

# A HANDBOOK FOR THE SUMMIT STEWARD

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## Introduction

The concept of stewardship is a beautiful one! It is the idea that we humans are only on this great, green Earth for a very short time, and that it will continue its infinite spin long after we're gone. With that we are endowed with responsibility. And our most magnificent duty is to leave it spinning freely, in every way, just as we found it.

And so it is that a Summit Steward is a noble profession. For after you teach yourself to care, you can begin to teach others. Here, in these Adirondack Mountains, we have a wondrous natural treasure atop our tallest peaks. It is the rare and beautiful arctic-alpine zone. We can save it through our stewardship; indeed, caring and dedicated Summit Stewards may be the only thing that can save it. Yet the lessons on the summit must be much more far reaching. For they show people, in one small way, the effects of their passage; and if people can apply this enlightenment to other parts of their being, then we have done a great thing. And so it is that by teaching people to save the alpine plants, we are stepping ever forward in the long journey to teach one another how to save the planet. People need to hear you. Teach them well that we may all be stewards upon the land.

## Purpose

This handbook is written to be a tool for Summit Stewards. It should provide some guidance in effective ways of approaching people and some general ideas about your style, content, and delivery. These are only suggestions based on my one summer's experience as a Summit Steward. Feel free to use some creativity; stray from what is written here, and do what works best for you. My hope is that these pages will help you develop your own special style. Your own creativity is the most important tool.

This handbook is not intended to be a technical manual for the Summit Steward. It will not discuss camping skills or minimum impact techniques. Nor will it provide a key to identification of the alpine plants. Other sources for that information are listed in the Bibliography. This handbook is meant to provide some preliminary information about a Summit Steward's job. After just a little basic reading and study you should be able to answer most any question asked of you while on the summit. Look forward to the learning; it's one of the best parts of the being a steward!

## Timing and Approach

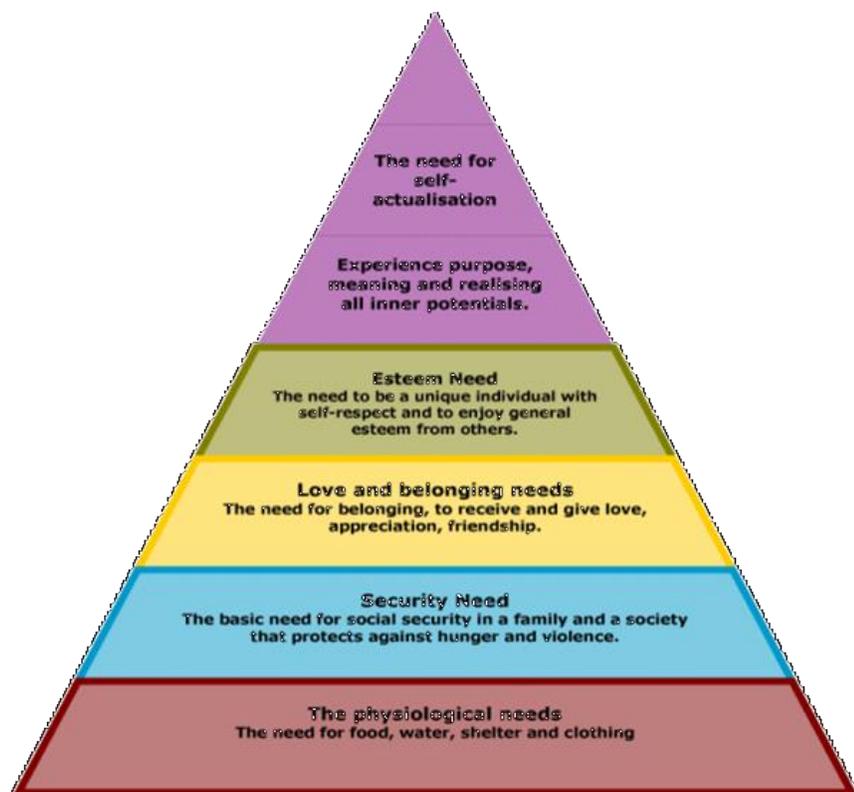


Timing is everything! So it is with Summit Stewarding! When you approach a hiker you have only a very brief window of opportunity in which to influence someone's hiking habits. If you squander this opportunity, the window will slam shut, and the person will walk off, undoubtedly all over the alpine plants. If, on the other hand, you are concise, convincing, connected, and timely, then you have done your very best to make your message heard.

So if timing is everything, how do you know when the time is right? How do you know when the person is "ready" to listen to you, and hear you, and learn from you, and not just have your

words go in one ear and out the other? Well, there's a simple three step process that will get you there. I call it checking in, checking out, and orchestrating the moment.

Checking in - Chances are that the moment of one's arrival on the summit may not be the best time for them to hear your whole rap. Remember that if people are exhausted or exhilarated, cold or hot, hungry or thirsty, windblown or wet, they are not ready to listen. Psychologist Abraham Maslow captured this idea in his "hierarchy of needs". People cannot focus on higher brain functioning when more basic physiological needs have not been met.

