Our Evangola Conservation Stewards, Derek Spann and Victoria Yargeau, focused their efforts on invasive species mapping only at that specific state park. They completed surveys throughout half of the park property, and collected data that invasive species are present in 57.4 acres of that area. They faced many obstacles like severe weather, dense brush making it difficult to access areas, and a lack of cell reception throughout most of the park. Even with these challenges, they exceeded all expectations from staff and logged over 130 hours of surveying!

Jay Bortel, Kelly Rife, and Alexandra Tzanetos staffed the Regional Conservation Team. They worked on many projects throughout the region, but had three main topics. They assisted regional Environmental Stewardship Team members with completing invasive species surveys along the Niagara Gorge by using ArcGIS' Collector application. A large portion of time was dedicated to the West River Shoreline Invasive Species Removal Pilot Project, where they dedicated countless hours to removing 1,792 invasive plants; which is equal to 45 full- sized pickup truck loads! Towards the end of the season, the stewards went to multiple parks to survey for the invasive European Gypsy Moth's egg masses.

Cameron Haberl who had been our resident Greenhouse Steward retired from her position in November, after being with the Niagara FORCES program for 2 seasons. She was able to learn many valuable lessons from the staff at the facility such as the seed stratification process, caring for existing stock, and proper transplanting habits to restoration areas.



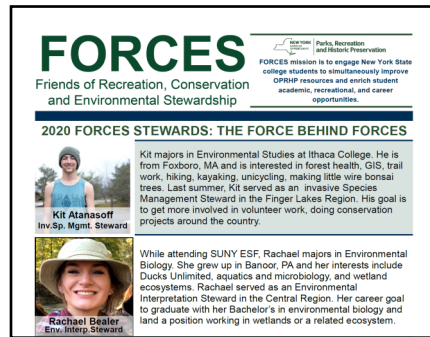
Alex and Jay surveying for invasive species along the Niagara Gorge. Photo: OPRHP

Due to rising COVID-19 cases in the area, we opted for a virtual FORCES project Expo this season. A benefit to this was that staff from all over the state were able to attend, and the stewards' family and professors could join us as well! I am looking forward to what is to come for the Niagara FORCES team this spring!

Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

For more information about 2020 FORCES Stewards, see the *Who's Who* publication on our website!



Our 2020 edition of the FORCES *Who's Who* that highlights 72 FORCES Stewards from the Niagara, Taconic, Finger Lakes, and Central regions has been published on the FORCES web page, go take a look! As always, I was very impressed at the professionalism and respect demonstrated as they worked under rigorous safety conditions.

We said goodbye to Cara Gannon, SCA Parks Corps FORCES Program Specialist. Her SCA term came to an end and we are grateful for all of Cara's assistance with field and environmental education projects in the Central Region. Her positive, enthusiastic spirit will be missed!

Our FORCES social media pages have gotten extra attention thanks to the efforts from Education and Outreach Steward, Savannah Kraus. She revised our Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn pages with bright, beautiful pictures. We encourage you to like our Facebook page and connect with us on Instagram and LinkedIn.

Our spring 2021 internship positions for the Central Region filled very quickly. If you're considering a position with us for the summer, now is the time to contact us as we have a variety of projects from invasive species management to environmental education to monitoring for piping plovers and eastern red-backed salamanders, happening across NYS.

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Taconic Region Update

Joshua DiPaola, Natural Resource Specialist

This past fall, the Stewardship Team and FORCES Stewards of Rockefeller State Park Preserve (RSPP) focused their efforts on documenting fauna biodiversity and the restoration of key habitats which were vulnerable to degradation. William Starkey and Angelica Termine, two key fall FORCES Stewards of RSPP, assisted with the placement and review of wildlife cameras throughout the preserve, with specific focus on predatory species such as coyote, bobcat, and fisher. Through countless sessions of trial and error, as well as hours of hiking through the woods on cold days, we were able to successfully document some large coyotes and a healthy mix of bobcats.

