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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.

Parks Are For People, And For Fish <<(((°>

Tom Hughes, Environmental Stewardship Biologist
Central Region FORCES Program Manager



Ladders to the Outdoors participants from Sherburne-Earlville High School learn about fish and aquatic ecology at Green Lakes. Photo: OPRHP

It is important that we conserve and protect our recreational and natural resources within the Great Lakes watershed and throughout New York. Learn about how NYS Parks, Audubon and Healing Our Waters Coalition are working together to do just that—see our ‘Partner Highlight’ on pages 8 & 9. Please also take a moment to get to know FORCES alum and Invasive Species Biologist Matt Brincka in our ‘Alumni Spotlight’ (page 2). Matt and I had the opportunity to work together over 15 years ago on a program called “Something’s Fishy About Onondaga Lake”, and now everything we do together in NYS Parks is fishy:)

Sturgeon Release Selfie!



In New York State, we are blessed with a wealth of water resources. Several of our Park Regions embody the names of the mighty waterbodies within—Niagara, Genesee, Finger Lakes and Allegheny (Allegany). At the center of it all, reigning over this “water kingdom”, sits Lake Ontario and its massive watershed. Therein lies the enormous opportunity for our Parks agency and partners to engage and educate people about all the amazing plant and animal species living and thriving in the watershed. Exploring fish, for example, can create connections and long lasting memories. We have lots to talk about—from native species like the lake sturgeon (see ‘SUNY ESF Update’ on page 10) to charismatic imports like the Pacific (king or Chinook) salmon (photo above). Fun Fact—the salmon pictured above is a taxidermy of an actual fish my dad caught in Lake Ontario in 1985! Years ago, I moved that fish from the living room wall to hands-on education, and it has been thrilling youth ever since.



Alumni Spotlight: Matt Brincka

Invasive Species Biologist, OPRHP



Matt Brincka in the field doing biocontrol monitoring. Photo: Matt Brincka

As a dewy-eyed freshman, I was struggling to find my feet at SUNY ESF. As a matter of fact, I was close to transferring out for a variety of reasons. My parents convinced (aka told) me to stick it out one more semester. “Get more involved” they insisted. “Maybe do a club” they said. So I did, but it wasn’t FORCES I got involved in. FORCES didn’t even *exist* when I was at ESF. Being a “fish guy”, I started showing up to the student chapter meetings for the American Fisheries Society. It was there I met a rather enthusiastic, caring, talkative, and convincing character-Tom Hughes. At the time, Tom worked out of the ESF Outreach office. He often talked about ways students could get involved with public outreach and was *very* excited about working with partners to provide hands-on experiences to under privileged youth. Since I was trying to find myself, I decided “sure, I’ll bite. Why not? Let’s see where this smiling man brings me.” So I volunteered... and to say I enjoyed myself is an understatement. It was the self fulfillment I needed to anchor myself as an ESF “Stumpy.” Not long after I started volunteering, Tom let me know of a summer job working for him where I could do exactly what I was doing but get paid. Uh... yes, please!

Little did I know my Act II confrontation would be Tom abandoning me before the job even started for some Biologist job at State Parks. He must have felt bad or convincing performance, because he got me to start volunteering with him at State Parks doing a variety of projects. I continued volunteering throughout my college career and then finally, in the last semester of my graduate school program, Tom rolled out the FORCES umbrella and wow...look at it now! You would think this tale of Tom ends here...but it doesn’t. After grad school I had seasonal positions with Audubon and New York Sea Grant. Shortly after marrying the love of my life, I somehow convinced her to move out West. We spent time in Colorado where I was a fisheries tech with Colorado Parks & Wildlife then an Advisor and Instructor for Forestry, Rangeland, and Natural Resource Management students at Colorado State University. Missing water, we eventually found ourselves in the Pacific Northwest where I was as an extension associate with Washington State University identifying “out-of-the-box” approaches to increase salmon and oyster habitat. Every step of the way, every interview I had, I talked about my volunteer experiences and how much they impacted my life.

