

To: Summit Stewardship Program Partners, Supporters, and Friends
From: Liam Ebner & Kayla White
Date: 11/12/2025

2025 Summit Steward End of Season Report



Eli giving an up-close lesson on alpine plants

The Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Program has wrapped up its **36th field season**. We've grown a lot since our first season in 1990 with just two summit stewards. In the 2025 season, we fielded a crew of 5 summit stewards, a chief summit steward, and a summit steward intern. In the fall season, we were able to maintain a crew of four summit stewards and a chief steward.

Summit Stewards **educated 26,410 visitors** this season, bringing our total contacts since the beginning of the program to **738,547!** The number of hikers educated this year is significantly lower than 2024, by over 5000 contacts even though coverage of the peaks remains high. We do not have a set goal of the number of hikers to educate every year, and it has fluctuated over the years. We can make predictions going into each season, but every single season is different in terms of usage. Regardless of the number of hikers stewards reach on any given day, we strive for every interaction to be informative, welcoming, and spread the passion for stewardship each summit steward has with those who make their way into the alpine zone.

Everything accomplished this season was made possible through the generous support from our partners, donors, sponsors, and people like you. The [Adirondack 46ers](#) have continued to be stalwart sponsors of the program. This is the second year of a two-year commitment we received funding for the Summit Stewardship Program. The Adirondack 46ers have also committed to funding this program and the Professional Trail Crew next year. We appreciate their passion and dedication to protecting the High Peaks and the places we all love to recreate.

A huge thank you to our friends at [The Mountaineer](#) for facilitating gear sponsorship through [LOWA](#) (boots), [Darn Tough](#) (socks), and [Patagonia](#) (rain jackets), as well as discounts on gear at The Mountaineer. Thank you to [L.L.Bean](#) for donating down jackets, pants, and shirts for the stewards and other ADK staff. The Summit

Stewardship Program has three endowments, the Dr. Norton G. Miller Memorial Fund, the [#507 Fund for the Summit Stewardship Program](#), and the Will Cummer Gear Fund. These endowments are an essential investment in the future of the program. [Nine Pin Cider](#) held its bi-annual 26er Challenge which entails trying 26 new hard ciders made exclusively for the challenge over the course of one year. A [portion of the sales](#) from the 26 ciders is donated to the Summit Stewardship Program. The Summit Stewardship Program also received a grant from the [Helen and Ritter Shumway Foundation Grant](#) through Bank of America. And of course, a big thank you to all our individual donors across New York, the Northeast and beyond. We could not do this work without you!

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

State of the Summit Stewardship Program:

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

Below you can see the 2025 project list in *italics*.

❑ *Photopoint Monitoring Research*

In 2021/2022, we added in line transects to our photopoint monitoring efforts. These transects focus on herd paths or social trails through the alpine and document damage over a linear area. Since we recently established baseline images a few years ago and these herd paths can deteriorate quickly, we chose this year for the retake frequency for this data set. This summer we were able to retake all 41 transects over 10 days of field work.

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

❑ *Alpine Focused Teaching Herbarium*

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

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

- Hire a new Summit Steward Coordinator!

We're hiring! After three seasons overseeing the Summit Stewardship Program, I will be shifting roles within our Stewardship Department. Going into 2026, I will be overseeing the Rt. 73 Trailhead Stewardship and the Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Programs, as well as other tasks within the department, and getting up to the summits to help develop summit stewards. Part of my role will be training a new Summit Steward Coordinator, who we hope will be starting here in Lake Placid at the beginning of January. Kayla and I will be working with the new coordinator to get them ready for the field season and will continue to assist and guide them throughout the season. If you or someone you know is interested in this position, please apply [here!](#)

- Coverage on the Great Range

It is logistically harder for us to have as much presence on the Great Range as we do Marcy or the MacIntyres, but the alpine there still needs a steward presence. I hope to have some more coverage days on the Range next season as well as some dedicated trail maintenance project days. We got out to Gothics, Haystack and Saddleback each once this season, but I hope to have stewards there more often in the future.