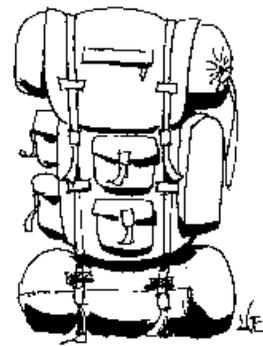


<http://two.not2.org/psychosynthesis/articles/maslow.gif>

Chances are, when people arrive on the summit, they aren't ready to talk. Although they may not be ready to hear your whole spiel, you still want to "check in" with them. You can make small talk about where they came from, or the weather, congratulate them on reaching the summit, and at the same time introduce yourself. Let people know that you would like to speak with them sometime before they leave the summit. Some people will be ready for your delivery right then and there. Go for it! Many will not be ready. Encourage these folks to check back with you before they leave. This helps to insure that they will come to you when they feel ready to listen. This is important!

Checking out - This happens at the same time as you're checking in. You're checking people out in order to better assess your audience, and tailor your presentation to them. So as a person hikes up take notice of who they are. Are they carefully stepping from rock to rock, or are they leaving a path of trampled plants in their wake? Find out if people are alone or hiking with a group. Are they first time hikers or wily old mountaineers? Do they seem to be in a hurry or planning to stay a while? Try your best to quickly get an idea of who people are, what they know, and when they may be ready to listen. When speaking with people do your best to acknowledge their background and experience. This helps them feel that you are on their level.

It's also helpful to take a close look at people, and try to remember what they look like, what they're wearing, what kind of pack they're carrying, or any other identifying characteristics. This will help you later on when you're trying to figure out who you have or have not spoken with; or in the unfortunate event that this person is involved in a search and rescue effort. Your words will seem more directed and will be more effective if people feel that you've recognized them and know who they are.



Orchestrating the moment - Now take what you've learned, and use it to figure out not only what to say and how to say it, but when to say it. This will all be different if you're talking to a Girl Scout troop, or a middle-aged couple, or some beer drinking bad boys from the big city. A first time hiker would need to hear your whole rap, while the woodsy old timer might only get a quick review to confirm that they actually know what they think they know. Use what you've learned. If someone is a member of a group, try to gather the whole group and speak to them all at once. This saves you some talking, and speaking to the group as a whole increases their compliance as they're more likely to monitor and remind one another. If someone is tired, or hungry, or cold, suggest that they have some lunch or get a jacket on before you talk to them. Allow people to satisfy their needs, get settled, and be "ready" to listen without distraction. Then give it all you've got!

I once made the mistake of trying to speak to a group of hungry Boy Scouts while they were eating lunch. I may as well have been speaking to the stones. They were so busy eating that my words were just blown away by the wind. I stopped where I was and asked them to call me when their lunch was finished. I was truly amazed the second time around by having their totally undivided attention. They walked away tip-toeing from rock to rock, and we had both learned a lesson.

Here are a couple of other points about your approach. On the busiest of holiday weekends, with a couple of hundred people on the summit, you'll be doing well just to deliver a basic message to everyone who comes up. You just won't have enough time to use the whole process we've described here. That's OK. Do the best you can.



You may have to check in, check out, and orchestrate the moment all at the same time, but be sure to speak, however briefly, with everyone who comes up. When the quantity goes up the quality might have to go down, but you can only take things as they come. You do however have an obligation to try to speak with everyone without exception.

Sometimes when hikers are in a hurry, or preoccupied, they may not stop for your small talk and "checking in". There's an easy way to quickly get anyone's attention. Just say, "Can I speak with you for a minute? I work up here, and talk with everyone who comes up." This stops people

quickly and in a non-authoritative, non-threatening way. These are often times the kind of people you will need to talk with right then and there.



There is one other kind of timing I should briefly discuss. Ideally you want to be the first person on the summit and the last one off. This means being on top from 9 to 5, just like at the office. There will always be those adventurous souls who come to see the sun set or moon rise, or the meteors' shower, and who you are never going to see. But being on top from 9 to 5 you can be sure of three things: you can ease rather than rush into you day's work, you'll be there to speak with almost everyone who comes up, and that, at least on some days, you'll have a little time in the morning or the afternoon to

be alone atop the mountain. **This is a beautiful thing and important to your well being.** It helps you to keep a healthy perspective when you've grown tired of saying the same thing over and over again.