Alongside fauna initiatives, was an unexpected wildlife rehab, which literally landed on our doorstep. Common snapping turtles typically hatch within their nest in the late summer to early fall, upon which they either make a hasty scramble to the nearest waterbody or they will over-winter within their nest until the following spring. To our surprise, on a cold day in late fall, a snapping turtle hatchling was found leaning against our office door with an injured leg and showing signs of stress from cold exposure. William Starkey assisted the Natural Resource Specialist with rehabilitating this turtle back to health and it is currently showing promising signs of health, with an anticipated release for spring of 2021.

Transitioning into the colder weeks of fall, William Starkey assisted with selective, large-scale management of invasive vegetation, specifically focusing on multi-flora rose, oriental bittersweet, and Japanese angelica tree.

The aforementioned invasives were encroaching or vigorously outcompeting native species of dogwood, red maple, ash tree saplings, and other wildflowers in a key riparian zone. In an attempt to promote a healthier balance of native flora and to make our lakeside habitat more accessible to wildlife, FORCES Stewards worked alongside RSPP stewardship staff to not only remove these invasives, but to also follow-up with the propagation of native flora.



The two-camera trap images depict a coyote (top), likely exceeding 40lbs, holding its territory in the far reaches of the preserve. A bobcat (bottom) in an area of the park where this species has previously not been documented. Photo: OPRHP

“This experience has improved my academic experience by allowing me to see and physically experience the process needed to conduct a state funded field study. By experiencing it firsthand, I am also able to use my new knowledge in a professional aspect moving forward. The skills we learned ranged from camera trapping, aquatic animal trapping and release, turtle markings, small mammal trapping, trail maintenance, and much more. These newly acquired skills far exceeded my expectations for the better.”

~Felix Gonzalez, Pace University

Steward Spotlight: Kelly Rife

Kelly Rife, Regional Steward, Niagara Region



When I became a Regional Conservation Steward this past fall, I felt an overwhelming sense of relief. I am a 26-year-old college graduate with a Bachelor's in Earth Science and nothing to show for it so far. When you are young people always tell you how you have your whole life ahead of you; what they don't tell you is that there is a constant inner struggle of knowing if you're on the right path or not.

This past December was the 2-year anniversary of my college graduation. I, like many others, have needed to take on occupations less than glamorous to pay my bills. While I have managed to save a bit of money, it has been very hard not to admit defeat. My dream job has always been to become an interpretive Park Ranger, both working with people and nature. The unfortunate truth about achieving this goal is that there is a very long, difficult road to navigate before reaching that level. Many other jobs in this field require previous experience as well, which made my dreams seem even more out of reach.

I was given info about the FORCES program in the Niagara Region while visiting my lifelong friend, Carlin Wakefield, in Ithaca this past summer. Almost immediately after that trip, I assisted on an excursion to Yellowstone National Park where there was little to no cell service to stay in contact with anyone. I immediately emailed Allie Tillman, the FORCES Program Specialist for the region, and realized

how difficult the communication between us would be during my trip. By the time I returned and applied for a fall steward position, all the slots were full. At this point, I felt as though the universe was playing a cruel trick on me; but my luck changed later that week. I got a call from Allie that a spot opened up, and she couldn't even finish her sentence before I said "I'll take it!"

Working as a Regional Conservation Steward I was able to gain experience in this field and learn more information that goes along with it. I took part in projects like surveying and removal of invasive species, seed collection, pheasant releases and native plantings in restoration areas. One of the most common invasive plants in our area is *Rhamnus cathartica*, also known as common buckthorn. We had multiple projects focused on this invasive plant specifically, and I am now able to identify it at all stages of its growth. Identifying is one thing, but then you have to physically remove and treat it, which is the fun part to me!

This internship was a blessing in a time of my life where I thought all hope was gone. It can be a rewarding challenge devoting time and energy to this volunteer internship when you are a young professional out of college. For me it was a stepping-stone for a brighter future in this field and a start to building my resume for future endeavors. It also helped confirm that this is the profession for me.

