To: Summit Steward Program Partners, Supporters, and Friends  
From: Kayla White & Julia Goren  
Date: 10/29/2018

2018 Summit Steward End of Season Report

Fall is here with bright foliage, chilly summits and plenty of weekend hikers. In August, summit stewards hit a big milestone by speaking to half a million hikers since the start of the program. That’s 1 million feet deviated from walking on alpine plants onto bare rock.

The 29th year of the Summit Steward Program has brought new challenges and opportunities to instill in hikers a sense of alpine stewardship. The trend of increasing number of hikers continues with a record number of contacts made (38,033)! Now more than ever, we need to mobilize to protect this precious alpine resource. Therefore, next year ADK will be hosting the 2019 Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering. The Gathering is a great way for interested parties to discuss the future of alpine conservation. It will also be a celebration of the 30th year anniversary of the Summit Steward Program.

Our accomplishments are made possible only through the continuous support of our partners, donors, sponsors, and people like you. A huge thank you goes to the Adirondack 46ers, whose generosity made it possible to field a full crew this season. The 46ers have pledged to support the Summit Steward Program for the next three years. Another thank you goes to the ADKhighpeaks Foundation whose support provides regular coverage of Cascade Mountain for a ninth year in a row. We also owe our gratitude to the Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund, which funded a fall summit steward position. This year, the #507 Fund for the Summit Stewardship Program made its third grant to help partially fund a steward position. Another big thank you goes to our friends at The Mountaineer for facilitating funding through Patagonia. Both Patagonia and REI have provided funding to cover the cost of summit steward positions. Northern New York Audubon provided partial funding for one of our botany stewards this year.
With a heavy heart, we say goodbye to Julia Goren who has been with the program since 2006 and the Adirondack Mountain Club since 2004. Julia transformed the Summit Steward Program into one of the most highly respected alpine stewardship programs in the Northeast. She worked to create a sustainable source of funding while every year writing grants to keep the program afloat, gave her time and body to the mountains during the stewarding season, created an extensive training regimen for stewards and expanded the research conducted in NY’s alpine zone. This only scratches the surface of her accomplishments. Julia has also been ADK’s Education Director for the past four years, setting ADK’s educational programs to a higher standard. Luckily, Julia will not be far and she will be continuing to work on issues pertaining to the Adirondack Park with the Adirondack Council. I look forward to collaborating with Julia on issues like overuse in the High Peaks, wilderness ethics and the future of NY’s public lands.

We had a crew of four summit stewards, two botany stewards, two fall stewards and twenty six volunteers who continue to dedicate their blood, sweat, and tears to the protection of tiny alpine plants. I’m proud to be a part of such a devoted group of unwavering alpine educators. While hiker ethics have changed dramatically in the past 29 years and some visitors to the summit have met stewards before or are familiar with the message, we still have many new hikers to the area. There are always new people to educate and to enlist in the cause of alpine stewardship!

State of the Summit Steward Program:

Every year, I include in this report a list of projects that I’d like to work on in the upcoming year and spend some time reflecting upon the past season’s accomplishments.

Below you can see the 2017 project list in *italics*.

- **Continuing to work on the future of the program**

  In 2015, the #507 Fund for Summit Stewardship was created, and in 2016, *Adirondack Archangels: Guardians of the High Peaks* was released as a fundraiser for this endowment. We are happy to announce that the #507 Fund has given its third grant to help partially fund one summit steward position. We continue to work to raise awareness about this endowment and other ways to assist with funding the Summit Steward Program. We are continuing to find funding through other grant sources, including Adirondack 46ers, ADKhighpeaks Foundation, Waterman Fund, Patagonia, REI, and NNY Audubon. If you are aware of any potential donors or grant opprotunities, please send them our way. We will continue to work on securing funding to increase outreach and summit steward presence on the mountains as a way to ensure the protection of NY’s alpine zone.
Continuing our third round of alpine population sampling into 2019

This year we started our third round of alpine population sampling, hiring botany stewards Yuuka and Connor. In 2006-2007, we collected baseline population data on the 27 rare, threatened and endangered alpine plants through a stratified random sampling procedure. With this data, we could model population densities and estimate population sizes. This sampling was done again in 2013 to test for any divergence in population. Botany stewards have to travel to remote parts of the mountain, swimming through krummholz and skirting ledges to find their sampling plots. Once at the sampling point, they would lay down a 5 x 5 meter plot with string and then count stems, plants and estimated square meters of clumps. Yuuka and Connor were able to complete 213 plots on seven summits this year. In 2019, we will hire one botany steward to complete their work.