**Try to spend some time up there alone!**

**A word on the weather...**

The weather will have a big impact on your approach. Much of your time on the summit will be in wet, cold, windy weather, even in summer. You need to be able to stay warm through the worst of it, which takes a lot of clothing. Remember, you're not a passing hiker, but must stay warm on the summit all day. **Your own well being is the most important concern.**

When conditions are too nasty you can always go down to the protection of tree line and speak with people there, or even advise them against going any further in the worst conditions, such as a lightning storm. Remember, though, that your presentation is most effective when given on the summit. Try to have enough clothing to stay up there and allow people time to get suitably dressed before talking to them. On every summit there is just the right rock to protect you and hikers from wind from any direction. Find these sheltered places and speak to people there rather than out in a frigid, howling wind. So be prepared for the worst, find that sheltered place and talk to people there, let them



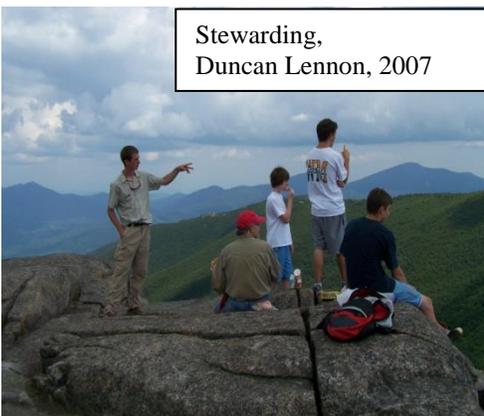
Quarrying in the rain  
(Brendan Wiltse, 2008)

get some warm clothes on, and dress yourself adequately, but always use your common sense. If you're wearing everything you have, and the isometric exercises aren't enough to keep you warm, it may be time to retreat to the tree line. If you suspect that lightning may occur, immediately retreat to tree line. Should the lightning strike, tree line is exactly where you want to be!

## Style, Content, and Delivery

So now we can talk a bit about what to say and how to say it; an elaboration on how to best orchestrate the moment. Before we get into the details though, let's keep a few general ideas in mind.

Summit Stewarding is a great job that almost anyone who loves the outdoors can enjoy. Yet it is a serious job, with important tasks, and some very real frustrations. You **will** get tired of saying the same thing over and over again. This you should know right from the start so that you can plan for it and work to minimize its effects. There are a few ways that you can do this. One is to try and vary what you say, at least a little bit. This does have limitations since what you say must impart the same basic ideas to everyone. Another method is to interact as much as possible with the hikers who come up. Find out where they're from, what they do for a living, where they've hiked, what their hobbies are, or anything else that may be of interest. Learn about whom they are, have fun with them, try to find common ground. **It is critical you realize that although**



**this may be the hundredth time in a day that you're giving your spiel, it is the very first time that person is hearing it.** You must do everything you can not to sound like a tape recorded message, even though you may feel like one. Remember that window of opportunity is only open for a short time so you always have to be at your best.

Another way for you to minimize your frustrations is to realize that you are not up there to act as a police person and shoo away everyone who steps on the plants. You will see many people who don't know any better walking all over the alpine plants. Always remember that you are educating them for the next time they go hiking, and there are going to be some violations by people until you talk to them. Don't be frustrated by this. They know not what they do. Instead use it to gain resolve and determination to talk to them honestly and constructively and to change their behavior for the next time they go hiking and every time after that. If everyone stayed off the plants, Summit Stewards would be unnecessary.

In the previous section I talked about how you needed to be concise, convincing, and connected in talking with people. Let's cover generally what this means, and then put it all together in more detail.

Concise - You can't ramble on forever or you'll lose everyone's attention. At the same time you can't simply ask people to "stay on the rocks." This is too general a statement and they won't grasp the whole concept. You need to be specific and give people all the right background and

reasons for protecting the alpine plants without being long winded. This means that your words need to be organized and carefully chosen with clarity and brevity in mind.

Convincing - People are going to need good reason to stay on the rocks if you are going to change their lifelong habits. That's why every person needs to hear a basic talk that always includes some good information on why this is important, not just a simple call to "stay on the rocks." Most of all people need to hear conviction in your voice. They need to know that you believe in what you're doing and saying and that it is very important to you. If you act as a positive role model, this will help people impart their own sense of importance to what you are saying. To be convincing you also need to be friendly but firm. People must understand that although you're friendly and courteous; you also mean business and want them to learn the lesson. Friendly but firm, it's a good combination.

Connected - Your words will have more gravity if people feel that you are speaking to them personally and directly. You have to "connect" with them. There are a couple of ways in which you can do this. The first, as we have already talked about, is to sound fresh and excited and not like a recorded message. If you have learned a person's name, use it, and always try to maintain eye contact. We also spoke earlier about noticing what people look like or what they're wearing. If you recognize a person, they will feel more connected to you and your words will mean more. You can also get closer to people through your interaction with them, at the same time making your day more interesting, and yourself less likely to burn out. So interact! It's good for everybody.

Now that we've talked about some things in general, let's outline what you might say in a bit more detail:

Introduction - Introduce yourself by name and explain to people what your job is. This helps you to personalize things and to "connect."

Outline the problem - People must understand that the plants present are not only rare and fragile, but very much threatened in New York State by unknowing hikers.

Give important background information - This helps to convince people of the complexity and importance of the problem.

- Where are the plants from? - People should know that many are true arctic species occurring only atop a few of our highest peaks.

- How they got here - As a result of the glacier that covered the area during the last ice age; 12,000 years ago. They have remained as a result of the arctic conditions that prevail on our summits.

- Why they're fragile - Due to the harsh environment in which they live: the cold, wet, windy conditions, the poor soil and nutrients, and the short growing season.