- Lesser Summits Plant Inventory

We are looking to continue to document rare species on smaller alpine and subalpine summits. Some examples of these summits are Giant, Cascade, Noonmark, and Hurricane. Documenting occurrences of rare plants will help aid in the knowledge of alpine ecosystems and can help justify management actions there.

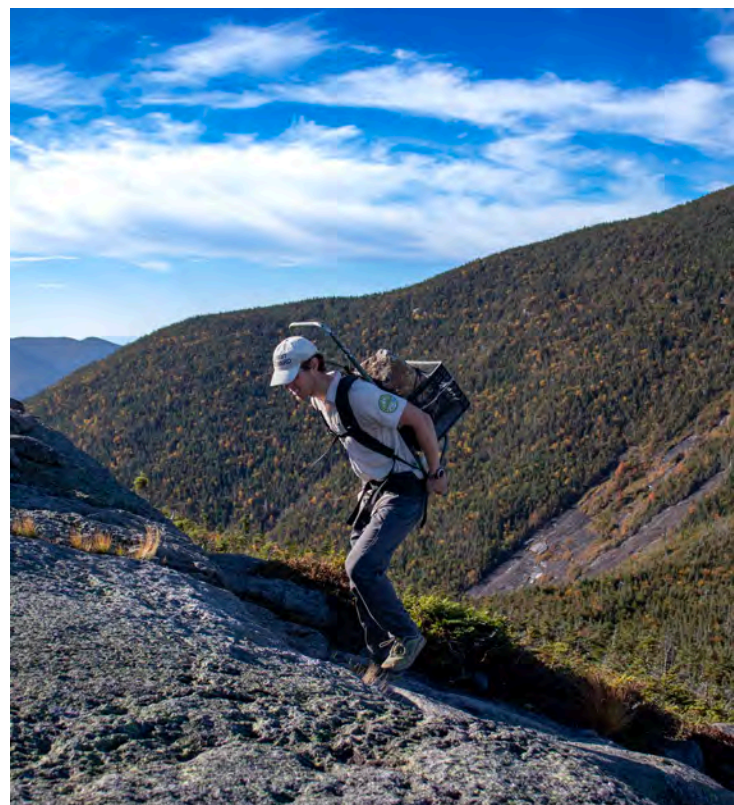
□ *Wright Peak Cairn Reconstruction*

As many of you likely saw in the [news](#) and [social media](#), eleven out of the twelve cairns on Wright Peak were knocked over on Monday, September 15th. We were not sure what the damage was when we learned about it, and hoped that it would be just a few cairns, but Kayla and I headed up on Tuesday to assess the summit. Unfortunately, after getting there, we found every cairn except one knocked over. This caused the crew to pivot away from some planned projects, like Haystack, and focus on Wright until we finished rebuilding all of them. While Kayla and I were up there the first day, we witnessed several groups of hikers getting off trail and walking through the vegetation due to the lack of cairns marking the trail. As we headed into shoulder seasons and snow and ice could happen at any point, it was imperative that the cairns got rebuilt before winter.

We worked on Wright for two consecutive weeks and rebuilt all eleven of the damaged cairns. This was a huge accomplishment by the crew as cairn building is a tedious and slow process. Most of the cairns were multi day projects, with some being more complex builds than others. Thank you to Kayla and Virginia for coming up with the crew!



Alex and Katie working on a cairn



Chris hauling a rock uphill

As a reminder, official, designated cairns above treeline are large, sturdy structure of rock work. These cairns withstand all weather conditions, will last through the winter, and if built correctly, only fall down due to human intervention. If you notice rock stacks while in the High Peaks, small, intricately balanced piles of rock, let a summit steward know and we can remove them and return the rocks to where they previously were placed.

