

To: Summit Stewardship Program Partners, Supporters, and Friends
From: Liam Ebner & Kayla White
Date: 11/13/2024

2024 Summit Steward End of Season Report



The Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Program has wrapped up its **35th field season**. From starting in 1990 with two Summit Stewards, the program this year fielded a team of five Summit Stewards, two Botany Field Technicians, one Botany Intern, and over 20 volunteers! 2024 saw the completion of the fourth round of our Alpine Population Study, started in 2006 as a collaboration with the New York Natural Heritage Program. We kept busy

working on our regular trail maintenance, some bigger fall projects, and several other research efforts.

Summit Stewards **educated 31,874 hikers** this season, bringing our total contacts since the beginning of the program to **712,137**! Though our total contacts for this season were less than last season, we had a lower number of days stewarded than last year. Regardless of the number of hikers stewards reach on any given day, we strive for every interaction to be informative, welcoming, and spread the passion for stewardship each summit steward has with those who make their way into the alpine zone. We saw our highest number of contacts on a summit in a single day in program history on Saturday, October 12th (Indigenous Peoples' Day Weekend) on Cascade Mountain at **729 hikers**.

Everything accomplished this season was made possible through the generous support from our partners, donors, sponsors, and people like you. The [Adirondack 46ers](#) have continued to be stalwart sponsors of the program. This year we received a two-year commitment for funding the Summit Stewardship Program. A huge thank you to our friends at [The Mountaineer](#) for facilitating gear sponsorship through [SCARPA](#) (boots), [Darn Tough](#) (socks), and [Patagonia](#) (rain pants), as well as discounts on gear at The Mountaineer. Thank you to [L.L.Bean](#) for donating hiking pants and shirts for the stewards. [Thuja](#), a local company based in Williston, VT, donated Burrow Hoodies to the

program! In 2020, the family of Dr. Norton Miller created an endowment for the program called the Dr. Norton G. Miller Memorial Fund. This means the Summit Stewardship Program now has three endowments, the other two being the [#507 Fund for the Summit Stewardship Program](#) and the Will Cummer Gear Fund. [Nine Pin Cider](#) held its bi-annual 26er Challenge which entails trying 26 new hard ciders made exclusively for the challenge over the course of one year.

A [portion of the sales](#) from the 26 ciders is donated to the Summit Stewardship Program. The Summit Stewardship Program also received a grant from the [Helen and Ritter Shumway Foundation Grant](#) through Bank of America. The [Northeastern States Research Cooperative](#) (NSRC) provided funding to complete the fourth round of the Alpine Population Study. The [Adirondack Garden Club](#) awarded the program a grant to purchase supplies for an alpine focused teaching herbarium, funded by their Francesca Paine Irwin Conservation Fund. And of course, a big thank you to all our individual donors across New York, the Northeast and beyond. We could not do this work without you!



The crew in their new Thuja Hoodies!

Thanks also to the program partners who keep the Summit Stewardship Program running: the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (ANC), and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for extensive administrative, logistical, and financial support. Funding through the [Environmental Protection Fund \(EPF\)](#) is administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. A big thanks goes to Chris DiCintio and Tate Connor for their continued guidance. We'd like to thank Kevin Burns and Pete Evans for their years of service for New York State and assistance in the backcountry over the years.

State of the Summit Stewardship Program:

Below is a list of projects that I hope to work on next year, as well as projects that I would like to take a moment to discuss accomplishments from this season.

Below you can see the 2024 project list in *italics*.

❑ *Photopoint Monitoring Research*

We're continuing to analyze results from the last round of photopoint monitoring in 2022 and hope to have a peer reviewed journal article coming within the year. Even though we are not in the High Peaks taking photopoint monitoring images, Kayla and I have been around the Northeast assisting other organizations in their conservation efforts.

In July, Kayla and I traveled to New Hampshire to help train the Franconia Ridge Summit Stewards on our photopoint monitoring methods. A major part of our photopoint monitoring methods is that they are easily replicable. Franconia ridge faces high visitation in the summer hiking months, and efforts by stewards of the ridge are working to revegetate damaged areas. Increased stewardship presence on the ridge as well as implementing photopoint monitoring will help better monitor the vegetation response to stewardship efforts.

Also in July, I traveled south to Minnewaska State Park to assist park staff in photopoint monitoring. Although Minnewaska State Park does not have alpine vegetation, Gertrude's Nose Trail is a rocky summit community, that combined with high visitation shares common issues of trampling like our alpine zones. Minnewaska State Park is home to the only inland population of Broom Crowberry in the world, making it in need of the most protection on Gertrude's Nose.

