

## 2022 Mid-Season Summit Steward Report

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Happy August! Summit stewards have been rocking it. The weather has been good to us this year with lots of sunshine although there have been some heat waves. ADK has continued to enact safety protocols in line with state and federal guidelines due to the pandemic. We were able to hire a full crew of four summit stewards, one chief steward, and one Photopoint

Monitoring Field Tech. This is the second year of sampling for our Photopoint Monitoring Project. In 2021 we resampled the 59 preexisting photopoints and put in new photopoint locations focused on recently damaged areas on Marcy, Skylight, and Colden using our revamped methodology. This year we've continued adding new photopoints to give us baseline data and see how management actions in the alpine zone are aiding with our revegetation efforts.

We've continued our educational efforts on Hurricane Mountain through the Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Program. Hurricane Mountain is a great peak to introduce hikers to the high peaks region and educate them on Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics.

I want to thank our rock star crew, devoted volunteers and you, our supporters who make it possible to accomplish an incredible amount of work up on our alpine summits.

### **Thank you to our donors, sponsors, and partners!**

The [Adirondack 46ers](#) have continued to be such stalwart supporters of the program. Last year they pledged another three-year commitment of \$75,000. You can read more about the Adirondack 46er's contribution to the Summit Stewardship Program and ADK's Trails Program [here](#).

A big thank you goes to our friends at [The Mountaineer](#) for their continued support of the program. Summit stewards have received [SCARPA](#) boots, [Darn Tough](#) socks, and [Rab](#) gloves, as well as discounts on gear at The Mountaineer. These companies see to it that the stewards have the best equipment and outdoor clothing available. We can't thank them enough for the hard work they do in protecting the Adirondack Park.

The Will Cummer Gear Fund was established in 2016 in honor of Will Cummer to provide gear support for summit stewards. Thanks to this Fund, we were able to buy necessary gear to keep stewards comfortable on the summits. It's fantastic to have this fund to be able to support the larger equipment purchases (like new tent tarps) and little odds and ends that get lost or broken (like clickers).



Summit Stewards getting fitted for gear at The Mountaineer  
Photo credit: The Mountaineer

The Dr. Norton G. Miller Memorial Fund was created in 2020 to support the Summit Stewardship Program and ADK's science and science outreach efforts. The fund was established by the family of Dr. Miller to honor his lifelong love of natural history and his esteemed career in botany research, particularly in the Adirondacks. The Miller family has previously contributed funding for alpine research, and we are thankful for this endowment.

The [#507 Fund for the Summit Stewardship Program](#) has continued to help sustain the program, making its sixth donation. All proceeds from the sale of [Adirondack Archangels: Guardians of the High Peaks](#), inspired by Ed Ketchledge's legacy, continue to support the Summit Stewardship Program (half go to our annual fund and half go to the #507 Fund). We are so excited to grow this endowment to cover our costs in the future.

The Summit Stewardship Program was supported with funding from the [New York State Park and Trail Partnership Grants](#) and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The Park and Trail Partnership Grants are administered by Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Thanks also to the program partners who keep the Summit Stewardship Program running: the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for extensive administrative, logistical, and financial support. Funding from our partners is through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). A big thanks goes to Kevin Burns and Tate Connor for their continued guidance.

## Personnel and Scheduling



2022 Crew: L to R: Liam Ebner, Kayla White (Stewardship Manager), Troy Tetreault (Photopoint Monitoring FT), Bridey Ryan, Jake Vitale, Maddy Ten Kate, and kneeling: Jack Coleman (Chief Steward)

The 2022 summit stewards are a mixture of veterans and new staff this year, making a solid crew right off the bat. I am extensively proud of them, and the alpine plants are lucky to have them!

Liam Ebner—This is Liam’s second year being involved with ADK. He recently graduated with a major in Mechanical Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Liam enjoys ultimate frisbee, climbing, and nature photography. He enjoys connecting people to the outdoors and the natural history of the Adirondacks.