As we continue to do trail maintenance tasks on Wright Peak, it is evident we are running out of loose rock to work with. Wright does not have a huge summit, so available rock is scarce. After rebuilding the cairns this season, we picked through just about all the loose rock remaining, even after scouring all aspects of the summit above treeline. Going forward, we will need to do some more scree wall and rock packing work to



Top: Liam with rebuilt cairn, Bottom: Aaron Sirtoli standing at same cairn, originally built in 2008 and remained standing until this fall.



Ryan, Eli, and Chris filling their cairn with crush. Crushed rocks help stabilize the cairn and make it a solid and dense marker.

protect the vegetation there. Next season, I hope to have some project days focused on carrying rock from below treeline up to the summit. When many of the cairns were built in and around 2008, stewards shuttled most of the rock for them from below treeline.

Personnel and Scheduling



Back Row L to R: Liam Ebner (Stewardship Manager), Tim Ostap, Eli Steinberg, Ezra Shamy, Christopher Hill.
Front Row L to R: Katie Leton (Chief Summit Steward), Katie Strutton. Not Pictured: Kayla White (Stewardship Director), Becca Guetzov, Ryan McLane (Fall), Alex Cassu (Fall)

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

Katie Leton—This is Katie's third season with the program. Last year Katie was one of our Botany Field Technicians, but this year has taken the role of Chief Summit Steward. She has previously worked at North Country Camps as a staff member. She is a recent graduate of Colorado College, where she majored in Environmental Studies and History. While Katie is not botanizing, she enjoys rock climbing, swimming, and a good book.

Christopher Hill—Christopher is also a returning steward to the Summit Stewardship Program! Originally from Connecticut, Chris came to the Adirondacks often while he was growing up. He is a recent graduate from the University of Notre Dame where he studied Environmental Science and Chemistry. In his free time, Christopher enjoys

running, paddling, spending time with friends, and enjoying all the Adirondacks has to offer.

Eli Steinberg—Eli is brand new to the Summit Stewardship Program, but not the Adirondacks as he grew up in Croghan, NY, just on the border of the Park. Eli has spent the last five years with the US Forest Service as a Wildland Firefighter, as well as three years in Conservation Corps positions. Eli often spends time practicing meditation and volunteering at meditation centers around the US, and other parts of the world.

Ezra Shamy—Ezra is also new to the Summit Stewardship Program. Ezra recently graduated from Skidmore College with a degree in American Studies where he was heavily involved in his school's ultimate frisbee team. He has a contagious level of enthusiasm and can brighten up a room (or summit!) with his interactions. Ezra loves to have meaningful and memorable conversations with hikers on the summit and never fails to find a connection with a hiker or group.

Tim Ostap—A rising junior studying Wildlife and Fisheries Biology at the University of Vermont, Tim is also new to the Summit Stewardship Program. Tim is the Treasurer for the UVM Birding Club and also serves on the board for Green Mountain Audubon, so safe to say Tim loves birding in their free time. Tim enjoys connecting with hikers on the summits about rare plants and getting to share some of their alpine knowledge while above treeline.

Becca Guetzov—Becca is new to the Summit Stewardship Program but was a Rt. 73 Trailhead Steward last summer. Becca is a rising senior at Vanderbilt University majoring in Climate Studies with a Biology minor. Becca has a passion for plant biology and loves to share botanical facts with hikers she interacts with.

Katie Strutton—Katie is a rising sophomore at Haverford College in Virginia and is new to the program as an intern. At school, Katie is a collegiate runner on the cross country and track and field teams. Katie loves to connect with every group she interacts with! She has great energy for educating the public and does so with enthusiasm.

Ryan McLane (Fall)—Ryan joined us this in September as one of our two fall stewards who replaced stewards that left after the summer season. He is originally from Camillus, New York and recently graduated from Binghamton University with a Master of Public Administration degree. Ryan grew up outdoors learning a sense of stewardship and community and enjoys sharing that with the hikers he interacts with.

Alex Cassu (Fall)—Alex also joined us for the fall season! She is new to the Summit Stewardship Program, but not to the Adirondacks; she has been coming to the area as long as she can remember and relocated here full-time. Alex spent this summer working at the SUNY ESF Newcomb campus as a Wildland Monitoring Technician. Alex loves to

share the importance of conserving our environment with others and having them fall in love with the outdoors.