Hosting the 2019 Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering

The Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering is an opportunity for alpine researchers, planners, land managers, hiking clubs, stewards, and interested parties to meet to share information and improve the understanding and management of the alpine areas of the Northeastern US. This event provides a forum for the discussion of challenges and opportunities common to all Northeastern alpine areas, as well a chance to celebrate the qualities that make each of these areas unique. This will be the second time ADK will be hosting the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering, coinciding with our 30th year anniversary. With the exponential increase in hiker use, it is important now more than ever that we are using the best management tools, research methods and wilderness ethics to protect our fragile alpine resource. Join us on October 25-27, 2019 at the High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid. There will be more information posted about it on the Waterman Fund’s website (https://www.watermanfund.org/alpine-gathering/) in the upcoming months.

Spending more time team stewarding, both in the beginning and throughout the season, and incorporating botany information throughout the year.

Team stewarding continues to be an important and extremely valuable experience with both volunteers and our professional crew. I spent four days of team stewarding with the stewards and four days stewarding with the volunteers. While this year we did less team stewarding due to scheduling conflicts, going forward I would like to team steward with each crew member a minimum of two times and two to three times with each new volunteer for the season.
Summit stewards need to know not only botany but an array of topics that hikers might ask about. Those questions could range from regulations, Adirondack history, ornithology, geology or how to go the bathroom in the woods. I hope to continue to provide informational reading to not only summit stewards but volunteers as well. This year I started sending volunteer’s research articles, summit forecasts for preparedness, summit steward updates, pertinent information that they should be sharing with hikers and user impacts effecting the High Peaks. I also made an electronic version of the stewarding schedule and weekly report form to try and make volunteering easier.

- Continuing to work with our volunteers to improve the program and expand coverage

With our dedicated volunteers we were able to keep our coverage higher than in years past. Julia and I held a training in May for five new volunteers in Ray Brook, NY. We have twenty six volunteers in total, who spent 71 coverage days and spoke to a total of 11,000 people (roughly 4,000 more than last year). That means that our volunteer stewards spoke to an average of 154 contacts a day!

We were able to cover 48 days on Cascade Mountain this year, meaning we were able to talk to 12,251 people on Cascade alone (a 36% increase from 2017, an average of 255 contacts a day). Volunteers covered 32 of the 48 days on Cascade, enabling the paid crew to spend time on other locations and on other projects. We are contacted frequently by people who either want to know more about the Summit Steward Program or are interested in volunteering.

Additionally this year, Julia and I assisted with training for the 46er Trailhead Steward Program for a second year in a row. Adirondack 46ers are stationed at a table on weekends at the Cascade trailhead to educate visitors about Leave No Trace and preparedness. We were able to share our techniques for visitor interaction and expertise in educating hikers on Leave No Trace at the start of the season. The Trailhead Steward Program continues to be a huge success, reducing the amount of trash, number of dogs off-leash and poop on the trails witnessed by summit stewards.
Sharing our findings on the Photopoint Monitoring project

In 2015, we retook all 59 photopoint pictures that are spread across nine summits as part of our long-term Photopoint Monitoring project. This project has allowed us to compare specific alpine images from the past with images from today to compare for signs of regrowth, habitat change, and vegetation loss. This project is extremely important because it has given us quantitative data on the success of the Summit Steward Program.

The last time analysis was done was in 2009, before the surge in hiker contacts. The question we asked was whether traditional methods of alpine stewardship would continue to protect the alpine zone given the tremendous increase in visitors. We found no statistically significant difference between 2009 and 2015, meaning that summit stewards are continuing to hold the line! We reported our findings at the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering this past April. Since this data only looks at damaged trailside areas and vegetation without discrimination between alpine and non-alpine species, our alpine population study shows us how the alpine zone is changing as a whole, giving us a bigger picture and better understanding of the challenges these areas face in the future.