When our daughter was born, my wife and I made the hard decision to leave Washington and come back to New York. When I reached out to my contacts to let them know I was returning and actively looking for work, I received a one sentence email from Tom that said, “Join us Matthew... come to the dark side of Parks...” Attached to that email was a job posting to coordinate the agency’s Boat Steward Program. Less than a month later I was driving a U-Haul across Middle America while my wife and child flew overhead, excited to start the newest chapter of my life working with New York State Parks & Historic Sites.

And here I am – approximately 17 years removed from my plunge into volunteering with “what would eventually become FORCES” and 8 years with State Parks. In my capacity as the Invasive Species Biologist/Unit Lead for the Invasive Species Unit, I have the pleasure of working with the best environmental stewards New York has, and every day I appreciate the roots that got me here. The most important lesson I’ve learned on this long, winding road is the importance of creating meaningful, lasting relationships. You never know when an enthusiastic stranger could influence the rest of your life.



Matt and his daughter out for a snowshoe. Photo: Matt Brincka

Coordinator's Corner

Amy Kochem, FORCES Program Coordinator

We started off the semester with our 8th Annual FORCES Membership Gathering at Letchworth State Park's Humphrey Nature Center. Former FORCES Alum Kelly Rife, shared her inspiring journey from her start with FORCES to her current positions with Parks as a Public Affairs Coordinator. Nature center staff member, Mike Landowski, lead a fabulous interpretive hike along the gorge, and Finger Lakes Educator, Josh Teeter, guided us through a Restorative Nature workshop.

After two wonderful years of service, we said goodbye to Kelly Punch, SCA Parks Corps FORCES Program Specialist. We are grateful for all of their assistance with creating the FORCES Roots Alumni Network, field work, and environmental education projects in the Central Region. Kelly's positive, enthusiastic spirit will be missed! You may have noticed that our FORCES social media pages have gotten lots of extra attention thanks to Kelly's initiative with fun and creative posts. We encourage you to like our Facebook page and connect with us on Instagram and LinkedIn!

Our 2023 edition of the FORCES *Who's Who* that highlights 65 FORCES Stewards and 7 Jr. Conservation Stewards from the Niagara, Allegany, Finger Lakes, and Central Regions has been published on the FORCES web page, go take a look! Our spring 2024 internship positions are filling quickly. 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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FORCES NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Use #forcesnys on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram accounts!

Affiliated Institutions

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SUNY Binghamton
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SUNY Cobleskill
SUNY Cortland
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SUNY Oswego
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Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Houghton College
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Ithaca College
Jamestown Community College
Le Moyne College*
Medaille College
Mercyhurst College
Niagara Community College
Niagara University
Onondaga Community College
Pace University
Paul Smith's College
Penn State University
Rochester Institute of Technology
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St. John Fisher College
Siena College
Stetson University
Syracuse University

Tompkins County CC
Tuft's University
University at Buffalo
University of Connecticut
University of Rochester
University of Vermont
Vassar College
Wells College*
Wesleyan University
***Denotes active 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

Central Region Update

Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist; Mike Serviss, Environmental Stewardship Biologist



New coverboard plot installed by FORCES Stewards at Robert V. Riddell State Park. Photo: OPRHP

During the fall season, stewardship programs primarily focused on nuisance animal management and ecosystem health assessment. FORCES Staff and Stewards assisted in the monitoring of salamander coverboard surveys in Selkirk Shores and Robert V. Riddell State Parks. This is an on-going survey to monitor the overall health of the hemlock-northern hardwood forest stands and the effects of hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) and subsequent treatments. Overall species richness of salamanders and health populations of red-backed salamanders can be used as a bioindicator for monitoring ecosystem health. Both parks were surveyed six times over the months of September, October, and November. SUNY ESF FORCES Club joined on two Selkirk Shores State Park survey days as part of a field trip. Two new sites were added to Robert V. Riddell State Park, in addition to the previous two sites, for a total of 200 coverboards. FORCES Stewards assisted in the cutting, preparation, and placement of said coverboards. The goal for 2024 is to place more boards at Robert V. Riddell and Selkirk Shores State Parks, while expanding into other parks afflicted with HWA. FORCES