How can we solve the problem? - It's easy! People need only to stay on the rocks. Stay off the vegetation, gravel, or dirt areas. Solid rock only!



Endow them with responsibility - Ask people to spread the word, teach their friends. Give them a further role to play.

Demonstrate - The more specific you are the better. It's very effective to actually show them what you mean by hopping through a damaged area from rock to rock. The summit is a dynamic, wonderful place to teach, so use it! Move around to demonstrate things and point out areas of interest or problem areas.

Let them do it - Allow people to follow you on tip toes through the same rock garden or problem area. This really drives things home.

Offer a chance to learn more - If time allows, everyone should hear the entire contents of this outline. You should also offer everyone the possibility of learning more about the plants and alpine ecology by offering a summit tour. You'll probably find the interaction of these tours a welcome relief from the routine. Only a small percentage of people will actually take you up on this, but it's worth it when they do.

To show you what I mean here's a sample speech. It incorporates everything in the outline yet it only takes about three minutes to say. It also includes a few techniques we haven't discussed yet, but more on that later. For reasons of clarity I've deleted all the comments people make during such a talk. Here goes!

"Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm the Summit Steward. I work up here on top of Mt. Marcy every day. Now, as a Summit Steward, you might think my job is to clean up all the litter up here. Well, as it turns out, I don't have to clean up litter very often because most people who come up here are very conscious of that problem and are responsible about carrying out their own trash. There's another problem up here though, that people are not as aware of. Many of the plants you see up here are true arctic plants, for example that small white flower there (you point to it) is called Mountain Sandwort. These arctic plants appeared in the area during the time of the last glacier; 12,000 years ago. In fact the glacier completely covered these mountaintops, and as the glaciers receded, and the climate warmed, the only place these plants could survive is right here on top of about eleven of our tallest peaks, where conditions are very arctic-like. So they are very rare in New York State, and to see them commonly you'd have to go one thousand miles north into the arctic tundra. Yet these plants are very fragile because it's so cold and windy up here, the soil is nutrient poor, and the growing season is short. They are very prone to hiker damage as you can see; right here in these eroded pathways (you can point out a specific area). The solution is simple! All you have to do is to stay only on solid rock and stay off the vegetation, and even stay off these areas of dirt and gravel (point them out) since they can come back if people learn to stay off them (use photo point monitoring photos as examples). We can maintain a beautiful, lush, alpine summit, but if your feet are not on solid rock, chances are you're in the wrong place. There are so many of us hiking these days that we all need to act

responsibly. So, just like you automatically carry out all of your trash and would never think of littering, now when in the alpine zone, above tree line, you must automatically stay on the solid rock and stay off the vegetation. Remember that as late as the mid-1960's we all buried our trash while in the backcountry. Then, as our numbers increased and we realized that this wouldn't do, we changed our habits and re-educated ourselves to carry the trash out. Now, we can re-educate ourselves to stay on the rock as well. So, for example, if I want to go across this area all I need to do is hop from rock to rock just like this (you can actually do it and tip toe across). Now let me see you all try it (they follow you). All right! You've got the idea! I hope next time you go hiking you'll teach your friends as well. If anyone is interested in learning more about the alpine ecology or specific plants, I'll be happy to give you a little summit tour and answer your questions. If not, you've already learned the most important thing: stay on the rocks! Thanks for your time, and have a good hike."

This may seem like a lot of information, but it only takes about three minutes to say. It includes everything in the outline and then some. It's concise, yet has enough information to be interesting and convincing. If the talk is also directed, given with eye contact and recognition, and is combined with your personal interaction, then it is bound to be effective. If time allows, and on most days it does, this much should be said to every hiker who visits the summit. Realize that this talk is very much a give and take between Summit Steward and hiker. Ask questions, encourage questions, and dialogue. Do all you can to make your talk more of an exchange and less of a speech. There are a few other techniques used in this talk that we should look at a bit closer:



Cite examples - It's very important that you be specific in pointing things out. You may have noticed that during the talk a plant, Mountain Sandwort, was pointed out and identified. This contributes to your credibility and tickles peoples' curiosity. You may have also noticed that problem areas, an area of restoration, and an area to rock hop through were all specifically pointed out and demonstrated. If you're too general, people don't get it. Be specific; cite examples that exist around you.

Wow 'em - There are some amazing facts thrown in that are not terribly essential but serve to act as a hook and get people interested and listening. The fact that the mountaintops were covered by glacier ice 12,000 years ago, or that these plants commonly occur 1,000 miles north on the tundra are thrown in for just that reason, to wow 'em! It's also possible that one of these amazing facts is what makes the most impact on someone or what really convinces them that the summit is truly a special place. You can also wow 'em with such things as ring lichens that live to be 2,000 years old, or stunted, gnarly, little spruce trees that may be 100 years old! What interests you? Whatever that is, use it to wow 'em.

Relate it to a known - The whole idea in mentioning the litter problem is to get people to relate this new problem to one they not only know and love but have solved! This empowers them and gives them hope that we can tackle this new problem as well. Pointing out the beautiful restored alpine meadow on Algonquin also serves to give people hope and encourages them to do their share as others have.