Thanks to the work of ADK’s Education Programs Manager, Seth Jones, we were able to make a video on our Photopoint Monitoring Project. Educating hikers on the research that we conduct in the alpine zone enhances their understanding of NY’s alpine ecosystem. This video received over 5,600 views on ADK’s social media accounts. ADK has also been creating more Public Service Announcement videos to try to educate hikers on a variety of Leave No Trace topics. You can view the Photopoint Monitoring video, as well as ADK’s Leave No Trace Skills and Outdoor Ethics videos here:
https://www.facebook.com/AdirondackMountainClub/.

Conducting more public outreach programs throughout the year to expand our visibility (and please contact us if you’re interested in having a program!)

In the spring, I put out our pre-season mailing to camps, colleges, and organizations who bring groups into the High Peaks. I was able to educate over 200 hikers in Leave No Trace Awareness Workshops and the importance of protecting alpine vegetation. I also co-trained the new High Peaks Information Center volunteers with a Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop. Educating hikers before they go into the backcountry helps protect the resource and the recreational experience of the Adirondack Park for future generations.
Since the end of last season, Julia and I have done approximately 20 outreach presentations including presentations for the public, college orientation groups, hiking organizations, Road Scholars, youth camp groups, ADK Chapters and researchers. Doing these programs are such a great way to get the message out to people before they visit the area. It’s also a way to recruit people who want to volunteer, become a paid steward, or donate to help protect a beautiful ecosystem.

**Personnel and Scheduling**

The 2018 Summit Stewards are a great crew of dedicated environmentalists. With a mixture of previous ADK employees and new stewards, we were able to create a dynamic group of alpine protectors. The mountains were lucky to have them!

**Ryan Nerp**—Ryan is returning for a third year of stewarding. As a Paul Smith’s College alum, Ryan has lived in the Adirondacks for the past six years. When not chatting with hikers on the mountains, you can find Ryan paddling on some Adirondack body of water, working the ropes course at Paul Smith’s, or developing his own film. On the mountain, he is always happy to point out alpine plants or listen to a hiker tell of his or her latest adventure.

**Matt Baer**—This is Matt’s first year as a summit steward, but his third year here at ADK. He’s worked at the High Peaks Information Center and as ADK’s Wilderness Trip Leader. He is another Paul Smith’s College alum and has spent a considerable amount of time in the High Peaks. This makes Matt a knowledgeable person to have in the backcountry and an amazing educator. He even has a podcast called *Foot Stuff Podcast*, which is dedicated to outdoor adventure, antics and activism. Give it a listen!

**Nathan Kiel**—Nathan is brand new to the Summit Steward Program, but has extensive knowledge of the High Peaks. He is a 46er and has been hiking the High Peaks since childhood. Currently he is attending SUNY-ESF for Conservation Biology. Nathan also has experience educating, backpacking and conducting research in Patagonia. He’s a natural in the mountains, enjoying everything the alpine zone has to offer!

**Michaela Dunn**—This is Michaela’s first year as a summit steward, but she grew up in the Adirondacks in Lake George, NY. Last year, Michaela worked at the Wild Center as a Summer Naturalist so she has a deep understanding of Adirondack fauna and flora. She’s a recent graduate of the University of New
Hampshire, majoring in Wildlife and Conservation Biology. Michaela is a quiet soul on the mountain, always with a smile on her face!

Yuuka McPherson—Yuuka is a Botany Steward and is brand new to the Program. She is currently enrolled in Williams College for Geosciences. Yuuka loves farming and has done so in Italy, Maine, Rhode Island and Connecticut. It was in the Alps where she discovered an interest in mountainous alpine regions. Yuuka’s strength lies in plant identification and a willingness to be out in all weather conditions. Yuuka is now in Japan for an internship on repurposing old farmhouses!

Connor Moore—Connor is also a Botany Steward and worked at ADK last year as a Summer Naturalist Intern. He currently goes to Columbia University and is majoring in Environmental Biology. Well versed in research and education, Connor’s been a Naturalist for Delaware State Parks. He enjoys biking around NYC and cooking, especially when it is breakfast on an Adirondack alpine summit for sunrise!

Chuck Pacer—Chuck has switched back between volunteer and paid staff over the past couple years and joined on for the fall stewarding season. He is very knowledgeable of the area and of the outdoor gear you’ll need for the hike. His bag is always heavily filled with lots of gadgets. His energy and willingness to share his experiences makes him a friendly face to find on the mountain.