All my hard work paid off because I have accepted a position in the Student Conservation Association (SCA) AmeriCorps program in New Hampshire! I am so grateful for everyone who has helped me get to where I am today. I am living proof that you do not need to have it all figured out right away after college; because there is no set timeline. Life is an adventure, embrace the journey!

Finger Lakes Region Update

Carlin Wakefield, FORCES Program Specialist



Savannah leading an afterschool ecology lesson with the Town of Danby Youth Program at Jennings Pond. Photo: OPRHP

The FORCES Program in the Finger Lakes stayed busy this fall with five stewards working in all corners of the region on a variety of projects! Environmental Education Steward, Savannah Kraus, focused on revamping FORCES social media outreach and engagement. Her hard work will hopefully bring new interest in FORCES internships across the state. Savannah lead two education programs with the Town of Danby Youth Bureau at Jennings Pond in Buttermilk Falls State Park, teaching elementary and middle school students about forest ecology and bird beak adaptations. Savannah also assisted in field work including Eastern red-backed salamander surveys and water quality monitoring for the Three Gorges Project.

History Steward, Jake Kelley, worked on finalizing a historic timeline of Robert H. Treman State Park, which notably turned 100 years old in 2020! Jake also assisted in field work such as helping the Landscape Restoration Program seed wildflowers and plant trees at the Watkins Glen State Park South entrance, and clearing invasive shrubs from around cell phone audio tour signposts at Sampson State Park alongside Savannah and the SCA Finger Lakes Environmental Education Team.



Finger Lakes SCA Environmental Education Team and FORCES Stewards team up to clear invasive shrubs at Sampson State Park around cell phone audio tour signposts. Photo: OPRHP

Invasive Species Management Steward, Sage Grasso-Monroe, worked on a variety of projects mapping and removing invasive species throughout multiple Finger Lakes parks, notably spending time on EDRR (Early Detection Rapid Response) spotted lanternfly (SLF) surveys in Ithaca area parks after an SLF outbreak was discovered near Cornell University campus. Sage also worked alongside the Finger Lake's Environmental Field Team to plant native species at Ganondagan State Historic Site, and alongside the SCA Environmental Education Team assisting the Plant Materials Program with greenhouse work at Sonnenberg Garden State Historic Site.



Colby assessing habitat suitability for brook trout. Photo: OPRHP

Brook Trout Habitat Research Steward, Colby Poerio, worked with her advisor and researcher, Susan Cushman, from Hobart and William Smith Colleges to assess habitat suitability for brook trout in multiple Finger Lakes State Parks. Stay tuned in future newsletters to learn more about the findings once Colby finalizes her report. Last but certainly not least, Chimney Bluffs Trail Steward, Adria Ivkovic, worked hard maintaining trails and educating hikers on best practices to prevent erosion of the bluffs. This work is part of an ongoing effort to preserve the wetland-bluff complex and lakeshore community that makes Chimney Bluffs State Park so unique.

FORCES Staff Highlight: Amy Kochem

FORCES Program Coordinator



I've been NYS OPRHP's FORCES Program Coordinator for almost eight years and at this point in my life, I truly feel that this position suits me very well. FORCES came into fruition a few years before I started and it has grown tremendously. My position allows me to serve as a mentor for students and I often share my collegiate and career journey and encourage students to network, take risks, and take advantage of all opportunities. I've worked with hundreds of students through FORCES, had many treasured conversations, and created life-long friendships.

I went to Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks and earned my A.A.S. in Ecology and Environmental Technology. I was turned on to environmental education when I interned as a naturalist at the NYS DEC's Rogers Environmental Education Center in the summer of '99, just before graduating with my Bachelor's Degree in Biology from SUNY Brockport. I fell in love with environmental education, the Rogers Center, and the patrons that made Rogers so special.