I hope that from this outline and sample speech, you have a basis for developing your own presentation. Let me end this section with a couple of other situations you may find yourself in and how you might handle them.

No matter how hard you try or how good you are, it is inevitable that someone you have spoken with doesn't quite get it and goes off to walk all over the alpine plants. You need to talk to them again and reaffirm what you said without insulting the person or being condescending. Have patience. Chances are that you were not specific enough and the person didn't realize that you meant the "grass" as well. Go back to them. Explain that perhaps you weren't clear and reiterate key points. Be sure to be specific and to show them graphically where you expect them to walk and where not to walk. Be friendly but firm and insistent.

You will also run across people who know it all and some who think they know it all. This is why you need to approach everyone, check in, and check them out. If you determine that they do already know what you're about to say, leave it at that. If you decide the person needs to be talked to, do so without insulting them. You can give them what I call a surrogate speech. (In other words you give your talk in the third person.) It may go something like this: "You seem to be pretty experienced, and you may know all of this already, but it's amazing how many people who come up here don't. Lots of folks don't realize how important it is to protect the alpine vegetation by staying on the rocks. So I'm up here to talk with all of them ..." etc. The person hears all the most important ideas but doesn't feel lectured. You will not need to use this method very often, but it is effective for that person who would otherwise shut you off. It's a different way of "connecting" on their terms and so you must adapt. In fact, the same holds true for all of these suggestions. If you don't think they will work on a certain person or they don't work well for you, change them as you will and adapt them into something that will work well for you. In the end you need not feel that you must learn all there is to know. It's perfectly fine to answer a question with "I don't know." Just go back and find the answer for next time.

### **Any Questions?**

Expect the hiking public to ask you lots and lots of questions about anything and everything to do with the Adirondack backcountry. The public perceives you as a Ranger and will ask you questions that go way beyond the arctic-alpine zone. Following is a list of topics about which you'll be asked questions. Listed with each topic is the source you may refer to in order to answer these questions.

#### Topic:

- \* drinking water and purification
- \* backcountry sanitation
- \* camping regulations
- \* map and compass
- \* bears and food
- \* proper clothing and equipment
- \* backcountry preparedness
- \* trail conditions and difficulty

#### Reference source:

- ADK High Peaks  
Trail Guide



- \* High Peak identification
- \* Adirondack alpine natural history
  - \*Adirondack Alpine Summits: An Ecological Field Guide by Nancy Slack & Allison Bell
  - Adirondack Wildguide by Michael G. DiNunzio "Islands in the Sky" chapter
  - Appalachian Mountain Club's Field Guide to Mountain Flowers
  - Michael G. DiNunzio's thesis available at Loj library
  
- \* Adirondack natural history beyond the alpine zone
  - Dr. Ketchledge's collection of reference articles, available at summit steward office library (info on fir waves, acid rain, red spruce decline)
  - Adirondack Wildguide
  - Newcomb's Wildflower Guide
  - The Adirondack Atlas
  
- \*Geology of the High Peaks
  - ADK Trail Guide to the High Peaks
  - Roots of a Continent
  - A Natural History of the ADK Park
  - Adirondack Wildguide "Heritage of Stone and Gift of the Glaciers" chapter

Of course there are many, many other resources where excellent background information is available. This list is provided to give you quick, easy access to the information you'll need to know to get started, but you can always read further and learn more about these topics. Happy research!

Just a couple of other hints:

There are always lots of questions from hikers about the trails such as: how steep, how long, how hard, how long will it take me? It is imperative that you only provide objective information only. You can tell hikers distances, elevation gain and loss, and existing topography. **DO NOT tell a hiker how much time it will take to hike from point A to B, since you do not know their hiking capabilities.** If you're not familiar with a certain area or trail, do your best to go and hike it yourself.

Another thing people will ask you about all the time are prominent plants along the way. This changes from week to week, even day to day sometimes depending on what's flowering. So remember to notice what's around during your morning hike and be sure you can identify these plants from the vague descriptions that people will give you. Plant identification is a big part of the Summit Steward's job, and many hikers will be curious about certain plants. The thought of knowing all the plants can be intimidating for a new Summit Steward, but there's really no need for concern here. Realistically, to do a good job, you only need to know between 10 and 20 of the basic alpine plants. The more you know the better, but the most basic list is found below. The first ten I call the "big 10." They are the ones most readily noticed by hikers. The rest of the plants listed you should come to know within the first week or two, as well as any rare or threatened plants in your area. Beyond that, it is up to your own initiative and interest to learn

as many more of the plants as you wish. Adirondack Alpine Summits and the Appalachian Mountain Club Field Guide to Mountain Flowers are the only books you should need for identification. The section summaries in the ADK book are especially good for background reading. For example, the sections on mosses and lichens provide an excellent general understanding of these communities. Next to some of the plants I have listed the reasons why they are significant to alpine education.