Kayla White—Kayla is ADK's Stewardship Director. It's her twelfth year with the Summit Stewardship Program and her fourteenth year at ADK. Last year, Kayla began overseeing ADK's newest stewardship program, the Route 73 Trailhead Stewardship Program (now in its second year), as well as the Trails department.

Liam Ebner—I'm ADK's Stewardship Manager. This is my fifth year with the Summit Stewardship Program and with ADK. When I'm not with the program, I can be found paddling, out birding, looking at plants (off the clock!), or on my bike.

Volunteer Stewards: Our volunteers are a wonderful group of devoted stewards; many of them have been with us for multiple years. They are always willing to fill in and we could not fully staff the peaks or do much needed trail maintenance or research without them. This year volunteers educated **6,952 hikers** on the summits; 26% of the total number of hikers educated this season. Each year, volunteers educate approximately 30% of our hikers contacted. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer summit steward for next year, you can reach out to me and follow this [link for more information about the program](#) and apply!

- Mary Lamb—13th year
- Jack Coleman—12th year volunteer, 2 years staff
- Lois Dannenberg—10th year
- Ann Fogarty—10th year
- Jen Denny—10th year volunteer, 2 years staff
- Jim Schneider—9th year SSP & Hurricane
- Ryan Nerp—6th year volunteer, 4 years staff
- Drew Benware—6th year SSP & Hurricane
- Klarisse Torriente—5th year
- Matt Szopa—5th year
- Angela Ranzini—4th year SSP & Hurricane
- Tyler Lucero—4th year SSP & Hurricane
- Tony Goodwin—4th year SSP & Hurricane
- Caitlin Glynn—4th year
- Esther Seacord—3rd year SSP & Hurricane
- Caitlin Porter—3rd year SSP & Hurricane
- Carla Denn—3rd year
- Mark Epstein—3rd year
- Kristen Peek—2nd year
- David Palat— 2nd year

- Peyton Riegel—2nd year, Hurricane
- Kim Brown—5th year, SSP & Hurricane
- Bob Hunter—5th year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Don Pachner—5th year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- John Loughlin—4th year, Hurricane, 2nd year SSP
- Pamela Gothner—4th year with ADK, Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Peter Slocum—Friends of Hurricane Mountain
- Mary Jean Bland—Friends of Hurricane Mountain

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

Education: Usage and Outreach

Year	Total Contacts	Days Covered	Average
2025	26,410	410	64
2024	31,874	389	82
2023	33,421	442	76
2022	32,844	408	81
2021	28,514	428	67
2020	28,605	315	91
2019	39,939	393	102
2018	38,033	349	109
2017	31,625	305	104
2016	36,355	334	109
2015	31,440	344	91
2014	28,488	312	91
2013	23,804	305	78
2012	20,567	269	77
2011	19,211	275	70
Total Contacts 1990–2024: 738,547			

Comparing usage of the 2025 and 2024 seasons, 2025 saw a large drop in meaningful interactions summit stewards had on the peaks. Though usage does fluctuate over the years, there are a couple potential contributing factors for the lower numbers we saw this season. First, Victoria Day and Memorial Day weekends in May had some brutal weather conditions. Victoria Day weekend saw strong thunderstorms, high winds, hail,