FORCES Stewards Kasey Neff and Leo Pugliese survey coverboards at Robert V. Riddell State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Staff and Stewards continued to assist Central Region State Parks with nuisance wildlife management. The fall focused on the survey and management of beaver dams along the Erie Canal. FORCES also focused on nuisance deer herbivory at Green Lakes State Park. Stewards participated in deer impact assessment surveys, including the sentinel oak program and ten tallest method.

~Delaney

Our efforts to conserve and protect the threatened American hart's-tongue fern (AHTF) continued this fall season. In October, we collected data on over 700 AHTF transplants at five sites in Onondaga and Madison counties. Survival and growth of the transplanted ferns remains promising at most sites, where some established transplants have been growing for eight years now. In an exciting development this fall, offspring from transplanted AHTF were observed for the first time since transplanting began in 2015! Dozens of naturally growing young ferns were noted at a site in Clark Reservation State Park very close to where several mature AHTF transplants have been producing spores for about 7-8 years. This discovery represents a significant step toward the ultimate goal of the AHTF propagation and reintroduction project- creating and augmenting self-sustaining AHTF populations (Cont'd p. 5).



Young AHTF, the offspring of transplanted ferns, were discovered at Clark Reservation in October 2023. Photo: OPRHP

Central Region Update (cont'd)

Delaney Kalsman, Stewardship Specialist; Mike Serviss, Environmental Stewardship Biologist



SUNY ESF FORCES club helps to winterize AHTF raised beds at Clark Reservation. Photo: OPRHP

On the AHTF propagation side of things, the SUNY ESF FORCES club assisted us in winterizing our AHTF raised beds in October. The beds were lined with bags of mulch and the ferns were covered in a layer of mostly sugar maple leaves to keep the soil from freezing and heaving the ferns out over the winter. These beds contain approximately 550 AHTF that were grown from spore over the past 3-4 years. We plan to transplant the ferns during the spring and summer of 2024. Forest health efforts also continued in the Central Region this fall. Many FORCES Stewards, OPRHP staff, SCA Parks Corps members, PRISM staff, and volunteers signed up to survey our region's hemlock forests for the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) for a fifth consecutive winter. Surveys for HWA, a destructive forest pest, began in late November and will continue through the winter. In total, we plan to survey 1,500-2,000 acres of hemlock forest at 15 different Central Region parks. Stay tuned for updates on our progress in the next newsletter!

~Mike

Niagara Region Update

Joyce Lytle, FORCES Program Specialist, Niagara Region



Jimi and Sara in the field. Photo: OPRHP

This fall, the Niagara Region hosted two Conservation Stewards: Sara Howard and Jimi Wiggins, both seniors at University at Buffalo. Sara is an Environmental Geosciences major and Jimi, an Environmental Studies major with a minor in Sociology. They worked with the Niagara Region Environmental Field Team on many different projects such as emerald ash borer (EAB) biocontrol surveys, invasive species surveys and removal at Wilson-Tuscarora, Knox Farm, and Woodlawn Beach State Parks, native species reintroduction at

Beaver Island State Park and winter raptor and hemlock woolly adelgid surveys in several parks. They also completed a special project surveying for Asian jumping worms at six state parks including Knox Farm, Golden Hill, Joesph-Davis, Fort Niagara, Reservoir, and Four-Mile Creek. This project combined both of their interests; Sara's being soil and Jimi's invasive species. While most of worms they found were nightcrawlers and mud worms, they did find six Asian jumping worms at Knox Farm State Park.