After graduation, I enrolled in the AmeriCorps as a Trail Crew Member for the Maine Conservation Corps. From time spent in Acadia National Park to Baxter State Park, it remains as one of my most memorable summers, filled with incredible adventures and experiences living outside, working on the Appalachian Trail. That fall, I had plans to continue with the AmeriCorps in Maine until I was

contacted by my former supervisor at Rogers Center. They were looking to fill an eight month environmental educator position from a grant through Cornell University. A few weeks later I was teaching environmental education and loving it. I took advantage of every opportunity to network with others in the field, served on committees, attended many conferences and trainings, and at some point along the way, earned my Master's Degree from SUNY Cortland in Environmental Education and Outdoor Recreation. That eight month position turned into 13 years! In 2013, I came to Parks and the rest is history.

For the last 12 years, I've volunteered locally in my community as a naturalist for the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation, leading guided walks and children's programs. I share my love for the outdoors with my husband, Dennis, and daughters, Tess and Gretta.

Everyone has a story as to how they've gotten to where they are today. I hope for many of you reading this that FORCES was a significant part of your story. Please reach out and share your story with us, we'd love to hear from you! Over the years, I've learned that interning is key, networking is critical, and being a team player is appreciated. FORCES strives to provide students with opportunities to network, unique field/technical experiences, and encouragement to work as a team member on their project.

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: Amy.Kochem@parks.ny.gov

Central Region Update

Mike Serviss, Regional Project Coordinator; Claire Nellis, Piping Plover Project Coordinator;
James Boyd, Regional Invasive Species Field Technician; Delaney Kalsman, COAS Project Coordinator



Central Region EFT and Thousand Islands Region stewardship staff at Whetstone Gulf to survey green spleenwort. Photo: OPRHP

There were many things to dislike about the year 2020, but the beautiful fall weather and top notch leaf peeping provided some respite from the year's hardships- and allowed for a comfortable extension of the field work season! In October, members of the Central Region EFT teamed up with the Thousand Islands Region stewardship staff at Whetstone Gulf to survey New York State's only known population of *Asplenium viride*, the green spleenwort.

Common buckthorn management continued at Clark Reservation with the assistance of FORCES stewards Hannah McConnell and Rachael Foote. Progress was made on the American hart's-tongue fern (AHTF) propagation and reintroduction project as many of the Central Region EFT helped to pot up young AHTF and to transport 400 older AHTF from SUNY ESF to the Plant Materials Program at Sonnenberg Gardens.

We met up with our AHTF project partners from SUNY ESF and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in November to scout potential locations for AHTF transplanting at the CNY Land Trust's Three Falls Woods natural area. We also met up with our research partner from Cornell University, Audrey Bowe, to winterize young AHTF being grown at Cornell as part of an earthworm mesocosm experiment. Lastly, the Central Region EFT teamed up with the DESP Invasive Species Unit and completed surveys for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) at Chenango Valley and Oquaga Creek State Parks. It saddens me to report that Chenango Valley became the first park in the Central Region with a confirmed HWA infestation- but we are hopeful that this apparently light infestation can be treated in the coming year!



Cornell University's, Audrey Bowe and the young AHTF. Photo: OPRHP



Milkweed propagator. Photo: OPRHP

While the Chittenango ovate amber snail is in hibernation, the COAS project has slowed to almost a snail's pace. However, we have not sat idle; focusing on housekeeping and education and propagation projects. In the new year, the COAS stewardship program plans to quadruple its size, growing from three stewards to a team of 12 during the summer months, to fill various roles in invasive management, outreach, and continued invasive cover surveying.

Furthering COAS public outreach has also been a focus during the late fall and winter seasons. This includes working on posts to social media and updating our tabling material. Milkweed propagation has been ongoing since pod collection in October as 98 common milkweed (*A. syriaca*) pods are sitting in cold storage for planting in March. The pods will be sowed within the Old Campground at Chittenango Falls State Park as part of the ongoing pollinator meadow project. Additionally, three pods were prepared for early propagation and as of January 1st, 2021, two propagates have sprouted. The winter season allows for preparation for a successful spring and summer season with the goal of growing the invasive management and outreach programs at Chittenango Falls State Park.