❑ *Alpine Population Study*

This summer we completed our fourth round of sampling for the Alpine Population Study. This research began in 2006, in partnership with NYNHP, with a goal of monitoring how alpine plant populations are changing over time. Population sampling across the northeast is extremely important in understanding how the broader alpine ecosystem in the region is faring. Alpine areas in the northeast may be geographically separated, but their similarities provide excellent



Kayla with Franconia Ridge Stewards working on Photopoint Monitoring



Carter surveying a tricky plot up on Marcy

data in understanding big picture trends. This summer, our Botany Field Technicians spent a lot of time scrambling over rocks, fighting through the krummholz, visiting some remote islands of alpine across the High Peaks. In total, they surveyed over 370 plots, each five meters by five meters. In these plots, technicians focused on 20 target species, the rare, threatened and endangered species present in the alpine, as well as keeping an eye out for some species that have not been seen in a long time on certain summits. In 2019, we published our findings after completion of the third round of the study. A huge thank you goes out to Carter, Katie, and Katie for data collection, Tim Howard for all his expertise and guidance, and Julia Goren, Ryan Nerp, and Patrick Murphy, all former Botany Stewards on previous rounds of sampling, for joining us to help train this year's Botany Field Technicians.

❑ *Alpine Focused Teaching Herbarium*

We're establishing an alpine focused teaching herbarium! First, what is a teaching herbarium? Teaching herbaria are a type of herbarium with a purpose of training individuals on botanical identification. Though summit stewards are typically not formally trained botanists, they do a lot of work on the summits inventorying and monitoring New York's alpine plant populations! Some species on the summits are extremely tricky to identify in the field, but having dried, correctly identified specimens available for stewards to study will help them be able to better identify those plants in the field.

This project is extremely exciting, but it could not be possible without the help of several organizations and institutions. James Lendemer (New York State Museum), Sean Robinson (SUNY Oneonta), Wes Testo (University of Vermont), Tim Howard (NYNHP), and the Hodgdon Herbarium of the University of New Hampshire have been a huge help in the planning and securing resources for this project. This summer, we received a grant from the Adirondack Garden Club's Francesca Paine Irwin Conservation Fund to purchase materials necessary for preserving plant specimens.

❑ *Expand Coverage on the Great Range*

The Great Range is home to several populations of alpine plants we have in the Adirondacks, and they are all very popular mountains. Because we don't make it over there as often as other summits, the existing trail features get disturbed over time. For the trail maintenance we do in the alpine zone like scree wall, brushing, and rock packing, it needs semi-regular maintenance to be effective and promote revegetation of the summits. An additional issue faced with doing trail maintenance on several Great Range summits like Gothics, Saddleback, and Basin is the lack of available rock. When doing trail maintenance this season on Gothics and Saddleback, we needed to carry rock in pack frames from the col between Gothics and Pyramid, and up the "saddleback cliffs" to complete projects like rock packing to prevent soil erosion. Restarting the

carry-a-rock program on these summits can help stewards complete this important work.

❑ Lesser Summits Plant Inventory

Aside from some of the best-known alpine summits in the Adirondacks including Marcy, Algonquin, Skylight, Haystack, and more, plenty of peaks, some not High Peaks, have extant and/or historical records of alpine and subalpine species. Plant rediscoveries are happening across the region all the time. These lesser summits, some of which are high peaks with small alpine zones, including Hopkins, Giant, Hurricane, Cascade, Noonmark, and Santanoni, all play a part in the higher elevation plant communities in New York State. Our work on the Alpine Population Study this year will aid in this effort, but plenty of peaks we have not visited recently need some observant eyes on them. This effort will also benefit and be benefitted by the establishment of our alpine focused teaching herbarium.

❑ Revisit Shepherd's Tooth and Marcy-Gray Herd Paths

Hikers are still using these herd paths based on evidence of cairns, moved brush, and conversations while on the summits. Although the usage has gone down since our brushing work in 2022, additional maintenance is still needed to prevent further trampling on the herd paths themselves, and the above tree line areas hikers travel through to reach them.



Bearberry Willow on Marcy with Skylight in the background

Personnel and Scheduling



Standing L to R: Chris Hill, Fenton McKown, Carter Gordon (Botany Field Technician), Liam Ebner (Summit Steward Coordinator). Kneeling L to R: Katie Rhodes (Botany Intern), Amanda Matrazzo, Cali Rivera, Katie Leton (Botany Field Technician), Alex Cherry. Not Pictured: Kayla White, ADK Stewardship Director

The 2024 summit steward crew was a mixture of returning and brand-new staff this summer and was an awesome crew! I'm very proud of all the stewards this season and the alpine plants are lucky to have them on the summits!