Sara holding an Asian jumping worm. Photo: OPRHP

Featured Project:

Nandika Rajaram, Audubon in the Parks Steward & former Jr. Pollinator Steward

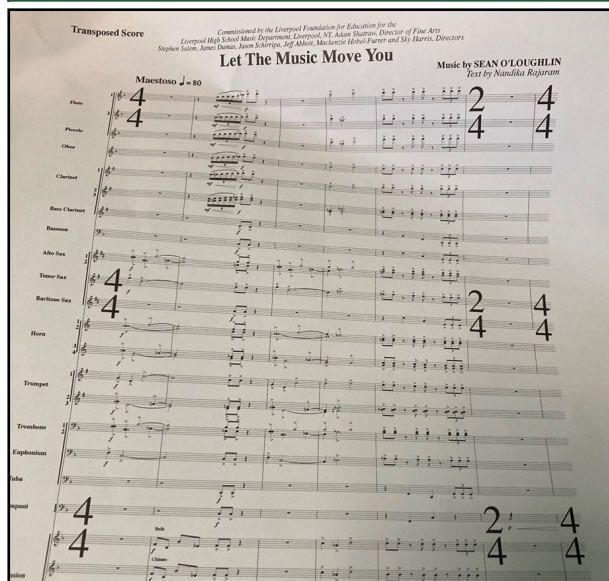
Transposed Score

Commissioned by the Liverpool Foundation for Education for the
Liverpool High School Music Department, Liverpool, NY. Adam Shapiro, Director of Fine Arts
Stephen Quinn, James Deane, Jason Schirripa, Jig Abbott, Maluccio Hobel-Farmer and Sky Harris, Directors

Let The Music Move You

Music by SEAN O'LOUGHLIN
Text by Nandika Rajaram

Maestoso $\text{♩} = 80$



I was a freshman at Liverpool High School in the String Ensemble when I wrote the lyrics for the piece. Mr. Sean O'Loughlin, Principal Pops Conductor of *Symphoria* in Syracuse, NY, was partnering with our music department by composing an original piece for us to premiere for our 2023 PRISM concert which was at the same stage as the *Symphoria* concert. Since it was a collaboration with the department, he decided to give the responsibility of writing the lyrics of the song to the students. Mr. Abbott, who was my Orchestra teacher at that time, told us that if we scan a QR code that he attached to the white board, we would have access to a Google form where we could submit anything from a poem to an idea. It was really casual, but songwriting is a passion of mine (I really want to release an original song one day). So I just randomly typed a small poem on the bus and a month later, I found out that my entry was chosen! I was on the newspaper and was interviewed too!



Nandika with Sean O'Loughlin.

Let the music move you, let the sound of the melody enchant you, this harmony will never end. Joy and laughter making it even sweeter, do you hear it? Heart and passion of bright young spirits, all together a perfectly imperfect, beautiful blend of heart and soul, perseverance and loyalty, all bright jewels shining through the darkness. Do you hear, oh do you hear, this melody?

"I absolutely loved working with the birds themselves and I will miss them dearly, I was able to make such a connection with them through the kind of monitoring we did daily and got to see all their unique mannerisms. I will definitely remember this experience and it has furthered my desire to work with birds for my career".

~Brianna Svitak, Audubon in the Parks Piping Plover Steward



Happy 15th Anniversary Environmental Stewardship Initiative!

Finger Lakes Region Update

Carlin Shew, FORCES Program Specialist, Finger Lakes Region

FORCES in the Finger Lakes had a great fall season, hosting three Conservation Stewards, and collaborating with local universities to connect with students around the region. Conservation Stewards Ella Hobler, Ollie St. Clair and Nicole Schroeders, all from Ithaca College worked with us on a variety of different projects throughout the region, as well as the Ithaca, NY area. All three Stewards assisted on projects including bi-annual salamander cover board monitoring, benthic macroinvertebrate surveys at multiple different parks including Buttermilk Falls and Fillmore Glen, and assisted staff from the Plant Materials Program (PMP) to mulch saplings in the outdoor beds in preparation for the winter. The PMP's new temporary location, Sampson State Park, is also a site where Steward, Ella Hobler, worked on trails maintenance and trimming back overgrown shrubs around the Park's educational cell-phone tour locations.