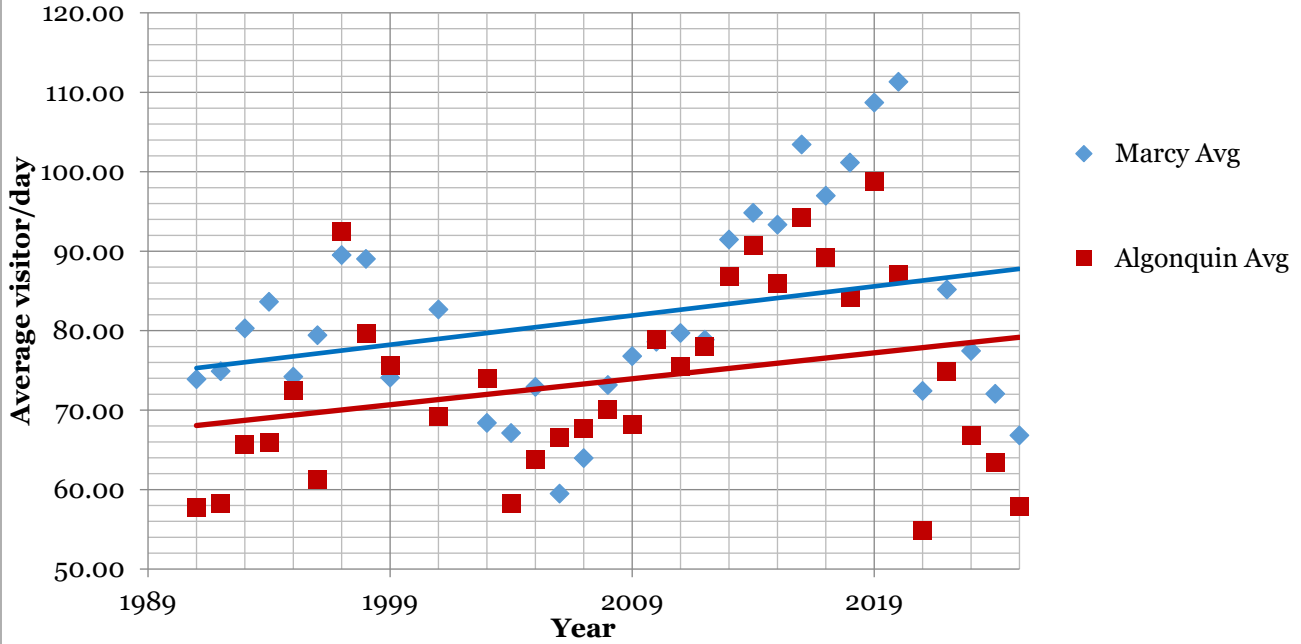
and low temps. Memorial Day weekend saw cold rain at low elevations, and snow and rime ice on the summits. Stewards did not see many hikers these weekends that are usually very busy, when the weather is favorable. Looking back to May 2024, we had over 2000 contacts over those two weekends, while this year we were just over 700. The cool and wet conditions continued through the first half of June, which also had lower than normal hiker numbers. Once the weather got better, and very dry, usage increased, but not to what it was in previous seasons. Another factor in the lower contact numbers this season is one that is impacting the North Country as a whole. We have not been interacting with as many Canadian visitors. While summit stewards do not collect demographics on who we talk to, it was evident through conversations that we had less Canadians on the summits. Canadian border crossings into New York for June were down 21% compared to June 2024.

The following chart compares the daily average of contacts on Marcy and Algonquin for July and August. This is the best comparison we have for observing trends in usage due to the large data set dating to the beginning of the program. Because we are looking at the average daily contacts, it eliminates issues in data we may face with the size of the stewarding team fluctuating over the years.. Usage was not as predictable throughout this season.