Sarah Rhodes—Sarah came on for fall stewarding and is new to ADK, but has a wealth of experience under her belt. Sarah’s been a ridge runner for AMC, AmeriCorps Park Ranger in Georgia, worked on trail crews and did invasive species removal. She loves traveling, learning new languages, reading out loud and exercising. Sarah will be leaving us to work with kids in experiential learning and outdoor recreation in Hong Kong!

Julia Goren—Julia’s been a devoted part of the Summit Steward Program since 2006 and is ADK’s Educational Director. She continues to be a mentor, focusing on education and securing donations for the program. We are sad to see her leave ADK but excited for her to continue to protect the Adirondack Park.

Kayla White—This is my second year as Summit Steward Coordinator, my fifth year with the Summit Steward Program and my seventh year at ADK. I’m so excited to be on this journey with such an amazing group of people!

**Volunteer Stewards:** Our volunteers are a wonderful group of devoted stewards, many of them have been with us for multiple years. We were able to reach a new record of hiker contacts in large part due
to the enthusiasm of our volunteers. Volunteers have provided 71 coverage days and spoke to a total of 11,000 people!

Ian Ellbogen—Ian has been with the volunteer program for nine years. When not stewarding, you can find Ian taking his grandchildren hiking, and in the winter, you’re sure to find him skiing.

David Warfield—This is Dave’s eighth year with the steward program. He has spent a great deal of time hiking above tree line here and in the White Mountains. He has climbed Chamonix, Mt. Blanc, and Mt. Rainier, and can frequently be found cycling the area.

Mike Cady—Mike is back for a sixth season of volunteering. He is a member of the ADKhighpeaks Forum, a professional photographer, a 46er in summer and winter, and a Saranac Lake Ultra 6er. Mike recently completed his second round of the 46 with his son Eli, who just completed his first round.

Jack Coleman—Jack is also back for his sixth season as a volunteer. Jack is treasurer of the ADKhighpeaks Forum, a 46er and winter 46er, an inspirational hiker who helps leads challenge hikes for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and he is never to be found without a smile on his face.

Mary Lamb—Mary is returning for a sixth season as a hard core steward volunteer. Mary is also a member of the ADKhighpeaks Forum, a 46er, winter 46er, and boundlessly energetic.

Bob Rock—Bob is also returning for a sixth season as a volunteer. He, too, comes to the program through the ADKhighpeaks Forum and as a 46er. Bob has the endless patience that comes, among other things, with years of experience as a Boy Scout troop leader.

John Wood—John is also returning for his sixth year. John is a former student of Dr. Ketchledge; he did some of the first trail work on these summits to help protect the alpine plants. John has the incredible patience to spend hours combing the summits looking for tiny nails as part of our Photopoint Monitoring project.

Dan Kane—Dan is returning for a fifth year. He is a familiar face around the Loj, having served as Campground Host for six years and helped tremendously with the renovations to the HPIC. Dan’s previous experiences are too numerous to name, but include teaching, interning at the APA, and regional planning. Among many other interests (concert bouncer!), Dan is an enthusiastic hiker and 46er.

Vin Maresco—Vin is returning for his fourth year. He is a geologist, avid hiker, ski patroller, and former JBL hut crew member. He brings tremendous enthusiasm and energy to the program.

Lois Dannenberg—Lois is returning for her third year. She has a passion for botany and currently works for a tree and lawn care company. She just finished becoming a 46er and brings her love of the outdoors to everything she does.
Ann Fogarty—Ann is returning for a third year. She is very active in the Genesee Valley Chapter and hikes frequently in the Adirondacks. Ann has a friendly demeanor, enjoys traveling, and loves talking to hikers about doing the 46 High Peaks.

Jen Maguder—This is Jen’s third year volunteering but her face is a familiar one at ADK. Jen was a summit steward for two years and brings enthusiasm, knowledge, and positivity to the program. Her dedication to the mountains is extremely admirable.

Patrick Murphy—Pat is another previous summit steward turned volunteer. Pat was a steward in 2012 and a botany steward in 2013. He has a wealth of knowledge of the alpine vegetation, the High Peaks area, and anything outdoors related. He is currently employed at the Wild Center in Tupper Lake.