Conservation Stewards conducting a creek survey at Buttermilk Falls State Park. Photo: OPRHP

Our Conservation Stewards also assisted the Finger Lake's Hemlock Program with grant-required monitoring of Eastern hemlocks within stands that had been previously treated for hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) in 2021 and 2022. They conducted stand assessment surveys wherein 25% of the treated trees in the stand were assessed for two metrics: HWA density and canopy health. These surveys, assisted by Finger Lake's Student Conservation Association (SCA) HWA Technician Abbey Welch, were completed at Taughannock Falls, Robert H. Treman, and Buttermilk Falls State Parks over the months of October and November. Approximately 1,050 hemlocks were assessed. Conservation Biology Students from SUNY Cortland came out again for their annual HWA Lab section. FORCES Program Specialist, Carlin Shew, visited SUNY Cortland campus to give a guest lecture on the importance of Eastern hemlocks, the threat of HWA, and what NYS-OPRHP is doing about it statewide. Then students came out to Fillmore Glen State Park and assisted SCA HWA Tech, Abbey, with stand assessments and monitored for benthic macroinvertebrates in the stream with Carlin. This was a great collaboration, and we look forward to future years' collaborations with SUNY Cortland and so many other institutions in the Finger Lakes Region.

Ella took on wildlife monitoring as her special project this semester—from E-bird surveys, to managing trail camera maintenance, data collection and sorting. Ella had her hands full with batteries and SD cards, capturing great videos of our region's wildlife. From our favorite fisher returning to his stump, to families of deer, coyote, and raccoon, to a mother bobcat walking with her bobkitten, and even a 'main character' mouse who loved to dance in front of our camera and take up our SD storage space. So much great footage was captured and a lot of fun was had. We hope to share these videos through our Instagram page (@forcesnys) in the coming year. Ollie and Nicole took on invasive species removals as their big fall project. They completed removals of species like porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) and stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) at Buttermilk Falls State Park. They both assisted FORCES Program Specialist, Carlin, lead a lab section with Ithaca College's Conservation Biology students in September removing and mapping invasive plants along Buttermilk Fall's park boundary. Ollie and Nicole saved up their invasive plant material from their work days and hosted a workshop on Basketweaving with Invasive Species in early December. The workshop was well attended and received great feedback from the community, especially their fellow Ithaca College Students. It was great to see our Stewards out there giving back to the community, and we look forward to more involvement from Ollie and Nicole with the FORCES program in the coming year. A big shout out and thank you to all Finger Lakes Staff, SCA, and Stewards for making this fall semester so great!



Baskets and guidance documents by FORCES Conservation Stewards, Ollie St. Clair and Nicole Schroeders for their Basketweaving with Invasive Species event in Ithaca, NY. Photo: OPRHP

Partner Highlight: Laura McCarthy, Audubon NY/CT

Sr. Network Engagement Manager

The best part of my job with Audubon is working with great partners – especially staff from NY State Parks, volunteers and staff from Audubon chapters across the state, and young people from partner schools and campus chapters who are passionate about conservation.

I spent my childhood in the woods and fields in CNY near the Finger Lakes, focused on environmental studies at St. Lawrence University in NY's north county, and spent a lot of my free time hiking my 46 Adirondack peaks. When an opportunity came up to work for Audubon New York, the NY program of the National Audubon Society, I jumped at the chance. That was about 16 years ago – and not long after, a recession threatened to close NYS Parks across the state. It became clear how important partners are to the stewardship of public lands we all value.