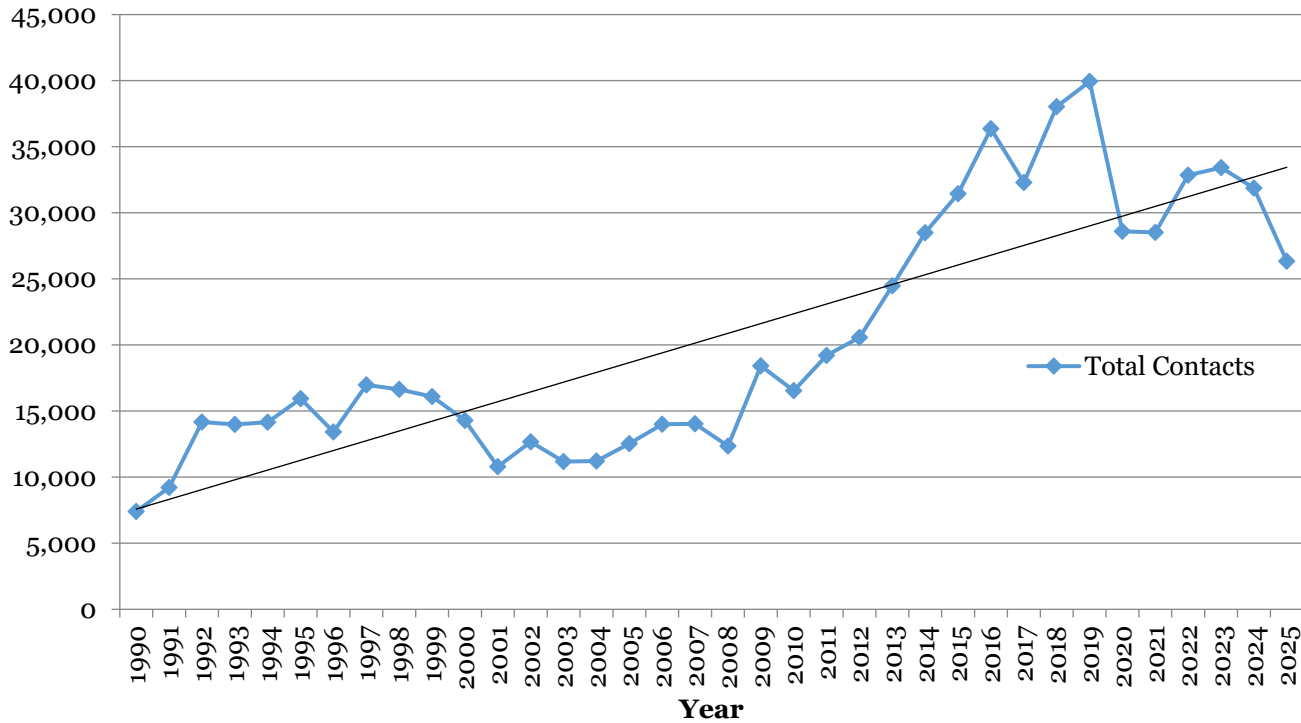
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Usage was not as predictable throughout this season. On a gorgeous Saturday in August on Algonquin it would be normal to see 200 or more hikers in a day. Throughout the entire season, we only broke 200 nine times, compared to 26 times in 2024. Educating 300 hikers a day has previously been used as our internal metric for a “busy” day. In 2025, we only broke 300 hikers one time, while in 2024 we educated over 300 hikers 8 times. Daily averages for Marcy and Algonquin in July and August are both down from last year. On Marcy, the daily average dropped from 72 hikers a day to 68 hikers a day. For Algonquin, the same average is down from 63 hikers a day to 58 hikers a day. While it is hard to know for sure the reasons behind this downward trend on Marcy and Algonquin, it has continued to decrease since 2021 after a decade long increase in visitation.

Average Visitor per Day for Marcy & Algonquin in July & August



Total Summit Steward Contacts, 1989-2025



The decline in usage we have been seeing has been fairly consistent over the last few seasons. There are still large numbers of visitors in the High Peaks, even if this season was less than last. Knowing the exact cause of why we are seeing less visitors on the summits is very difficult to determine. Has messaging about alternative hikes not in the High Peaks Wilderness Area been successful in spreading out visitors? What are visitation trends looking like on smaller summit hikes like Ampersand, Pitchoff, or Roostercomb? How much of an impact is the lower number of Canadian border crossings having on alpine summits' visitors? We are unable to predict what next year's visitation numbers will look like. Will we continue to see this steady decline in daily averages on Marcy and Algonquin? Regardless of how many people we see next year, summit stewards will continue doing all they can to protect New York's alpine habitat through education, trail maintenance, and research.