Alex Cherry— Alex is a second-year summit steward and visited the Adirondacks with his family growing up in the Capitol Region. He recently graduated from the University of New Hampshire majoring in Environmental Conservation and Sustainability. In the off-season, Alex works at the Ashokan Center in the Catskills as an educator. Alex loves to talk about the alpine plants and show them to as many people that will let him!

Katie Leton— Katie returned for her second year with the program, but this season as one of the Botany Field Technicians. She has previously worked on the North Country Camps as staff. She is a student at Colorado College, majoring in Environmental Studies

and History. While Katie is not looking at plants, she enjoys rock climbing, swimming, and a good book.

Cali Rivera— This is Cali's first year as a summit steward. Originally from Minnesota, Cali recently graduated from Brown University majoring in Computer Science. Cali has previously worked in the huts in Maine. She recently returned from a semester abroad in Sweden. Cali enjoys educating hikers on the alpine zone, exploring the Adirondacks, and going on canoe packing adventures.

Amanda Matrazzo—Amanda is also new to the program in her first year but is not new to the High Peaks. She grew up near Glens Falls and has been an avid hiker in the High Peaks Region. After spending a year at Clarkson University, Amanda will be attending SUNY ESF this academic year majoring in Conservation Biology.

Carter Gordon— This is Carter's first season at ADK working as a Botany Field Technician but grew up in the Adirondacks, so he is not new to the region. In the winter, Carter is a ski patroller at Whiteface Mountain. He graduated from Saint Lawrence University in 2022. In his free time, Carter enjoys spending time with friends, paddling, and enjoying the Adirondacks.

Fenton McKown— This is Fenton's first year as a summit steward and is also brand new to the Adirondacks! Coming all the way from North Carolina, Fenton is entering his second year at North Carolina State University majoring in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology. When Fenton is not on the summits you can find him out in the woods searching for herptiles or exploring the Adirondack Park as well as the Northeast Mountains.

Chris Hill— Chris is also brand new to the Summit Stewardship Program! Originally from Connecticut, Chris came to the Adirondacks often while he was growing up. He is a senior at the University of Notre Dame studying Environmental Science and Chemistry. In his free time, Chris enjoys running, spending time with friends, and enjoying all the Adirondacks has to offer.

Katie Rhodes— This summer, Katie is spending a few days each week working with our Botany Field Technicians as an intern. She is currently completing her master's degree at Antioch University focusing on alpine ecology. Though Katie is new to the Summit Stewardship Program, she is extremely familiar with the High Peaks. Katie is an accomplished trail runner and hiker, loves going on big adventures, and enjoys observing the forest and plants around her when she's in the woods.

Kayla White—Kayla is ADK's Stewardship Director. It's her eleventh year with the Summit Stewardship Program and her thirteenth year at ADK. This year, Kayla is overseeing ADK's newest stewardship program, the Route 73 Trailhead Stewardship

Program. Trailhead Stewards were stationed along the Route 73 corridor educating hikers and rock climbers on Leave No Trace Principles and trail and trip planning information this year.

Liam Ebner—I'm ADK's Summit Steward Coordinator. This is my fourth year with the Summit Stewardship Program and with ADK. When I'm not with the program I can be found paddling, out birding, or on my bike.

Volunteer Stewards: Our volunteers are a wonderful group of devoted stewards, many of them have been with us for multiple years. They are always willing to fill in and we could not fully staff the peaks or do much needed trail maintenance or research without them. This year volunteers educated **10,527 hikers** on the summits, 33% of the total number of hikers educated this season. We were able to fully train four new volunteers this year between the Summit Stewardship Program and the Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Program. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer summit steward for next year, you can reach out to me and follow this [link for more information about the program](#) and to apply!

- Mary Lamb—12th year
- Jack Coleman— 11th year volunteer, 1 year staff
- Lois Dannenberg—9th year
- Ann Fogarty—9th year
- Jen Denny—9th year volunteer, 2 years staff
- Jim Schneider—8th year
- Ryan Nerp—5th year volunteer, 4 years staff
- Tom Collins—5th year volunteer, 2 years staff
- Drew Benware—5th year
- Kevin Douglass—4th year
- Klarisse Torriente—4th year
- Lucas LaBarre—4th year
- Matt Szopa—4th year
- Angela Ranzini—3rd year
- Tyler Lucero— 3rd year
- Tony Goodwin— 3rd year
- Caitlin Glynn—3rd year
- Esther Seacord—2nd year
- Caitlin Porter—2nd year
- Carla Denn—2nd year
- Mark Epstein—2nd year
- Rebecca Collins—2nd year
- Bridey Ryan—1st year volunteer, 3 years staff