Central Region Update cont'd

Mike Serviss, Regional Project Coordinator; Claire Nellis, Piping Plover Project Coordinator;
James Boyd, Regional Invasive Species Field Technician; Delaney Kalsman, COAS Project Coordinator



Zachary removing woody buckthorn along the shores of Green Lake. Photo: OPRHP

During the fall season, with the help of Conservation Steward, Zachary Widrick, the invasive species crew worked on several projects throughout the Central Region. To name a few highlights, a large infestation of glossy buckthorn was discovered at Green Lakes State Park wrapping around Round Lake and moving towards Green Lake. Over 750 individual trees were removed from this area during a three week period. More so, two large fields in the grassland area at Green Lakes State Park were mowed. This will give native species an edge this summer when competing against previously established invasive species.

Outside of Green Lakes, Chenango Valley, Glimmerglass, and Robert V. Riddell State Parks were all visited at least two times where over 700 honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and Japanese barberry plants were removed from trails.



Video Director, Shaina. Photo: OPRHP

Our piping plover team has gotten awfully small and quiet since our last update! All plovers have left for the season. Our female, Arwen, has been spotted on a beach in Georgia and her daughter, Chewie who stopped by Sandy Island Beach this summer briefly was seen in Florida again. We are anxiously awaiting their return this spring, hopefully they bring newcomer to two!



2020 PIPL Field Team Kate Noonan, Shaina Johnson, Claire Nellis. Photo: OPRHP

Project Technician, Shaina Johnson, has finished her term with us and finished her BS in Biology at SUNY Potsdam. SCA intern, Kate Noonan also finished her term and is off to Alabama to help conserve red-cockaded woodpeckers. We are proud of them and missing them fiercely! They left us with some incredible parting gifts though! Shaina finished this video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUVdXhtJAT4&feature=youtu.be>, that we were able to use for a virtual Conservation Field Days education and outreach event. Kate made this parody video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Lx3mU-bC40>, to teach about the piping plovers. Follow the FB page Great Lakes Piping Plover of New York for more plover facts and fun.



Arwen, 4 year old adult female 'Mom' Plover. Photo: OPRHP

I have been plugging away at writing reports, meetings, planning for next year and a little online education with a 6th grade Syracuse City Schools class. The office will be a little more full soon as we welcome the new 2021 SCA intern, Sarah Forestiere! I am looking forward to doing more education and outreach, planning for this summer and before we know it surveying for our Peeps on the sandy shores of Lake Ontario this spring!

Newest Addition to the FORCES Family: Jr. Conservation Stewards, Niagara Region

Alexandra Tillman, Niagara Region FORCES Program Specialist

I invite you all to welcome the Jr. FORCES program to the Niagara Region with me! This coming spring we will be hosting two Jr. Conservation Stewards, Logan Fournier and Lawrence Schwarzmuller, both seniors in the Conservation Program at the Niagara Career & Technical Education Center, in Sanborn, NY. I am extremely excited to have these young professionals on board with FORCES and watch them excel!

Towards the end of 2020, Mr. Paul Dewey, the Conservation teacher at the center, reached out to me asking if we had any internship opportunities for students in high school. At the time, we did not. Although, this was an idea I had been toying with for a while after observing his students' professional and eager attitudes for parks and all that we do. Even though FORCES is typically geared towards college students and post-graduate young professionals, why should that not include those going directly into the workforce after high school? They are young professionals as well, simply on a different time scale than our typical stewards.