We launched our formal “Audubon in the Parks” partnership soon after, to help elevate great work already happening and to advance bird conservation in even more NY State Parks. Thanks in large part to volunteer-led Audubon chapters all over the state who I work with every day – many who already had strong relationships with their local State Parks and friends groups – we highlighted and advanced lots of great collaborations. For example, invasive species removal work days at Thacher State Park and bird blind construction at Schodack Island State Park by Audubon Society of the Capital Region; native garden projects at Sunken Meadow and Nissaquogue River State Park by Four Harbors Audubon Society; fishing line receptacles – “tangle-tainers” – to prevent wildlife injuries at Moreau Lake State Park by Southern Adirondack Audubon which expanded to many other sites; and so many more.

Over the years, Audubon in the Parks evolved to focus on critical habitat that align with our strategic priorities for birds, such as expanding the work we do on Long Island for coastal bird stewardship at places like Jones Beach State Park, and our current Salt Marsh restoration work at Sunken Meadow State Park in partnership with Long Island Audubon chapters. We advocate for State Parks at the Capitol in Albany, too. As I write this, I'm just back from a Parks Advocacy Day to lobby for much-needed funding for State Parks and public lands in the State Budget, as we do every year with coalition partners who all recognize that capital improvements in State Parks and on NYDEC Lands are important to leverage the work we all do for conservation and to connect people to nature. This year, Audubon strongly supports the ongoing restoration and improvement of New York State's parks and lands held by the DEC, asking for \$250 million for OPRHP and \$90 million for the DEC for capital projects – including for projects focused on habitat improvement and green infrastructure.

Audubon is proud of our strong relationship with State Parks' FORCES, as well. Alison Kocek, Vice-President of Onondaga Audubon (OAS), the all-volunteer Audubon chapter in Central New York, has been instrumental in mentoring FORCES students by helping with on the ground training related to plover stewardship, incorporating them into the chapter's bird banding project, and overall being the power on the ground to help prepare these young people for not only the work they're doing today, but hopefully for longstanding careers in conservation (cont'd on page 9).



NYS Parks Corps Tyler Lee, avid birder Matt Brown, and Vice-President of Onondaga Audubon Alison Kocek monitoring for piping plovers. Photo: OPRHP

Partner Highlight: Laura McCarthy, Audubon NY/CT (cont'd)

Sr. Network Engagement Manager

I'm really excited about our latest collaboration with FORCES, which builds off Onondaga Audubon's partnership by sending young people in the Great Lakes basin who have been part of bird conservation projects to Washington D.C. to help educate lawmakers about the importance of the Great Lakes for both birds and people. Kudos to the first two ESF students to take part: former Audubon in the Parks Piping Plover Stewards, Savannah Kuhr and Aubrianna DeLario-Brown, who were an impressive force (pun intended) for the birds at the Healing Our Waters Coalition's Great Lakes Fly-in this past fall. This spring we're excited to be sending three young people to Great Lakes Days, too. This kind of focus on our next generation of conservation leaders is vital.

Today, the timing could not be more critical for birds. A 2019 Cornell report released frightening data about the loss of almost 3 billion birds in the last 50 years. Audubon is working on a new strategic plan, 'Flight Plan' which broadens our bird conservation work to a hemispheric approach, recognizing that in order to significantly improve the chance for our birds to survive and thrive, conservation needs to happen not just locally, but throughout the Americas, with partners - and quickly.

NY State Parks' and Audubon's partnership runs deep, and our work is strengthened by collaborating in places we both want to see conservation wins, from plover stewardship on Lake Ontario, at Bird Conservation Areas like Green Lakes State Park, with our elected leaders, through youth leadership and beyond. Thank you for the partnership, OPRHP!

FORCES & Audubon NY "Fly-in" Stewards to D.C.

Tom Hughes, FORCES Environmental Stewardship Biologist, Central Region



Cross country teammates Savannah and Aubrianna out for a run. Photo: Savannah Kuhr

People often ask me—"What is the favorite thing you like about your job?" There is always a long pause, on my part, because I love so many things about my job. But, the thing I do love the most is connecting young professionals (students) to amazing opportunities for study, continued learning and life-changing and memorable experiences. The other huge thing I love about my job is our Environmental Stewardship and all the important conservation projects we are working on every day. Quite often these two loves of mine combine, as FORCES was conceived to nurture both.