- Katia Bannigan— 1st year
- David Palat—1st year
- Kristeen Peek—1st year
- Peyton Riegel— 1st year, Hurricane
- Kim Brown—4th year, SSP & Hurricane
- Bob Hunter—4th year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Don Pachner—4th year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- John Loughlin—3rd year, SSP & Hurricane
- Pamela Gothner—3rd year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Peter Slocum—Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Mary Jean Bland—Friends of Hurricane Mountain

Kayla and I held a virtual training for volunteers in May. We sent new and returning volunteers training videos and documents to review and they had to take an online assessment after reviewing the materials. We then had a Zoom meeting to go over any lingering questions. We were joined by DEC Forester Tate Connor who gave his presentation on the High Peaks Unit Management Plan and Forest Ranger Pete Evans who went over radio protocol and personal safety training.



Mary Lamb stewarding up on Cascade!

Education: Usage and Outreach

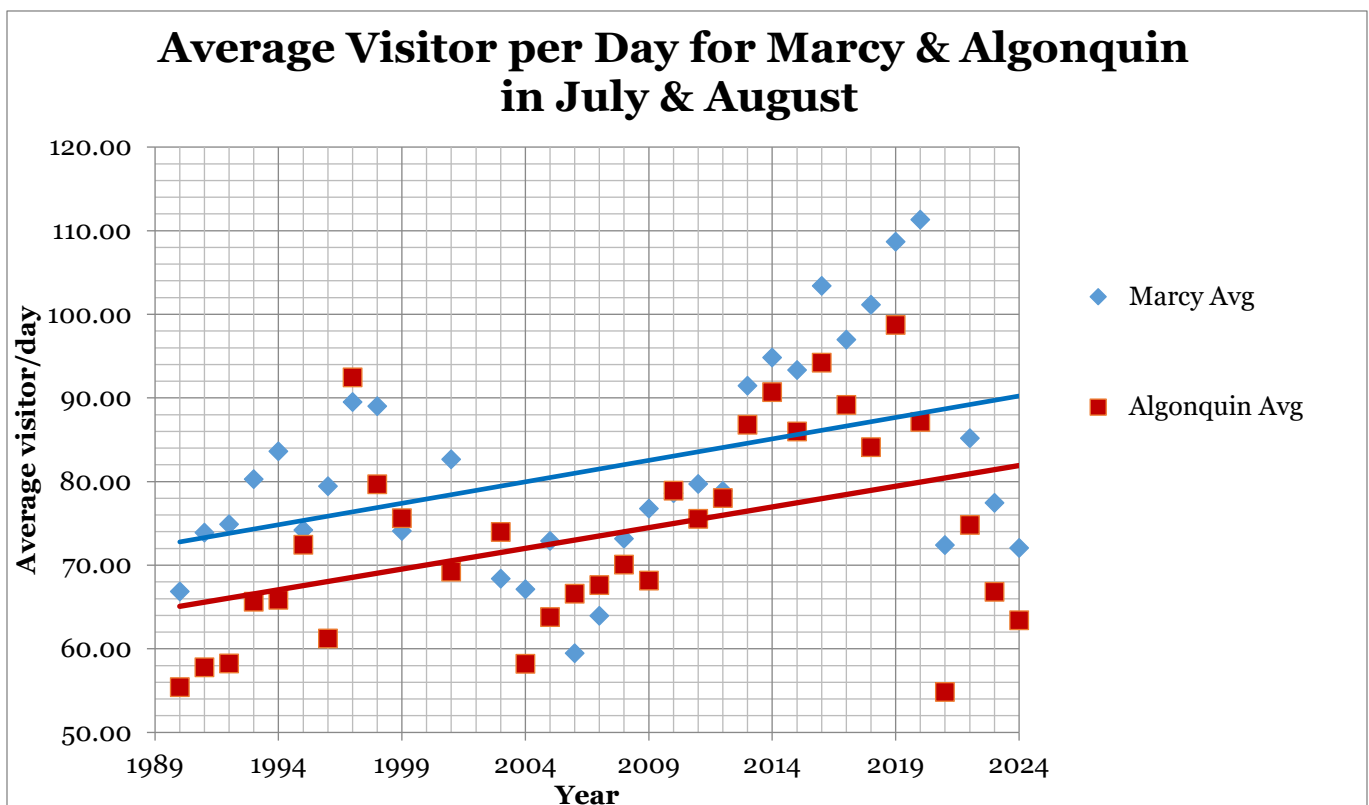
Year	Total Contacts	Days Covered	Average
2024	31,874	389	82
2023	33,421	442	76
2022	32,844	408	81
2021	28,514	428	67
2020	28,605	315	91
2019	39,939	393	102
2018	38,033	349	109
2017	31,625	305	104
2016	36,355	334	109
2015	31,440	344	91
2014	28,488	312	91
2013	23,804	305	78
2012	20,567	269	77
2011	19,211	275	70
2010	15,639	238	66
Total Contacts 1990-2024: 712,137			