Together, Paul and I created a new tier to the existing FORCES program where the stewards are assigned projects by NYS OPRHP staff, work on them in their BOCES classroom, and then come to the parks and install or apply their creations alongside agency staff. This is a great opportunity for them to highlight their skills, network with parks staff, and gain field experience; something most students cannot do until their later years in undergrad. Some of the projects they will be assigned are creating a turtle ramp for an irrigation pond, creating a landscape design and growing annuals for installation at Niagara Falls State Park, using GPS technology to locate and replace existing bird boxes throughout the region, and many more!

With the partnership of Orleans/Niagara BOCES, this will allow NYS OPRHP to provide a unique opportunity to students interested in the environmental science and conservation fields. It will give students a significant head start over their peers providing them with a great foundation to their future careers, hopefully with State Parks! I cannot wait to update everyone with their successes from the upcoming spring season. Stay tuned!

Featured Project: Robert H. Treman State Park Timeline

Jake Kelley, History Steward, Finger Lakes Region



Jacob assisting the Landscape Restoration Program plant trees at Watkins Glen State Park.
Photo: OPRHP

During my time with the FORCES program and my work on the Robert H. Treman State Park Timeline, I had the privilege of working with the documents and records kept in the archives at the region, investigating the story of the Treman family and the effort they went to in order to protect the natural areas around the town of Ithaca. It was awesome to see what a difference one person can make, even if it's to start the process of preservation, as Robert Treman did. The architecture and improvements made by the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp SP6, the original photos of the Old Mill and Hotel, and having to contextualize what was happening in the Park with what was happening in New York State overall were some of the more interesting portions of my research.

Along with my work involving the documents, I toured the Park site in order to familiarize myself with the historical landmarks I was writing about. This division between archival office work and being able to walk through the history and nature I was researching actually changed my career plans a bit. Originally I intended to work as an environmental educator, teaching the public what the causes of environmental damage were and how everyone could do their part to protect nature. My time in the Park showed me that there were a number of ways to help beyond education. Invasive species control, maintenance and upkeep of the park, the research and applications that go into securing a site's historic nomination, and the daily work that patron assistants do to make every visitor's time safe and enjoyable are all integral processes in keeping our Parks preserved.

SUNY ESF

Emily Link, Club President



Despite challenges posed by restrictions due to COVID, ESF FORCES was still fortunate enough to travel to various state parks and volunteer on multiple, rewarding

projects. The club participated in projects ranging from a trash clean-up at Erie Canal, to traveling to Sandy Island Beach for an invasive species removal. A beautiful Saturday morning was also spent removing overgrowth at Clark Reservation State Park with satisfying results, followed by a short hike. We ventured to Sandy Island Beach for both the beach cleanup and Phragmites removal to help maintain the habitat of the Piping Plover nesting pair. For the majority of our volunteers, it was their first time visiting the park, and between the exciting boat ride and being able to learn so much about the plovers, those trips were highlight projects for many members. Unfortunately, our semester was cut short due to increased COVID limitations.

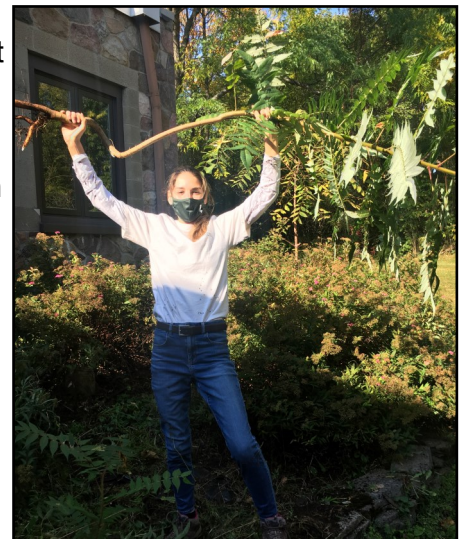


ESF FORCES Club members removing overgrowth at Clark Reservation State Park. Photo: ESF FORCES

The club also made strides in aspects other than volunteer hours. We welcomed a few new faces, and appreciated the commitment of our returning volunteers. Thanks to our secretary, Madison Stevens, the club initiated a post-event newsletter. This improved communication within the club regarding event happenings and helped to gain interest, through summarizing the project and recognizing those that dedicated their time. ESF FORCES was able to partner with the ESF Honor's Society, an opportunity that spread awareness about the FORCES

mission and attracted new volunteers. We hope to connect with additional clubs in the Spring to spark interest, increase participation, and accomplish more projects.