Bridey Ryan—Bridey is also a second-year steward and has been coming up to the area since she was a kid. She recently graduated with a major in Cultural Studies at McGill University. Bridey previously worked in bird conservation in New Zealand. She’s a natural up on the summits and feels passionately about protecting alpine plants.

Jake Vitale—Jake is brand new to the program but not the Adirondacks. He is a 46er and has been climbing and hiking in the region since he was five years old. Jake recently graduated from SUNY College of Environmental Forestry and Science and hopes to go to graduate school for alpine plant ecology. Jake enjoys spending time identifying plants.

Maddy Ten Kate— Maddy is also new to the program but not the Adirondacks. She grew up hiking the fire towers and the High Peaks; her family also maintains lean-tos and has a cabin in Newcomb. Maddy currently attends the University of Maine Farmington, where she is on the alpine ski and lacrosse teams. She loves educating kids about alpine plants.

Troy Tetreault— Troy was formerly a volunteer summit steward and returned as the Photopoint Monitoring Field Tech. He's done extensive research ranging from tree encroachment into boreal peatlands to alpine plant-insect interactions in the Adirondacks. Troy also did a multi-year study surveying alpine insect species and their specific interactions with wildflowers. He is also a 46er who enjoys chatting with people on the summits.

Jack Coleman—Jack has a wealth of knowledge, having been a volunteer for the program for the last nine years, but this is his first year as a paid staff member. Serving as the Chief Steward, Jack was the perfect person to help with training staff and volunteers. Jack is treasurer of the ADKhighpeaks Forum, a 46er and winter 46er, and an inspirational hiker who helps lead challenge hikes for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Seth Jones—Seth started his career here at ADK as a summit steward in 2008, which he did for three years. After spending a year running Johns Brook Lodge, he became part of ADK's Education Department. Seth is currently ADK's Education Director.

Kayla White—I'm ADK's Stewardship Manager. It's my ninth year with the Summit Stewardship Program and my eleventh 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. They are always willing to fill in and we could not fully staff the peaks or do much needed trail work or research without them.

- Mary Lamb—10<sup>th</sup> year
- Lois Dannenberg—7<sup>th</sup> year
- Ann Fogarty—7<sup>th</sup> year
- Jen Denny—7<sup>th</sup> year volunteer, 2 years staff
- Jim Schneider—6<sup>th</sup> year
- Ryan Nerp—3<sup>rd</sup> year volunteer, 4 years staff
- Tom Collins—3<sup>rd</sup> year volunteer, 2 years staff
- Drew Benware—3<sup>rd</sup> year
- Tony Canike—3<sup>rd</sup> year
- Bob George—2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Kevin Douglass—2<sup>nd</sup> year

- Klarisse Torriente—2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Lucas LaBarre—2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Matt Szopa—2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Tanner Burt—2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Ryan Andrews—2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Angela Ranzini—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Kristin Kaye—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Michael Sweeney—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Piper Warren—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Tyler Lucero—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Tony Goodwin—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Rebecca Collins—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Adora Race—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Asya Ostrovsky—1<sup>st</sup> year
- Kim Brown—2<sup>nd</sup> year, Hurricane
- Bob Hunter—2<sup>nd</sup> year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Don Pachner—2<sup>nd</sup> year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Beth Drohan —2<sup>nd</sup> year, Hurricane
- John Loughlin—1<sup>st</sup> year, Hurricane
- Kristy Martin—1<sup>st</sup> year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Pamela Gothner—1<sup>st</sup> year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Peter Slocum—Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Mary Jean Bland—Friends of Hurricane Mountain

## **Training**

The stewards arrived on Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, and were greeted with orientation and introductions, equipment was distributed, and we did a property tour. Returning stewards hit the mountains for Memorial Day weekend and new stewards began with two days of Wilderness First Aid.

Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, we did a training hike up Cascade Mountain. We focused on trail maintenance including brushing in undesigned trails, scree wall construction, rock packing techniques, and cairn building. We also discussed various techniques for stewarding on Cascade.

Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, we did a combination of radio protocol and interpretive communication training at ADK's Education Yurts. Forester Tate Connor gave a presentation on the High Peaks Unit Management Plan and all of the new changes to come. Lieutenant Kevin Burns went over radio protocol and personal safety training. I went over interpretive communication, coaching techniques, and Authority of the

Resource Technique. We practiced some role-playing so that all could get comfortable using these interpretive techniques. We finished with a presentation on alpine ecology.

Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, everyone participated in ADK's All-Staff Training. I gave a short presentation for the staff on alpine ecology and the Summit Stewardship Program.

Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup> were spent team stewarding on Marcy and Algonquin. Team stewarding is an important part of the training process because it allows new stewards to learn techniques and receive constructive feedback on their own educational approach from returning stewards. Troy went through Photopoint



Botany hike on Whiteface

Monitoring training on Wright on Sunday with New York Natural Heritage Program's Tim Howard.

Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> stewards participated in a Leave No Trace Trainer course taught by ADK staff: Seth Jones, Mary Glynn, Henry Liebers, and Tom Manitta. Bridey, Liam, Charlotte, and I did rock quarrying for cairn building on Hurricane Mountain.

Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, we did a botany training hike up Algonquin Peak. ADK's Deputy Executive Director Julia Goren provided an overview of the ecological succession that we see as we hike from trailhead to summit as well as an in depth look into alpine plant community ecology.

Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> were spent team stewarding on Marcy and Algonquin. With two weekends of team stewarding, everyone had the opportunity to observe other stewards in action.

Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, we did a training hike up Hurricane Mountain and went over special considerations for being a fire tower steward. We went over the history of the fire tower and spent time role playing. The Poke-O-Moonshine Steward joined us.

Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, we headed to Whiteface for an alpine plant identification trip and Photopoint Monitoring training. Tim Howard led the training. The folks at ORDA kindly

allowed us to utilize the highway free of charge. Afterwards, we went to The Mountaineer in Keene Valley to get fitted and took home SCARPA boots, Rab gloves, and Darn Tough socks that day!

Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, we did additional training at the Education Yurt on non-violent communication and inclusion in the backcountry. After lunch, summit stewards, summer naturalists, and Education staff drove to the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center to explore the cultural center and get a presentation by David Fadden on Haudenosaunee culture and history.

Thank you to everyone that participated and put the training together: Seth Jones, Mary Glynn, Henry Liebers, Charlotte Staats, Tom Manitta, Tim Howard, Julia Goren, David Fadden, Tate Connor, and Kevin Burns.

### **Weather and Usage**

The snow melted fast at the end of May, and it was a dry June and July. Due to the sunny weather and the Canadian border opening, we saw an increase in average steward contacts in May, June, and July!

The chart highlights these usage summaries below. The average represents the average number of people contacted per day.

| <b><u>May 2021</u></b> (weekends only) |                 |               |                | <b><u>May 2022</u></b> (weekends only) |                 |               |                |
|--|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Mountain</b>                        | <b># People</b> | <b># Days</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Mountain</b>                        | <b># People</b> | <b># Days</b> | <b>Average</b> |
| Algonquin                              | 313             | 4             | 78             | Algonquin                              | 378             | 4             | 95             |
| Marcy                                  | 437             | 4             | 109            | Marcy                                  | 362             | 4             | 91             |
| Wright                                 | 57              | 2             | 29             | Wright                                 | 140             | 2             | 70             |
| Cascade                                | 197             | 3             | 66             | Cascade                                | 490             | 5             | 98             |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>1004</b>     | <b>13</b>     | <b>77</b>      | <b>Total</b>                           | <b>1370</b>     | <b>15</b>     | <b>91</b>      |
| <b><u>June 2021</u></b>                |                 |               |                | <b><u>June 2022</u></b>                |                 |               |                |
| <b>Mountain</b>                        | <b># People</b> | <b># Days</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Mountain</b>                        | <b># People</b> | <b># Days</b> | <b>Average</b> |
| Algonquin                              | 946             | 19            | 50             | Algonquin                              | 994             | 17            | 58             |
| Marcy                                  | 1331            | 19            | 70             | Marcy                                  | 1197            | 17            | 70             |
| Wright                                 | 524             | 13            | 40             | Wright                                 | 236             | 6             | 39             |