As seen in the table above, our total number of contacts compared to the 2023 season is lower, but not by much. A big difference that led to lower contact numbers was the number of days we had people on the summits. Summit staffing fluctuates every year and can be affected by staff size, volunteer availability, and hazardous conditions. We also did not have as much volunteer coverage this season compared to last season. Our overall season average of hikers educated per day, was 82, compared to 2023's average of 76. Though that may indicate it was busier overall this summer than last, that average is not the best metric for observing trends in usage. The overall season average includes data from all summits we work on, including days where stewards are working on projects and would talk to a much lower number of people than a regular stewarding day. In the 2023 season, we had a steward on the summits 442 times, compared to 2024 where we had summits stewarded 389 times. Compared to last season with 3 days over 300 interactions, we had 7 days where stewards spoke to over 300 hikers, with the busiest day of the season being October 12th where Cascade had 729 hikers educated. That weekend was a mix of conditions with rime ice and snow blanketing the higher summits Friday morning, melting off nearly completely in the afternoon, and then leaving very icy conditions Saturday morning. Marcy and Algonquin saw much lower numbers than Cascade, due to many people not being able to make it up the trail above tree line due to the conditions and paired with a lack of traction devices.

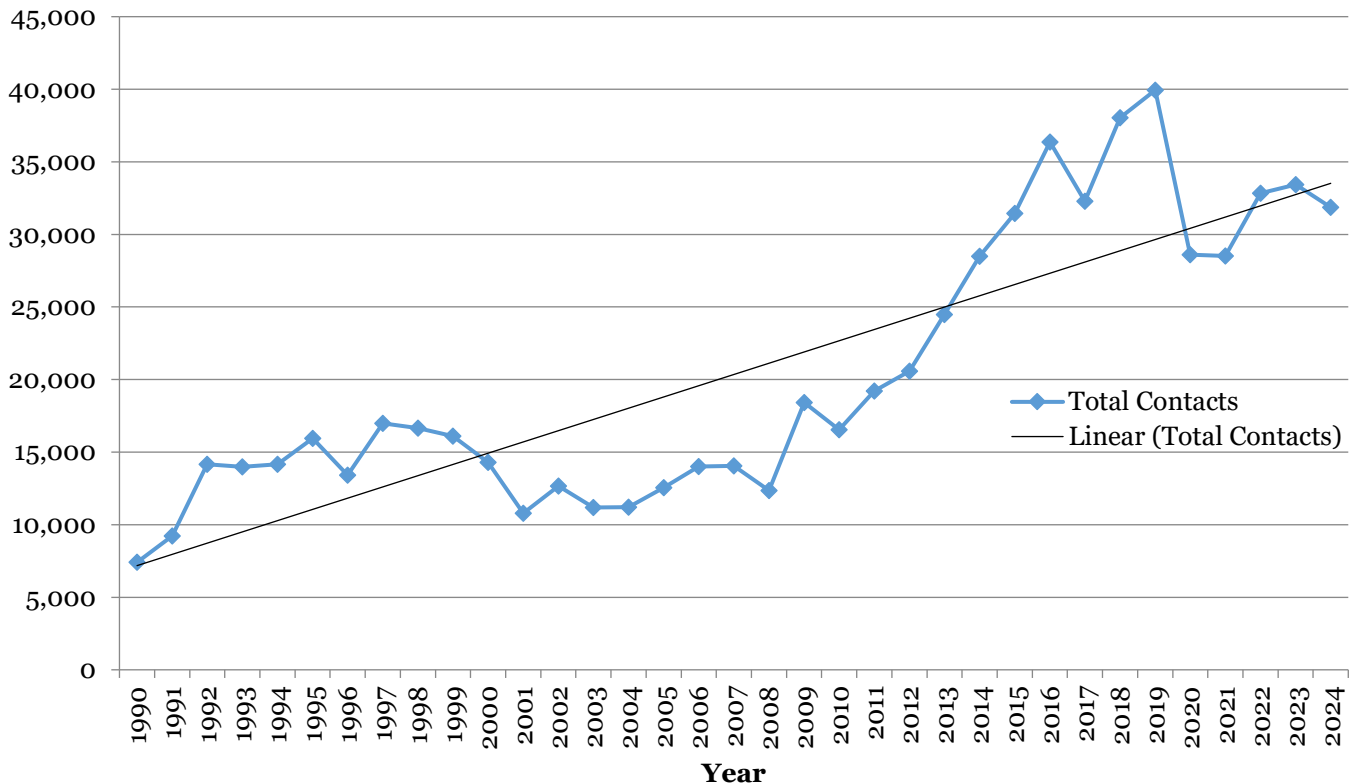
The following chart compares the daily average of contacts on Marcy and Algonquin for July and August. This is the best comparison we have for observing trends in usage due to the large data set dating to the beginning of the program. Because we are looking at the average daily contacts, it eliminates issues in data we may face with the size of the stewarding team fluctuated over the years. The daily average on both summits in July