Also a huge thank you to Tom Hughes for taking on the challenge of being the club's advisor. We are excited to continue to work with him to maximize the club's abilities. We are hoping for an active spring, with new projects and opportunities to serve the New York state parks and surrounding community.



ESF FORCES Club member with a large sumac root. Photo: ESF FORCES

2020 FORCES Stewards

Cornell University

Madeline Czymmeck, Conservation Steward
Jasmine Umrigler, Invasive Species Management Steward

Hartwick College

Max Pizarro, FORCES Club President

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Colby Poerio, Brook Trout Habitat Research Steward

Ithaca College

Christopher Atanasoff, Invasive Species Mngt. Steward
Anna Bornstein, Three Gorges FORCES Stewardship Corps
Erica Hudkins, Three Gorges FORCES Stewardship Corps
Savanna Lenker, Conservation and Education Steward

Le Moyne College

Luke Giunta, FORCES Club Co-President
Haley Synan, FORCES Club Co-President

Medaille College

Jay Bortel, Conservation Steward

Niagara County Community College

Thomas, "TJ" Clark, Conservation Steward
Tad Townsend, Trail Management Steward

Niagara University

Morgan Gere, Data Management Steward
Tanner Holthouse, Trail Management Steward

Pace University

Taylor Ganis, Flora and Fauna Steward
Felix Gonzalez, Flora and Fauna Steward
Raymonda Martin, Flora and Fauna Steward

Siena College

Christian Kirbach, Conservation Steward

Stetson University

Victoria Summers, Water Quality Steward

SUNY Binghamton

Justin Santiago, Small Mammal Research Steward

SUNY Cortland

Jacob Kelley, History Steward
Savannah Kraus, Environmental and Outdoor Edu. Steward
Clare Maloney, Forest Health Steward

SUNY ESF

Rachel Bealer, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Sara Cosenza, Community Conservation Steward
Lauren Craige, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Chris Danforth, Conservation Steward
Rachael Foote, Natural Resources Management Steward
Derek Gallo, Conservation Steward
Miranda Gregory, Conservation Steward
Adria Ivkovic, Chimney Bluffs Trail Steward
Brigit Jones, Environmental interpretation Steward
Emily Link, FORCES Club President

SUNY ESF Cont'd

Mary Martin, Invasive Species Management Steward
Hannah McConnell, Conservation Steward
Danielle Minnick, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Fiona Modrak, Environmental Interpretation Steward
Meghan Morral, Conservation Steward
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The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



Savannah Kraus, monitoring cover board plots for eastern red-backed salamanders at Taughannock Falls State Park.



FORCES Program Specialist, Carlin Wakefield, and Three Gorges Stewardship Corps Lead, Christina Morrow, assist NYSHI staff with HWA biocontrol release at Taughannock Falls State Park.



James Boyd surveying for hemlock woolly adelgid.



Maddie LeMere and Tad Townsend creating a defined path and edge to the newly installed Nature Center trail at Evangola State Park.



Savannah Kraus, teaching an elementary school age group about bird beak adaptations at Jennings Pond in Buttermilk Falls State Park.



Hemlock Preservation Program staff members measuring the length of an eastern red-backed salamander at Buttermilk Falls State Park.



Jake Kelley and Sage Grasso-Monroe, assisting the Landscape Restoration Program to collect seed of native species for wildflower plantings at the Watkins Glen State Park pool.

Photos: OPRHP



Audrey Bowe and Amanda Varhol preparing the mustard/water mixture for earthworm sampling.



Friends of Recreation, Conservation
and Environmental Stewardship

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FORCES Newsletter Spring Edition 2021

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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.