|                         |                 |               |                |  |                         |                 |               |                |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Cascade                 | 261             | 3             | 87             |  | Cascade                 | 725             | 7             | 104            |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>3062</b>     | <b>54</b>     | <b>57</b>      |  | <b>Total</b>            | <b>3152</b>     | <b>48</b>     | <b>66</b>      |
| <b><u>July 2021</u></b> |                 |               |                |  | <b><u>July 2022</u></b> |                 |               |                |
| <b>Mountain</b>         | <b># People</b> | <b># Days</b> | <b>Average</b> |  | <b>Mountain</b>         | <b># People</b> | <b># Days</b> | <b>Average</b> |
| Algonquin               | 1538            | 31            | 50             |  | Algonquin               | 2273            | 30            | 76             |
| Marcy                   | 2033            | 31            | 66             |  | Marcy                   | 2575            | 31            | 83             |
| Wright                  | 835             | 18            | 46             |  | Wright                  | 678             | 14            | 48             |
| Cascade                 | 1489            | 14            | 106            |  | Cascade                 | 2310            | 15            | 154            |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>5895</b>     | <b>94</b>     | <b>63</b>      |  | <b>Total</b>            | <b>7836</b>     | <b>90</b>     | <b>87</b>      |

### **Equipment and Campsites**

Summit steward equipment receives constant use, which means that something is always in need of repair or replacement. Jack spent time waterproofing tarps and tents and repairing uniforms at the beginning of the season. We also revamped the yurt by putting in new floors, refinished the bunk beds and door, bought new mattresses, put in new support beams and awnings, removed the old stove for the new stove, and cleaned the place up. Maintenance built a new pod to house the Chief Steward. Thank you to Tom Manitta, Nate Greene, Jack Coleman, Mark Minnoe, and Kevin McDonough who all made summit steward accommodations homier.

Thanks to the Will Cummer Gear Fund, we were able to purchase pack covers, work gloves, water filters and purification tablets, map cases, a new cook tarp, saw blades, loupes, compasses, bug nets, dry sacks for first aid kits, waterproofing spray, and clickers.

[Darn Tough](#) donated socks, [SCARPA](#) donated boots and [Rab](#) donated gloves to the stewards through [The Mountaineer](#). These items make it so summit stewards stay warm and dry, even in a dry year. We couldn't do our jobs without such necessary gear items.

Many, many thanks go to the Will Cummer Gear Fund, Darn Tough, SCARPA, Rab, and The Mountaineer for their generous support of the Summit Stewardship Program.

## Botany and Research Projects

The program established a photographic monitoring system in 1999 to better quantify the interplay among hiker trampling, vegetation growth and persistence, and education efforts and trail maintenance. In 2021, we hired Photopoint Monitoring Field Tech Audrey Fatone. Audrey retook 59 photopoint images, added new photopoints to the collection, and added another monitoring cycle to the long-term photopoint monitoring library. Mid-season, I found new photopoint locations on Wright, NW Wright, Algonquin, Boundary, Iroquois, Shepherd's Tooth, Colden, NE Colden, Marcy, Skylight, Haystack, and Little Haystack. Tim Howard reevaluated and updated the methodology to improve the sampling strategy and statistical rigor, and to make sure it is up to current photopoint monitoring standards. Regarding sampling, we've incorporated a scale measurement in photopoints and have introduced the line transect method to give us more quantitative data. Tim has also started researching image classification and incorporating that into the analysis.