The "BIG 10": (know by day 1)



- 1) Sphagnum moss - crucial to bog-like summit conditions
- 2) Lichens - very common
- 3) Black Spruce - their stunted growth form illustrates
- 4) Balsam Fir - interesting adaptations to summit conditions
- 5) Birches - more common varieties
- 6) Three-toothed Cinquefoil - both Cinquefoil & Sandwort are important pioneer species and are very common
- 7) Mountain Sandwort
- 8) Bog Bilberry - very common
- 9) Deer's Hair Sedge - very common
- 10) Diapensia - very common and has an interesting "pin cushion" growth form

Some other important plants: (know by week 2)

Polytrichum moss - very common and critical to  
 Granite moss - succession in the alpine zone  
 Bigelow sedge - very common  
 Pale Laurel - all very showy and obvious in flower  
 Lapland Rosebay " "  
 Alpine Azalea " "  
 Labrador Tea " "  
 Bunchberry - very common and prominent  
 Indian Poke " "  
 Alpine Cottongrass or Hare's Tail - common and prominent



There are certainly many other plants, both alpine and non-alpine species, which you could learn as time allows. This basic list is the minimum you would need to do a good job of Summit Stewarding. It's not so bad, is it?

## Beyond Stewardship

"So what are you, a Ranger?" Perhaps this is the question that will be asked of you most frequently. The answer is simple. You're a Summit Steward, but of course it's a bit more complicated than that. In actuality, there is overlap between the positions, and hikers will not necessarily realize that you aren't a Ranger. Yet there are real differences. As a Summit Steward you have no enforcement powers, although you are bound to encounter people illegally camped. You are not responsible for search and rescue, yet are likely to encounter people in trouble who need your help. Your education efforts should be aimed primarily at the alpine zone, yet there will be people who you should speak with about footgear and clothing. You will need to strike a balance between your dual roles. Remember that your Ranger-like duties are secondary to your Summit Steward duties. Let's look at a couple different areas of concern and see how they might be handled.

Enforcement - You have no enforcement powers. You cannot ticket someone or escort them from the woods. But you can still deal effectively with people who are either ignorant of the regulations or blatantly choosing not to abide by them. Often times your uniform alone will earn you some respect. Remember that chances are they think you're a Ranger. More often than not, the best approach will be to simply and honestly inform people of the rules and ask them to do whatever is needed to comply. Use the opportunity to do some backcountry education and explain why the rule exists. You would be surprised at how many people don't know why they can't camp next to the stream or wash their dishes in it. Be friendly and sincere but firm in your conviction. Try to get to know the person a little so you can better interact and "connect" with them. This will help you to get better results. Most of all, try to instill in them a sense of responsibility and of stewardship. Try not to sound simply like some arm of the law coming down on them. You want to avoid an adversarial confrontation. Instead, interact and educate.

Inevitably you will run into the occasional person who doesn't want to hear it and refuses to comply despite your best efforts. Remember that in the end you can do little besides educate them and ask for their compliance. Should this fail, your only recourse is to notify a Ranger, either personally or via the radio. The gravity of the situation needs to be weighed against the inconvenience of getting a Ranger to the area to deal with the problem. It's a judgment call on your part. If you feel the person really needs to be dealt with more strongly then don't hesitate to call a Ranger, especially if one is nearby. If a Ranger is too far away or you don't feel such a drastic action is necessary, then you can use one other little trick passed on to me by Ranger Pete Fish (retired). You can bluff people by saying that a Ranger is due to come through any minute now on the nightly rounds, so they best move before then.

Fortunately, in most cases people are willing to abide by the rules if you approach them in the right way. It's a rare event that would cause you to call a Ranger or to use the bluff method. Most of all don't get too caught up in a power/enforcement role. It's not your job. When you come across a situation handle it in the same way you would on the summit, through education. There are many people using the High Peaks who don't know the backcountry etiquette or the rules. Don't be angry or resentful of them. It's a teachable moment. Use it! Educate! That's usually all that's needed.

Backcountry Education - It is truly amazing how many different issues there are to educate hikers about. Proper clothing, mountain weather, water treatment, minimum impact camping, trail erosion, bears, waste disposal; the list goes on and on. It becomes apparent that a new hiker cannot learn all there is to know in one encounter with a Summit Steward or Ranger. Don't inundate a person with all the varied backcountry issues. They will be overloaded and the effectiveness of the education is compromised. Remember that your focus should be the alpine zone. Anything you can teach people beyond the alpine issue may be considered a bonus, but you can only do this up to a point where a person is still getting the message. Know when to stop and have faith in the fact that Rangers have a different educational thrust and will focus more on these other issues. In a few words, concentrate on the alpine education, do as much other backcountry education as feels appropriate to a given situation, and know when to let go and be content with what you've got.

Some of the best advice you can give to people is to read the introductory section of the Adirondack Mountain Club Trail Guide to the High Peaks. It deals succinctly with nearly all of these issues.