In this case and for this story, our connection is piping plovers and cross country runners ;) It is with a huge smile on my face, as I reflect on a coffee shop meeting where I met with Laura McCarthy from Audubon NY (see article above) and where she told me about the fall "Great Lakes Fly-in." It did not take me (us) long to determine that we were going to send Aubrianna and Savannah to Washington, D.C. to tell their personal stories and hopefully have the time of their lives doing so. To our delight, both Aubrianna and Savannah immediately and enthusiastically accepted our invitation, and they were soon heading cross country and flying in—representing their piping plover friends from Sandy Island Beach State Park, where they spent the previous summer together on the beach. Congrats all!



Read more at Audubon NY's website-

<https://ny.audubon.org/news/suny-students-fly-dc-represent-lake-ontario-piping-plovers>



SUNY ESF Update

Gillian Smith, Club President



ESF FORCES had a fun and action-packed semester this fall! Our club went on lots of fun trips to different NY State Parks and did a great mix of activities. We offered two trips to survey salamanders and monarch butterflies at Selkirk Shores State Park. We released lake sturgeon into Cayuga Lake and helped young biologists learn about sturgeon with some fun activities. Green Lakes State Park hosted us as we trimmed bushes along the trails around Green and Round Lakes. Mike Serviss, State Park Environmental Stewardship Biologist, hosted a guided tour around Clark Reservation State Park and talked about the programs offered and fun facts about the property. We capped off the semester with a fun night of jeopardy with some cool prizes. This was by far the best semester since COVID with tons of participation and lots of interest in the club and FORCES.



Salamander cover board surveys at Selkirk Shores State Park. Photo: ESF FORCES



ESF FORCES Club members and Tom Hughes, State Park Environmental Stewardship Biologist and ESF FORCES Club Advisor, at the lake sturgeon release at Cayuga Lake State Park. Photo: ESF FORCES

2023 FORCES Stewards

Eckerd College

Ed Heller, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward

Endicott College

Bailey Thieben, AHTF Seasonal Tech

Hartwick College

Margarita Chistiakova, FORCES Club President
Giulia Gebert, FORCES Club President

Ithaca College

Abigail Aitken, Conservation Steward
Trinity Cullen, Conservation Steward
Julia DiGeronimo, Conservation Steward
Jared Foster, Chimney Bluffs Trails Steward
Ella Hobler, Conservation Steward
Mattix Lufrano, Conservation Steward
DEC Fisheries Access Steward
Jenna Parrish, Chimney Bluffs Trails Steward

Ithaca College (Cont'd)

Emily Polanish, Conservation Steward
Nicole Schroeders, Conservation Steward
Ollie St. Claire, Conservation Steward
Kelly Warren, Conservation Steward

Jamestown Community College

Aodhan O Se, Invasive Species Mgmt. Steward

Le Moyne College

Christianna Kosta, FORCES Club President
Kaylyn Weits, FORCES Club President

Niagara University

Lindsey Beck, Conservation Steward,
Claire Van Lieshout, COAS Conservation Steward

St. John Fisher College

Isabel Stowell, Chimney Bluffs Trails Steward

(Cont'd p.11)

2023 FORCES Stewards (Cont'd)

SUNY Binghamton

Braden Alessi, Environmental Field Team Steward
Plant Materials Program Steward

SUNY Buffalo

Sara Howard, Conservation Steward
Caitlin Roesch, Restoration Steward
Jimi Wiggins, Conservation Steward
Anna Wojtowicz, Conservation Steward