and August has gone down slightly from 2023, but usage has fluctuated heavily over the years. Right now, the trends are very similar to the decline in interactions we saw in 1998-2004. The data shows it was slower on Marcy and Algonquin this summer, and in the field observations from stewards reflect that. There were not many days in July and August where stewards interacted with over 100 individuals on a given day. On Marcy, stewards only broke 100 interactions 9 times, and on Algonquin only 7 times. In contrast, the average daily contacts for Cascade increased to 152 in 2024 from 139 in 2023.

Trends take time to observe, and the decline that we've been seeing has only been occurring for a few years. Visitors are still coming to the High Peaks region, but what is contributing to the lower numbers on the summits? Are people who traditionally come to the High Peaks region to hike High Peaks seeking alternative hikes more than previously? Summit stewards work on peaks with the most alpine vegetation, but what do the trends look like on High Peaks that do not have alpine zones like Phelps and Tabletop? Visitor use has been an ongoing discussion in the High Peaks region. The DEC is currently utilizing the [Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework](#), a methodology for understanding, setting goals, monitoring, managing, and adapting to help achieve desired future conditions. Parts of this process are being conducted and facilitated by DJ & A, a consulting group with expertise in visitor use management on public lands.



Total Summit Steward Contacts, 1989-2024



Regarding outreach, Kayla and I participated in *Adirondack Day* and *Environmental Protection Fund Day*, which are events at New York's capital where we educate legislators on issues pertaining to the Adirondack Park, thank them for investing in stewardship, and tell our field stories. Thank you to the Environmental Protection Fund for helping to fund this program.

We also gave presentations about the program and alpine zone to The Northwoods Chapter of ADK and La Vida Center for Outdoor Education and Leadership. The Grace Hudowalski Charitable Trust hosted its annual "People and Peaks" event honoring the legacy of Ed Ketchledge. I gave a presentation on the history of the program and how it has changed over the years. In October, Kayla and I traveled to New Hampshire for the [13th Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering](#) hosted by the Waterman Fund and Appalachian Mountain Club. At the Gathering, researchers, stewards, and land managers came together to discuss the alpine areas across the northeast region including challenges and successes over the last two years. I presented on the program, as well as joining Tim Howard to discuss our recent work on photopoint monitoring. It

was an honor to be awarded the *Emerging Alpine Steward Award* by the Waterman Fund Board!



Kayla, Liam, and Laura Waterman at the 2024 Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering at the Highland Center in Bretton Woods, NH

Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Program

This is the fourth year we've been educating on Hurricane Mountain, and it has been an amazing outreach opportunity. Hurricane Mountain is recommended by the DEC as an alternative hike to the high peaks. It's also a family-friendly mountain and is part of the Lake Placid 9er and Fire Tower Challenge. As fire tower stewards, we educate about the cultural history of the fire tower, the natural history of the area, and Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics. For some hikers, Hurricane is a steppingstone to the high peaks and we're there to educate them accordingly. We educated **2,848 hikers on Hurricane** this year. This expansion has been an exciting opportunity for our staff and volunteers to try something new. **We are looking for more volunteer fire tower stewards for Hurricane.** Please let me know if you are interested! Apply [here](#).

Thankfully there was less tampering of cairns; they fared much better this season than last and did not need any major repairs to them. We were able to add some significant brushing and scree walls on several areas of concern above tree line this fall.

Thank you to our partners, Friends of Hurricane Mountain, and DEC for their assistance with this program.