Andrew Wood—Andrew is also returning for a third year of stewarding. He went to school for Global Economics. His indoor job makes him want to come and explore the Adirondacks in his free time. He is a natural at stewarding and a great conversationalist on the peaks.

Jon and Alison Laurin—Both Jon and Alison are returning for their second year as stewards. They are experienced hikers and have done almost all of the 4,000 footers in the Northeast (making them also 46ers). They are both teachers so summit stewarding comes to them naturally. They make quite the tag team on the summit.

Jim Schneider—This is Jim’s second year as a summit steward who wanted to be part of the solution. He is a very experienced hiker, hiking throughout the northeast and out west. A summer and winter 46er, Jim loves talking with hikers about their experiences on and off the mountain. Check out his Adirondack Firetower book: Views from on High.

Jonathan Leff—Jonathan is another second year steward. He is an arborist who loves spending his time in the outdoors. Jonathan is a Lake Placid native who now makes the trek from Massachusetts to volunteer in the mountains he grew up in.

Troy Tetreault—Troy is another second year summit steward. He is attending SUNY Plattsburgh, majoring in Ecology with a minor in Botany. Troy is volunteering with us to better understand the alpine ecosystem and is currently working on a project to document alpine pollinators.
Bill Paradies—Bill is brand new to the program, but already completely hooked. He ran into a summit steward on Marcy and decided to do some shadowing last fall. Half way through his 46, Bill is working on becoming a 46er. He’s excited to give back to the mountains that give him such joy!

Brian Coville—Brian is also brand new to the program and excited to get out on the mountains. He works as an auditor and therefore spends a lot of time inside. Summit stewarding is a great excuse for him to come enjoy the Adirondacks and it’s a short drive from Saratoga Springs where he just bought a new house!

Danna Libbey—Danna has worked in ADK’s Education Department for the last couple years, so she’s had a lot of experience in interpretation and stewarding on Mt. Jo. This year she was the Adirondack Black Bear Steward, educating hikers on proper food storage in the High Peaks. Danna loves to hula-hoop with fire, poetry readings and going on hikes.

Tom Collins—Tom worked as ADK’s Summer Naturalist this past season and joined on for fall stewarding. He is currently going to SUNY Plattsburgh for communications, marketing and environment studies and is also very active in the outing club. Tom is a top notch educator, always with a smile on his face.

James Ianni—James is another ADK staff member turned fall steward volunteer. James worked this season in the High Peaks Information Center and is currently an Environmental Science and Ecology major at SUNY Brockport. Botany and birding are his passions, James is a natural summit steward and feels at home in the mountains.

Sadie Bobbette and Kai Scarangella—Sadie and Kai are both from Hamilton College and are interning with the Summit Steward Program this fall. They’ve joined us every Thursday to do trail work on Marcy, Skylight, Haystack and Whiteface. Now that the field season is over, they will work on research projects and social media for the program.

**Education: Usage and Outreach**

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Number of hiker contacts continue to stay high in the 30,000 range. To put a 38,033 person year in context, when the Summit Steward program started in 1990, stewards spoke with just over 7,000 hikers.
This year saw over a fivefold increase of contacts over that season. Having a 300-400 hiker contact day has become the new normal. To keep the quality of hiker interactions high, I’ve been having two summit stewards team up together on Cascade Mountain for busy holiday weekends. This ensures hikers are getting the full stewarding message and stewards have time to answer any questions hikers may have.

The graph shows the average number of hikers per day since the program started.
As the graph of total steward contacts shows, the trend is toward increasing numbers of visitors, with a particularly sharp rise in the past eight seasons.

We are always trying to connect with hikers and educate them in Leave No Trace Skills and Outdoor Ethics and responsible recreation before they enter the backcountry. We’ve continued our goal to increase the amount of outreach that we do with camps, colleges and organizations who bring groups into the High Peaks. Presentations were done for Camp Echo Lake, Deerfoot Lodge, Camp Dudley, Camp Chingachgook, Camp Gould Lake, Camp Unirondack, Camp Kirchenwald, Overland, UVM Outing Club and Plattsburgh Expedition. I brought Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA and Camp Dudley up on the MacIntyres to do trail work and spoke about the alpine ecosystem. I took Girls, Inc. (based out of Albany) up Whiteface to talk about the Summit Steward Program, alpine plants and female hiker pioneers to inspire intercity youth to explore the outdoors fearlessly.