### **In Closing**

So work hard, and enjoy your time above the trees. Love the mountains and know that all you do helps them and helps the whole Earth. I can think of no better words to leave you with than those of Chief Seattle as he spoke to President Franklin Pierce in 1854: "How can you buy or sell the sky? Every part of this Earth is sacred to my people ... We are part of the Earth and it is part of us ... If we sell you the land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred ..."



## A Handbook For The Summit Steward: 2019 Amendments

As the Summit Steward Program enters its thirtieth season, we should be proud of our successful efforts to protect Adirondack alpine ecosystems and the progress we have made as backcountry educators. While the Summit Steward Handbook is now too entering its thirtieth year, it still offers a wealth of information, including the history of our program and helpful advice on how to interact with the public. Yet as the program continues to evolve, stewards will often find that they must change the delivery and style of our message, depending on their audiences.

Over the course of the season you will encounter many people who have been coming to the Adirondacks for years and consequently have met Summit Stewards before. These encounters are some of the most challenging, for you will be unsure as to the extent of their knowledge, and many of these people will prefer that you don't repeat a lecture they have heard in past summers. A different approach needs to be taken with those familiar with our message. They have already heard about the fragile alpine plants and the need to stay on the rock, often times more than once. More than likely these people have complied with our request.

If a person has met a Summit Steward before they will usually let you know. If a person is keeping to the rock already, he or she may not need a detailed explanation about the importance of conserving alpine plant species. Thank these people for supporting the program, helping to protect the alpine areas, and spreading our message. You can very briefly summarize the goals of our program while you are thanking a group. For example, *"Oh, you have talked to stewards before? Well, thanks for helping us protect the fragile alpine ecosystem by 'doing the rock walk.' We need all the help we can to preserve the acres we have left."* Urge these people to take the stewardship message to peaks that don't have Summit Stewards. They are a valuable resource, so while you need to be careful not to annoy them with repeated information, don't let them slip by! **Remind these folks that it is hikers, rather than the stewards, that make the difference.**

A successful technique in years past for interacting with those familiar with the program has been to offer a plant tour. *"You have already met a Summit Steward but have you met the plants?"* These folks already know that New York's alpine areas are unique and fragile. Take them to the next phase of stewardship. By showing these people the plants and giving them a short lesson on the ecology, you can form an invaluable connection. With a greater appreciation for the plants themselves, they will be more likely to value the mission of the Summit Stewards. If a returning group leaves the summit knowing a bit more about the alpine, you have been successful. Plant tours not only instill a greater appreciation for the ecosystem, but it also gives you a chance to share more than just our basic message.

One of the biggest criticisms of the program is that the Stewards can sometimes be a bit over zealous. You only have a limited amount of time to spend with a group on the summit, especially on crowded holiday weekends. You'll have to read your audience carefully. Ask yourself- do these people look like they are experienced hikers and have heard our message before? Do they look interested in talking and learning about the ecology of the area, or more like they'd rather enjoy the solitude of a wilderness experience? If a group or individual looks as though they'd

rather not engage in conversation, that's fine, there is no need to force an interaction. Simply give them a concise version of our message and move on to another group. If a group looks interested and as though they want to chat, give them a detailed explanation and take advantage of the opportunity to share a lot of your knowledge. You will be received much better if you are sensitive to what hikers are feeling and modify your talk accordingly.

When you're up there on the summits, remember to have fun. You have an amazing job and should be proud to be part of such a successful program.

### **PAST ADIRONDACK HIGH PEAK SUMMIT STEWARDS**

1990:	Alexandra Cleveland Albert Nejme Nancy Bernstein (fall)	Derrick Dumoulin Doug Munro
1991:	Alexandra Cleveland Elizabeth Bass Greg Knoettner Michael Browne (fall)	1995: Erik Torch Walter Bailey Erin Donnelly Brian Gyoerkoe Carol Zimmerman
1992:	John Graham Melissa Connor Craig Jolly Lloyd Staats	1996: Andrew Lindsey Rebecca D'Aleo Michael Leyden Peter Abello Peter Price Matthew Scott
1993:	John Graham Deborah Hammond Andrew Lindsey Bruce Gerard Joshua Crabtree (intern)	1997: Erin Donnelly Rebecca D'Aleo Matthew Scott Peter Price
1994:	Erik Torch Joshua Crabtree	