Setting up a photopoint on Whiteface

Since we were not able to complete the project in 2021, we have continued this work into 2022. We hired Photopoint Monitoring Field Tech Troy Tetreault to continue adding new photopoints to the alpine zone. He's in the process of adding up to 100 new photopoints at newly damaged areas on some peaks with existing photopoints and new summits that historically haven't had photopoints. Our

new design and set of photos will set a baseline for sampling and tracking vegetation change in and adjacent trampled areas into the future. Overall, our goal is to continue building a photo monitoring system that is straightforward to maintain, evaluate the effectiveness of the management actions implemented in the alpine zone, provides accessible data to address our questions, and is easily transferrable to other locations and partner organizations. We are hoping to wrap up analysis in the winter and present at the upcoming Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering this fall.

This year marks the fifteenth year of our participation in the Appalachian Mountain Club's (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). 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. AMC also implemented the [Northeast Alpine Flower Watch](#), a citizen science project which asking hikers to use iNaturalist to take pictures of those four species in their blooming and fruiting phenophases. Hopefully, this will help create a more robust and complete data set. Feel free to download iNaturalist on your mobile device and participate!

### Trail Maintenance

Thanks to a highly motivated crew and dedicated volunteer coverage, we've been able to still get a lot of work done. Trail work has been done on Marcy, Algonquin, Wright, Cascade, Colden, Hurricane, Giant, Skylight, Gothics, Armstrong, Basin, Saddleback, Iroquois, and NW Wright. As always, we have been hard at work with regular brushing, scree wall work, cairn repair, and rock packing.

|           | Scree Wall in feet | Brushing in feet | Rock Packing in square feet | Cairn Rocks removed | Cairn repair | Privy holes dug |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Marcy     | 801                | 314              | 110                         | 292                 | 18           | 0               |
| Algonquin | 898                | 303              | 100                         | 252                 | 1            | 1               |
| Wright    | 242                | 35               | 60                          | 82                  | 1            | 1               |
| Cascade   | 325                | 40               | 20                          | 67                  | 2            | 1               |
| Colden    | 24                 | 39               | 5                           | 5                   | 0            | 0               |

Totals as of 8/12

| Brushing (feet) | Rock Pack (feet <sup>2</sup> ) | Scree Wall (feet) | Cairn Rocks removed | Cairn repaired |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1266            | 298                            | 2545              | 743                 | 23             |

### Outreach

Our outreach has continued to be limited due to the pandemic. Camps, colleges, and organizations who bring groups into the High Peaks have started leading trips again, but we have waited to give these groups time to get back on their feet.

I participated in Adirondack Day where we educated legislators on issues pertaining the Adirondack Park, thanked them for investing in stewardship, and told our field stories. Thank you to the Environmental Protection Fund for helping to fund this program.

We virtually trained new and returning trailhead stewards for the 46er Trailhead Stewardship Program. Noah and I trained ADK's Trailhead Stewards. Tom and I trained ADK's Campground Hosts. We have also been working with ADK's Communication Director Ben Brosseau to expand our outreach through social media.

Buck Mountain Trailhead Stewardship Program was created by local ADK volunteers who saw usage of Buck Mountain in Lake George increase over the years and with it an increase in recreational impacts. This program is completely run by ADK volunteers. I assisted with training, obtaining the volunteer stewardship agreement with DEC, and scouted the area for potential expansion. We're looking forward to seeing this volunteer program grow!



Visiting Buck Trailhead Steward Kim

This is the second year we've been educating on Hurricane Mountain regarding fire tower stewardship. This program has been an amazing outreach opportunity. Hurricane Mountain has been recommended by the DEC as an alternative hike to the high peaks, it is a family-friendly mountain and is part of the Lake Placid 9er and Fire Tower Challenge. While we are up there to educate about the cultural history of the fire tower, our real focus is to help prepare hikers by teaching them 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. Please let me know if you are interested in becoming a fire tower volunteer next year!

## Conclusion

The Summit Stewardship Program is going strong. Thank you for all of your support. We would not be able to do it without you, our partners, donors, and volunteers. Please feel free to reach out via phone (518-523-3480 x 117) or email with any questions or comments on how we can continue to improve the program and protect our fragile alpine ecosystem. Thank you.

Most sincerely,

Kayla White  
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and

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