Botany and Research Projects:

This year marks the sixteenth year of our participation in Appalachian Mountain Club's (AMC) Mountain Watch phenology program. We monitor the phenological stages of four species at standardized monitoring areas in line with the National Phenology Network (NPN). AMC uses this data to analyze long term trends in the timing of the different phenological stages, which could be an indication of the effects of climate change on the alpine ecosystem.



Carter surveying a tricky plot on Marcy

AMC has also implemented the [Northeast Alpine Flower Watch](#), a community science project which asks hikers to use iNaturalist, available on mobile and desktop, to take pictures of six alpine species in their blooming and fruiting phenophases. Hopefully, this will help create a more robust and complete data set. Feel free to download [iNaturalist](#) and participate!

Continuing from last season, summit stewards spent time this season listening for and observing Bicknell's Thrush in the High Peaks. [The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas](#) occurs every 20 years, and the current third iteration of the Atlas is ongoing, finishing in 2024. A breeding bird atlas helps to better understand the distribution of breeding birds throughout the state and helps provide data that can be used in conservation and management. The alpine zone and surrounding krummholz is home to several rare bird species, one being the Bicknell's Thrush. Bicknell's Thrushes breed only in the krummholz in the Adirondacks and some higher elevation areas in the Catskills, as well as similar areas across the northeast. Seeing a Bicknell's is rare, but their song is very distinct and often heard while making your way to a summit. This year summit stewards carried microphones to capture recording at higher elevations. The advantages of using recordings over manual observations through eBird like we did last year is that stewards do not need be able to identify every single bird call that is recorded. These recordings will be analyzed by NYNHP and the results added into the Breeding Bird Atlas. This summer wraps up the final year of the third Breeding Bird Atlas. Thank you to Julie Hart, NYNHP Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator, for providing us with microphones and for her guidance!

Again, like last summer, we worked with the New York Natural Heritage Program for small mammal monitoring. Matt Schlesinger, NYNHP's Chief Zoologist created a set of protocols to [monitor small mammals](#) on several rocky summits in the High Peaks. We had six monitoring stations set up on several high peaks, focusing on rocky slope

habitats to find evidence of small mammals including bog lemmings, voles, mice, shrews, and whatever else we find! Stewards visited these stations two times during the month that they were deployed to collect scat samples, swab the inside of the traps, and replenish the bait. This summer saw new collection methods, including game cameras to obtain images of target species. Stations were deployed on Marcy, Algonquin, Wright, and a few other lower elevation areas targeting stream side habitats.

Trail Maintenance and Project Days:

With a seasoned crew we've been able to get a lot of maintenance done. Trail maintenance was completed on Marcy, Algonquin, Wright, Cascade, Gothics, Giant, Iroquois, and Hurricane. At the beginning of the season, Alex, Katie, and I rebuilt the cairn on the Ridge Trail of Giant, and it was a big one! Chris spent time continuing the brushing work on Iroquois that was started in 2022. Cairns on Wright and Algonquin got some much-needed attention. A new privy was installed on the Algonquin trail. There has been a privy at the junction of Algonquin and Wright previously, but a second privy, a short distance before the junction should help with managing human waste on this very popular trail.



Alex and Katie with the cairn on Giant!

We were able to accomplish some substantial trail maintenance this fall! The weather did not cooperate too well for us in the fall season with several days of high winds, heavy rain, and ice. Since above tree line weather was unfavorable, we spent a good amount of time working on brushing in the many higher elevation herd paths on the Van Hoevenberg Trail above Indian Falls, and the Algonquin Trail above MacIntyre Falls. Tackling those herd paths kept us nice and warm! On the days that we could get up above tree line in the fall, we got some important projects done! String fence was initially added on Marcy in 2004, and the wooden posts had not been replaced since. We were able to replace all the fence posts with brand new lumber, as well as repositioning some posts to address problem areas. String fence on Marcy is only used in a few areas where it is easy to go off trail. In the areas where string fence is present, we have seen tremendous vegetation recovery through field observation and photopoint monitoring analysis.

While string fence is a very effective way to keep hikers off fragile plants, it does impact the spirit of wildness on our summits. That is why it is only used in highly damaged areas when other management actions fail. Also on Marcy, Cali and I were able to complete the scree wall project started last season on the southern side of the trail. After a winter and full summer hiking season, the sections in place from last year needed very minimal repairs. This fall we were able to add over 750 more linear feet of stone (about 3 tons), bringing the total linear feet of this project over the last two seasons to over 1400 feet. We received many comments this season from hikers on Marcy who noticed the wall and said how much easier it made it to follow the trail. Looking forward, I hope to see some great vegetation recovery on trail side areas after minimizing the amount of off trail travel.