1998:	Jeff Lougee Rebecca D'Aleo Peter Abello Melissa Buckler Matthew Scott		Ryan Harvey (Fall) Frank Krueger – Volunteer
1999:	Matthew Scott Melissa Buckler Leslie Karasin Sean Robinson Dan Nelson	2004:	Matt Diskin Krista Nelson Mark Atkinson Kyle Shenk Matt Maloney (Fall) Frank Krueger – Volunteer
2000:	Leslie Karasin Sean Robinson Ariel Diggory Shannon Belt	2005:	Krista Nelson Kyle Schenk Sarah Hoskinson Tom Coleman Frank Krueger – Volunteer
2001:	Mike Chiarella Matthew Maloney Maggie Anderson Jenny Mugrace	2006:	Nate Becker Hannah Becker Lauren LaRocca Brendan Wiltse Julia Goren-- Botanist Frank Krueger – Volunteer
2002:	Erik Jacobson Matthew Maloney Thea Moruzzi Kevin Anderson Shawn Lucas Frank Krueger – Volunteer	2007:	Bill McManus Duncan Lennon Mike Libsch Dei Laubauch Julia Goren—Botanist Sean Gryzb, Fall Brendan Wiltse, Fall Frank Krueger – Volunteer
2003:	Kathleen Wiley Matt Maloney Krista Nelson Bryan Millea Tom Coleman		
2008:	Brendan Wiltse Aaron Sirtolo Seth Jones Eric Hawes Frank Krueger—Volunteer Julia Goren	2009:	Rocio Fernandez Seth Jones Lynn Metcalf Grace Vajda Frank Krueger—Volunteer Kathleen Wiley-- Volunteer Katie Britton-- Volunteer Julia Goren
2010:	Katie Britton Seth Jones Andy Testo Devon Reynolds—Volunteer Frank Krueger—Volunteer Kathleen Wiley—Volunteer Andrea Hill, Gregg Popp,-- Volunteers Drake Pregnall, Ryan Williams	2011:	Devon Reynolds Samantha Brooks Gina Edwards Libby Nichols Zack Bell Frank Krueger, Ian Ellbogen, Ethan Collins, Dave Warfield,

Julia Goren

Carrie Clendaniel—Volunteers  
Julia Goren

2012: Eric Coe  
Kevin Berend  
Cameron West  
Patrick Murphy  
Alena Giesche  
Frank Krueger, Ian Ellbogen,  
Dave Warfield, Ethan Collins,  
Danielle Mangold—Volunteers

2013: Samantha Brooks  
Jaime Barrett—Botanist  
Sylvia Gwozdz  
Patrick Murphy—Botanist  
Tim Moody  
Kevin Berend  
Tyra Olstad  
Frank Krueger, Ian Ellbogen,  
David Warfield, Ethan Collins,  
Azaria Bower, Mike Cady,  
Jack Coleman, Cynda Lamb,  
Mary Lamb, Bob Rock,  
John Wood—Volunteers  
Julia Goren

2015: Maddie Grant  
Andrew McDonald  
Amy Stafford  
Cory Tiger  
Kayla White  
Jen Maguder  
Ian Ellbogen, David Warfield,  
Mike Cady, Jack Coleman,  
Mary Lamb, Bob Rock,  
John Wood, Chrissy Dagenais,  
Stephanie Gaudons, Dan Kane,  
Vin Maresco, Larry Lepak,  
Molly Arnold, Annie Emanuels—Volunteers  
Julia Goren

2014: Andrew McDonald  
Kayla White  
Devon Reynolds  
Tyra Olstad  
Jen Maguder  
Frank Krueger, Ian Ellbogen,  
Ethan Collins, David Warfield,  
Mike Cady, Jack Coleman,  
Cynda Lamb, Mary Lamb,  
Bob Rock, John Wood,  
Bretton Caws, Chrissy Dagenais,  
Stephanie Gaudons, Dan Kane,  
Greg Petliski—Volunteers  
Julia Goren

2016: Wade Bastian  
Addie Clayton  
Ryan Nerp  
Kayla White  
Tyra Olstad  
Ian Ellbogen, David Warfield,  
Mike Cady, Jack Coleman,  
Mary Lamb, Bob Rock,  
John Wood, Chrissy Dagenais,  
Stephanie Gaudons, Dan Kane,  
Vin Maresco, Larry Lepak,  
Sam Boese, Lois Dannenberg,  
Chuck Pacer, Annie Fogarty,  
Jen Maguder, Patrick Murphy,  
Borno Zaman, Andrew Wood  
—Volunteers  
Julia Goren

2017:

Wade Bastian  
Chuck Pacer  
Ryan Nerp  
Tyra Olstad  
Ian Ellbogen, David Warfield,  
Mike Cady, Jack Coleman,  
Mary Lamb, Bob Rock,  
John Wood, Chrissy Dagenais,  
Dan Kane, Vin Maresco,  
Larry Lepak, Lois Dannenberg,  
Annie Fogarty, Jen Maguder,  
Patrick Murphy, Andrew Wood,  
Jon Laurin, Alison Laurin,  
Jim Schneider, Jonathan Leff,  
Troy Tetreault—Volunteers  
Julia Goren  
Kayla White

2018:

Yuuka McPherson- Botany  
Connor Moore- Botany  
Michaela Dunn  
Nathan Kiel  
Matt Baer  
Ryan Nerp  
Chuck Pacer- Fall  
Sarah Rhodes- Fall  
Vin Maresco, Patrick Murphy,  
Lois Dannenberg, Andrew Wood,  
Annie Fogarty, Jen Maguder,  
Jon Laurin, Alison Laurin,  
Jim Schneider, Jonathan Leff,  
Troy Tetreault, Bill Paradies,  
Brian Coville, Danna Libbey,  
Tom Collins, James Ianni,  
Ian Ellbogen, David Warfield—  
Volunteers  
Julia Goren  
Kayla White