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

I also gave presentations about the program and alpine zone to the La Vida Center for Outdoor Education and Leadership, North Country Camps, Camp Dudley, Camp Chigachgook, and Marist College's Natural History class. Kayla did a presentation on outdoor recreation, the Summit Stewardship Program, and Leave No Trace to a St. Lawrence University class.

Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Program

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

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

Botany and Research Projects:

This year marks the seventeenth year of our participation in Appalachian Mountain Club's (AMC) Mountain Watch phenology program. We monitor the phenological stages of four species at standardized monitoring areas in line with the National Phenology Network (NPN). AMC uses this data to analyze long term trends in the timing of the different phenological stages, which could be an indication of the effects of climate change on the alpine ecosystem. AMC has also implemented the [Northeast Alpine Flower Watch](#), a community science project which asks hikers to use iNaturalist, available on mobile and desktop, to take pictures of six alpine species in their blooming and fruiting phenophases. Hopefully, this will help create a more robust and complete data set. Feel free to download [iNaturalist](#) and participate!



Photopoint monitoring transect training on Whiteface

Over the season, Chris, Katie, and Tim were able to complete Peak Health Reports on Gothics, Iroquois, Santanoni, and Panther. Peak Health Reports are a periodic review of alpine summits that we try to complete every five years. These reports document erosion, trail infrastructure, vegetation occurrences, and alpine trail maintenance which help us determine where to complete projects in the future. Some peaks, like Santanoni and Panther, have not been visited for a report in over ten years. Though the amount of alpine on those summits is very small, it is still susceptible to hiker trampling.

Trail Maintenance and Project Days:

We were able to get trail maintenance done on lots of peaks this season! Stewards got maintenance done on Algonquin, Boundary, Cascade, Colden, Giant, Gothics, Haystack, Hurricane, Iroquois, Marcy, Saddleback, Shepherd's Tooth, Skylight, and Wright. The cairns on Hurricane that we had issues with people tampering with for a few seasons made it through this season with no problems. Stewards stayed on top of the scree walls on the summits with Algonquin getting lots of attention. This fall saw some major trail maintenance being done by the entire team.



Completed scree wall on backside of Marcy

Aside from rebuilding the cairns on Wright, our other large project for the fall season was completing the scree wall on the back side of Marcy. This has been an ongoing project for the last three seasons, but we were able to build scree walls marking the trails all the way from Schofield Cobble to the summit of Marcy, except in places where natural barriers delineated the trail. The backside of Marcy is much more open than the front side coming from the Van Hovenburg trail, so it was easier to get off trail and walk on alpine plants. We added another 600 linear feet of scree wall this fall, bringing the total for this project to approximately 2,000 linear feet over the last three seasons. Going forward, this will need

regular maintenance, but the heavy lifting (literally) is all complete. It will be a very slow process, but we hope to see vegetation recovery in the immediate vicinity of the trail.

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

	Scree Wall	Brushing	Rock Pack	Cairn Rocks Removed	Cairns Rebuilt	Poop Buried
Algonquin	694	325	62	305	4	3
Boundary	15	0	0	25	1	0
Cascade	564	158	19	272	7	3
Colden	0	0	7	0	0	0
Giant	0	80	0	23	0	0
Gothics	0	95	0	0	0	0
Haystack	5	0	0	25	0	0
Hurricane	54	180	8	18	2	1
Iroquois	55	90	0	10	5	0
Marcy	1568	179	35	284	9	9
Saddleback	0	80	0	0	0	0
Shep. Tooth	0	300	0	0	0	0
Skylight	75	0	0	0	0	0
Wright	312	72	15	51	14	1
Grand Total	3342 ft	1559 ft	146 sq ft	1013 rocks	42 cairns	17 poops

Future recommendations:

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

- ❑ Hire a Summit Steward Coordinator
- ❑ Work with DEC to make sure they have the most up-to-date data on alpine stewardship.
- ❑ Publish the analysis on the Photopoint Monitoring Project in conjunction with the New York Natural Heritage Program.
- ❑ Write a **new** Adirondack alpine field guide!
- ❑ Continue to expand and improve the Volunteer Summit Stewardship Program and Hurricane Fire Tower Stewardship Program and build up volunteer numbers for coverage on Hurricane, Giant (weekends), and Cascade (every day in July & August)
- ❑ Continue adding specimens to our alpine focused teaching herbarium.
- ❑ Complete Peak Health Reports on summits where their most recent one is ten years old
- ❑ Build group project days to accomplish more high-quality trail maintenance.
- ❑ Work to continue providing public outreach programs to camp groups, college clubs, and other organizations to expand our visibility and spread our alpine stewardship message. (Please contact me if you are interested!)
- ❑ Expand our presence and trail maintenance on alpine summits within the Great Range.



The crew on an end of season field trip to the Adirondack Experience! Front: Eli Steinberg, Liam Ebner.
Back: Katie Leton, Ryan McLane, Christopher Hill, Alex Cassu

Thank you!

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

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

And individuals:

DEC: Tate Connor, Chris DiCintio, Andrew Lewis, Jenna Curcio, Charlie Foutch, Nicole Duchene, Rob Prackajlo, Hanna Prackajlo, Allison Rooney, Alicia Bodmer and the entire Ray Brook Dispatch team, Bob Ripp, Rob Daley; Andrew Miller, Wilson Cummer, Volunteer Summit Stewards and Fire Tower Stewards, Katherin Berdan (TNC), Julia Goren (ARTA), Dave Fadden (SNICC), Tim Howard (NYNHP), Steve Young, Sean Robinson (SUNY Oneonta), Aaron Kellet (Whiteface), Wes Testo (UVM), James Lendemer (NYSM), Mary Glynn (ADKX), Vinny McClelland, Charlie Wise and the entire staff of The Mountaineer, and all ADK staff.

With an awesome crew of staff and volunteers, we were able to accomplish a lot this season! I'm very proud of the team for all the work we were able to complete and visitors we were able to educate. From a cairn reconstruction marathon to testing and replicating our new photopoint monitoring protocols, this season saw many successes. None of what was accomplished this year could have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement from every one of you. The alpine zone would not be the place it is today without the support from you. Next time you are above treeline and see a patch of rock packing being taken over by moss, or a flourishing meadow of deer's hair sedge, know that you play a part in the alpine zone continuing to recover and thrive.

It has been an amazing experience overseeing this program the last three seasons! The Summit Stewardship Program truly is a very special program. As the Summit Stewardship Program will have a new coordinator next year, I am excited to see the program continue to grow, reach tens of thousands of visitors, and conduct research to help better understand the environment we are protecting. Kayla and I will be working to select a new coordinator who will be able to be a strong leader for this program and build on the numerous successes we have had on the summits since 1989. Again, thank you all for all of your support over the years. If anyone has any questions, suggestions, or opportunities for the program, please do not hesitate to reach out!

No matter what big projects are going on during any given season, there is always a lot to talk about with the Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Program. I am extremely proud of the program's staff and volunteers' dedication and hard work this summer! We had many successes this season from completing a major research effort, addressing some much-needed trail maintenance, and taking steps to provide better botanical training for future summit stewards. None of the work mentioned in this report could have been possible without all the support, guidance, and encouragement from every one of you. These living museums of islands in the sky give us a small glimpse back in time, constantly teaching us about the State's natural history. The evidence of recovery on these summits continues to emphasize the importance of stewardship in the alpine zone. New York's 173 acres of unique, precious, and fragile alpine habitat impress and instill awe to those who visit the mountains. The plants may not be able to say it themselves, but with every new clump of mountain sandwort, thriving mats of Diapensia, and meadows of deer's hair sedge flowing with the wind, thank you too. Please feel free to reach out at any time with questions, suggestions, or opportunities for the program. Thank you and see you on the summits in 2026!

Sincerely,

Liam Ebner
Stewardship Manager
liam@adk.org
he/him/his

&

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