This year Julia gave presentations to North Country Community College, Saranac Lake Public Library, several Road Scholar groups, Gordon College’s La Vida Program and the North American Rock Garden Society. Julia and I also conducted training for the Hurricane Mountain Firetower Steward, Poke-O-Moonshine Steward, and the 46ers Trailhead Steward Program, SCA Backcountry Stewards, Catskill Center’s Peekamoose Blue Hole Stewards, MERE Steward and the Green Mountain Club.

**Botany and Research Projects:**

For a second year in a row, stewards participated in Vermont’s Center for Ecostudies Mountain Birdwatch. Mountain Birdwatch focuses on monitoring high elevation birds in the spruce/fir and alpine zone which spans four states. This project looks at 10 bird species with a focus on the rare Bicknell’s Thrush, as well as red squirrels. Summit stewards went up the north and south trails of Algonquin, Porter, and Saddleback while stopping at specific points to listen to bird calls and map their locations. To read their findings, go to [https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ecs2.1921](https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ecs2.1921).

This year marks the eleventh year of our participation in the AMC Mountain Watch phenology program. We monitor the phenological stages of four species: Bigelow’s Sedge, Diapensia, Labrador Tea, and Bilberry. These species are monitored at standardized monitoring areas in line with the National Phenology Network (NPN). This ensures the data can be used in broader studies that look at global trends. The data collected is being stored in hard copy here at the Adirondack Mountain Club and being
submitted electronically to NPN’s website. AMC uses these 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.

Summit Stewards have been collecting bryophytes from the alpine zone for SUNY Oneonta Professor Sean Robinson. We actually do not have a comprehensive list of the mosses found on our summits, so this research will give us a better understanding of the alpine ecosystem. Sean is examining the relationship of bryophytes and alpine community types.

Another project that summit stewards are conducting is testing the pH of soil on the summits. Both due to the soil amendments added by Dr. Ketchledge and the lessening of acid deposition due to the Clean Air Act, we suspect that the pH of the soils may have become less acidic since last tested in the 1970s. We are interested to see what we’ll find up there. This project is being paired nicely with bryophyte collection, giving a more robust data set to both projects.

Summit stewards continue to collect data on cairn tampering on Cascade Mountain. Signs were implemented at the trailhead last year and we will be putting signs on the summit next year to see if this additional signage aids in educating hikers on the function of cairns and prevents hikers from damaging them.

**Trail Work and Project Days:**

Before and after pictures of the “cairn” rock pile on Skylight. Stewards moved over 3 tons of rock!

With a seasoned crew we’ve been able to get a lot of work done. Trail work has been done on Marcy, Algonquin, Wright, Cascade, Colden, Gothics, Whiteface, Giant, Haystack, Skylight and Iroquois. We dug a new privy hole at the Wright/ Algonquin junction, rebuilt cairns on Haystack and started to dismantle the rock pile on Skylight. Stewards carried over three tons of rock from the summit of Skylight, using the rock to do trail work or scattering them in the trail. Fall summit stewards also spent five days on Whiteface and carried a ton of rock for trail work. Working from the road to the summit, stewards carried up brush and rock to delineate the trail and they also repainted the blazes. We primarily did rock
packing on Mt. Marcy and reblazed the summit. We also did work on Mt. Colden where we used rock that was flown to the summit by DEC to do rock packing and scree wall work.

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<td>Totals</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>1,949</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equipment and Campsites:

As is to be expected, our equipment receives heavy use and something is always in need of repair or replacement. Many thanks go to the companies that provide us with equipment and clothing for supporting the Summit Steward Program. Stalwart program sustainers, such as Vasque, and Outdoor Research helped to improve the program and the experience of the stewards through their donations of equipment and gear. We are very grateful for the support!

Unfortunately, a May storm took out our Marcy camp tarp and cook tent. Luckily, we were able to replace those items (as well as a gravity filter) last minute thanks to the Will Cummer gear fund. Summit steward Chuck Pacer was kind enough to donate a slightly used tent for Marcy camp which held up fantastically, even in the storm.