Cali making sure the new privy hole is deep enough
(Brand new thunderbox!)



New scree wall on the back side of Marcy defining the
trail

As always, we have been hard at work with regular brushing, scree wall maintenance, cairn repair, and rock packing.

	Scree Wall	Brushing	Rock Pack	Cairn Rocks Removed	Cairns Rebuilt	Poop Buried
Algonquin	705	206	140	259	7	8
Cascade	380	202	25	92	6	3
Giant	0	480	0	19	1	2
Gothics	0	60	0	0	0	0
Gray	0	60	0	0	0	0
Hurricane	35	215	10	68	2	0
Iroquois	0	300	0	0	0	0
Marcy	1732	334	97	199	8	7
Skylight	20	0	4	12	0	0
Wright	315	116	63	72	7	2
Grand Total	3,187 ft	1,967 ft	339 sq ft	721 rocks	31 cairns	22 poops

Future recommendations:

Here are a few things that I look forward to doing in the upcoming year:

- ❑ Work with DEC to make sure they have the most up-to-date data on alpine stewardship.
- ❑ Publish the analysis on the Photopoint Monitoring Project in conjunction with the New York Natural Heritage Program.
- ❑ Continue to expand and improve the Volunteer Summit Stewardship Program and Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Program and build up volunteer numbers for coverage on Hurricane, Giant (weekends), and Cascade (every day in July & August)
- ❑ Establish an alpine focused teaching herbarium.
- ❑ Complete plant inventories on lesser summits in conjunction with NYNHP.
- ❑ Build group project days to accomplish more high-quality trail maintenance.
- ❑ Work to continue providing public outreach programs to camp groups, college clubs, and other organizations to expand our visibility and spread our alpine stewardship message. (Please contact me if you are interested!)
- ❑ Expand our presence and trail maintenance on alpine summits within the Great Range.

Thank you!

As always, the Summit Stewardship Program would not be possible without the support and funding of several various organizations and individuals. We'd like to thank the following organizations:

- ❑ NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- ❑ Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy
- ❑ Adirondack 46ers
- ❑ Will Cummer Gear Fund
- ❑ #507 Fund for the Summit Stewardship Program
- ❑ Dr. Norton G. Miller Memorial Fund
- ❑ Helen and Ritter Shumway Foundation
- ❑ Northern States Research Cooperative
- ❑ Nine Pin Cider
- ❑ ORDA and the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center for access to the summit of Whiteface via the Memorial Highway
- ❑ The Mountaineer
- ❑ Environmental Protection Fund
- ❑ Adirondack Garden Club
- ❑ Thuja
- ❑ L.L.Bean
- ❑ Scarpa
- ❑ Darn Tough
- ❑ Patagonia
- ❑ New York Natural Heritage Program

And individuals:

DEC: Tate Connor, Kevin Burns, Chris DiCintio, Pete Evans, Andrew Lewis, Jenna Curcio, Charlie Foutch, Nicole Duchene, Rob Prackajlo, Allison Rooney, Bob Ripp, Rob Daley; Andrew Miller, Wilson Cummer, Volunteer Summit Stewards and Fire Tower Stewards, Katherin Berdan (TNC), Tim Howard (NYNHP), Steve Young, Matt Schlesinger (NYNHP), Julie Hart (NYNHP), Sean Robinson (SUNY Oneonta), Aaron Kellet (Whiteface), Wes Testo (UVM), James Lendemer (NYSM), Ryan Nerp, Patrick Murphy, Vinny McClelland, Charlie Wise and the entire staff of The Mountaineer, ADK's Education Department, ADK's Maintenance Department, and all ADK staff.

No matter what big projects are going on during any given season, there is always a lot to talk about with the Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Program. I am extremely proud of the program's staff and volunteers' dedication and hard work this summer! We had many successes this season from completing a major research effort, addressing some much-needed trail maintenance, and taking steps to provide better botanical training for future summit stewards. None of the work mentioned in this report could have been possible without all the support, guidance, and encouragement from every one of you. These living museums of islands in the sky give us a small

glimpse back in time, constantly teaching us about the State's natural history. The evidence of recovery on these summits continues to emphasize the importance of stewardship in the alpine zone. New York's 173 acres of unique, precious, and fragile alpine habitat impress and instill awe to those who visit the mountains. The plants may not be able to say it themselves, but with every new clump of mountain sandwort, thriving mats of Diapensia, and meadows of deer's hair sedge flowing with the wind, they thank you too. Please feel free to reach out at any time with questions, suggestions, or opportunities for the program. Thank you and see you on the summits in 2025!

Sincerely,

Liam Ebner
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&

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