SUNY Cobleskill

Leean Harris, COAS Conservation Steward

SUNY ESF

Rachel Arcaro, AHTF Technician
Layla Blask, COAS Conservation Steward
Madison Clapp, DEC Ecosystems Health & Habitat
Protection Steward
Elizabeth Clippard, Central Region Trails Steward
Shea Crissman, DEC Salmon River Hatchery Steward
Aubrianna DeLario-Brown, Audubon in The Parks Piping
Plover Conservation Steward
Kayla Elkhay, Wildlife Steward
Ryan Frohlich, COAS Conservation Steward
Emily Gelardi, Piping Plover Conservation Steward
Angie Gugino, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward
Skyla Hays-Taber, Invasives Technician
Derek Hobson, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Steward
Morgan Holsinger, COAS Conservation Steward
Alexa Howe, Audubon in the Parks Steward
Connor Jacobs, COAS Conservation Steward
Orchid Kinzie-Middleton, COAS Conservation Steward
Kyle Koprevich, Audubon in the Parks Steward
Grace Kritz, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward
Savannah Kuhr, Audubon in The Parks Piping Plover
Conservation Steward
Alexis LaFever, AHTF Conservation Steward
Caleb Landry, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward
Holly Malinowski, COAS Conservation Steward
Julia McCann, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward
Lauren McElroy, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward
Raquel Menella, AHTF Project Crew Lead
Kasey Neff, Wildlife Steward
Sarah Olney, DEC Ecosystems Health & Habitat
Protection Steward
Rhett Parsons, COAS Conservation Steward
Leo Pugliese, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward
Archer Shurtliff, COAS Conservation Steward
Gillian Smith, FORCES Club President
Laura Stark, AHTF Conservation Steward
Gordon Stansbury, Wildlife Steward
Brianna Svitak, Audubon in The Parks Piping Plover
Conservation Steward
Anyka Tetu, Ladders to the Outdoors Crew Lead
Ethan Winter, AHTF Technician
Jennifer Wybieracki, Clack Res. Nature Center Steward

SUNY Geneseo

Colin Raymond, Environmental Ed Center Host Steward

SUNY Morrisville

Gavin Daugherty, DEC Fisheries Access Steward
Max Prybyla, AHTF Conservation Steward
Camberly Vanvalenburg, DEC Lands and Forest Steward

SUNY Oswego

Jack Fegeley, Piping Plover Conservation Steward

Tompkins County Community College

Garett Garbry, DEC Reynold's Game Farm Steward

Wesleyan College

Ciaran Edwards, Restoration Steward

JR. CONSERVATION STEWARDS

Baker High School

Nolan Tresco, Jr. FORCES Project Steward

Fayetteville-Manlius High School

Sankulp Gautam, Jr. Ladders to the Outdoors Steward

Liverpool High School

Nandika Rajaram, Jr. Pollinator Steward

Nottingham High School

Matias Romano, Jr. Ladders to the Outdoors Steward

Pittsford Sutherland High School

Ayushi Nath, Jr. Conservation Steward

Sandy Creek High School

Perle Convey, Jr. Audubon in the Parks Steward

Waverly High School

Josie VanDyke, Jr. Conservation Steward



The Force Behind FORCES Picture Page



Photos: OPRHP



SUNY Cortland Conservation Biology Students identifying benthic macroinvertebrates as part of a lab visit at Fillmore Glen State Park.

Niagara Conservation Stewards, Jimi Wiggins and Sara Howard working on invasive species removals.



Raquel Mennella, Crew Leader on the AHTF project, poses with a beautiful AHTF transplant.



Conservation Steward, Jimi Wiggins doing invasive species management.



SUNY ESF Club member monitoring a salamander cover board.



Conservation Stewards Ella Hobler, Ollie St. Clair and Nicole Schroeders assisting the Plant Materials Program mulch plants in preparation for the winter at Sampson State Park.



Conservation Steward, Nicole Schroeders, assisting with grant-required monitoring of hemlock woolly adelgid at Robert H. Treman State Park.



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

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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.