We were also able to buy, through the Will Cummer gear fund, a new GPS, rechargeable batteries, charger and radio battery for the botany stewards. Through the donation of our generous gear sponsors, we made sure that the stewards are properly equipped for the harsh mountain conditions. Outdoor Research (OR) donated winter gloves, fleece gloves, rain pants, rain jackets, gaiters, shirts, pants, bug hats and winter hats. They truly deck us out head to toe with gear! As always, we are so grateful for the support of Jaeger Shaw and the fine folks at OR—with the summer heat the moisture wicking clothing and bug hats have kept us dry and happy on the mountains.

Darn Tough donated socks and Vasque donated boots to the stewards through The Mountaineer. They were even kind enough to donate an extra pair for the botany stewards. Waterproof boots and wool
socks make it so summit steward’s feet stay nice and dry, even in a hot summer like this. We couldn’t do our jobs without such necessary gear items.

Many, many thanks go to the Will Cummer Gear Fund, Outdoor Research (OR), Darn Tough, The Mountaineer, and Vasque for their generous support of the Summit Steward Program. For next year, we will replace rain pants and jackets that are no longer waterproof. Furthermore, new saw blades, work gloves, thermoses, books and map case items will be needed.

Special thanks go to Addie Clayton, Tyler Socash, Matt Baer, Chuck Pacer and Sarah Rhodes for setting up and taking down Marcy and Algonquin camps.

Future recommendations:

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

- Working to educate more hikers before they arrive at the trailhead through outreach and social media
- Working with the DEC to devise ways to get information out on suggested alternative hikes to try to divert some of the less prepared tourists away from Cascade and other severely damaged trails
- Spending more time team stewarding, both in the beginning and throughout the season, and incorporating botany information throughout the season
- Continuing our alpine population study by hiring one botany steward for 2019
- Continuing to expand and improve the volunteer program
- Finish collecting data on the Cascade Sign Project and analyze our soil pH data
- Building group project days to accomplish more high quality trail work
- Conducting more public outreach programs throughout the year to expand our visibility (and please contact me if you’re interested in having a program!)
- Host the 2019 Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Summit Steward Program

Thank you!

As always, the Summit Steward Program would not be possible without the support and funding of a number of various organizations and individuals. We’d like to thank the following organizations:

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy
- The Adirondack 46ers
- ADKhighpeaks Foundation
- Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund
- Will Cummer Gear Fund
- ORDA and the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center for access to the summit of Whiteface via the Memorial Highway
- The Mountaineer
- Patagonia
- REI
Northern New York Audubon
Vasque for boots for the stewards
Outdoor Research
Darn Tough Socks

And individuals:

Wes Lampman (ADK), Sophie McClelland (TNC), Bill Martin (TNC), Jim Giglinto (DEC), Tate Connor (DEC), Jack Coleman (ADKhighpeaks Foundation), Christine Bourjade, Alex Radmanovich, Wilson Cummer, Ian Ellbogen, David Warfield, Mary Lamb, Mike Cady, Bob Rock, Dan Kane, Vin Maresco, John Wood, Lois Dannenberg, Ann Fogarty, Jen Maguder, Patrick Murphy, Jon Laurin, Alison Laurin, Andrew Wood, Jim Schneider, Jonathan Leff, Troy Tetreault, Seth Jones, Dr. Tim Howard (NYNHP), Dr. Sean Robinson (SUNY Oneonta), Jeff Chiarenzelli (St. Lawrence University), Dr. Sean Regan (USGS), Paul Casson (ASRC), Vinny McClelland, Chuck Bruja and the entire staff of The Mountaineer, Bill O’Donnell, Jaeger Shaw, Hal Elmes, Tom Manitta, Bobby Clark, Matt Baer, Tyler Socash, Danna Libbey, Tom Collins, James Ianni and our two dedicated interns from Hamilton College’s Adirondack Semester: Sadye Bobbette and Kai Scarangella.

It has been such a rewarding season! I cherish our time spent on the mountains, the Adirondack alpine zone is such a unique and beautiful ecosystem. It is a privilege to be a part of this stewardship program; I can’t imagine a better place to work or more satisfying work to do. We can’t do it without all of your hard work, everyone should be proud to be a part of protecting NY’s alpine plants. Please feel free to contact me (chiefsteward@adk.org) at any time for help or with questions, suggestions, or opportunities for the program. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kayla White and Julia Goren
Summit Steward Coordinator and Education Director
chiefsteward@adk.org and summit@adk.org