



ROUTE 73 TRAILHEAD STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM 2025 END-OF-SEASON REPORT

We're happy to announce the completion of the second year of the Route 73 Trailhead Stewardship Program!

The program's mission is to foster an outdoor ethic in every trailhead visitor, and provide the skills and knowledge needed to protect New York State's wild lands and waters for the benefit of all living beings. Five trailhead stewards were hired for the season and were stationed at trailheads from Thursday–Monday. Their season began on the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend in May and ended in October on Indigenous Peoples' Day. Locations include trailheads for Giant (Roaring Brook Falls and the Ridge Trail), the Garden, Rooster Comb, and Cascade Mountain (on Thursdays and Mondays when the 46er Trailhead Stewards are not there). Stewards also visited busy rock-climbing destinations like the Beer Walls and Chapel Pond. Trailhead stewards educated **20,782** hikers, backpackers, and rock climbers and were stationed at those trailheads **366** times this year.

PERSONNEL

There was a total of five trailhead stewards during the summer and four of those stewards stayed on into the fall. We had two returning trailhead stewards (Ian Trudell and Natalie Banister) and hired three stewards (Jack Coleman, Alison Clark, and Laura Warden) who were new to the program. These stewards have a diverse set of skills and experiences, creating a well-rounded crew of successful educators.

PARTNERS, DONORS, & SPONSORS

This program is contracted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Funding is provided through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) as administered by DEC. DEC also provided uniform shirts again this year. Thank you to DEC staff for providing administrative, training, and logistical support.

Thank you to [L.L.Bean](#) for donating gear to the program. L.L.Bean provided rain jackets, rain pants, puffy jackets, and zip-off pants to trailhead stewards, as well as providing additional gear to ADK's trip leaders, trails volunteer crew leaders, summit stewards, and professional trail crew.

EDUCATION: USAGE

The Garden parking lot filled on Saturdays from August–October usually before the stewards arrived at 5 a.m.; July's Saturdays usually filled when the stewards were there. In September and October, Saturdays typically filled on that Friday evening and remained filled throughout the night. The Roaring Brook parking lot filled between 8–11 a.m., with it commonly filling around 10 a.m. on the weekends.



Trailheads	Contacts	% of Contacts	Days*	AVG Person/TH/Day
Roaring Brook	3,093	15%	60	52
Roaring Brook Falls	2	0.01%	1	2
Beer Walls	299	1%	21	14
Ridge	4,791	23%	70	68
Jewel's & Gems	0	0%	0	0
Chapel Pond	96	0.46%	20	5
Garden AM	5,958	29%	83	72
Garden PM	3,438	17%	67	51
Garden (Total)	9,396	45%	150	63
Rooster Comb	686	3%	18	38
Cascade	2,419	12%	26	93
Creature Walls	0	0%	0	0
Total	20,782	100%	366	57

*Days equates to number of times a steward was at a trailhead.

Green= increase, red= decrease, black= stayed the same from last year.

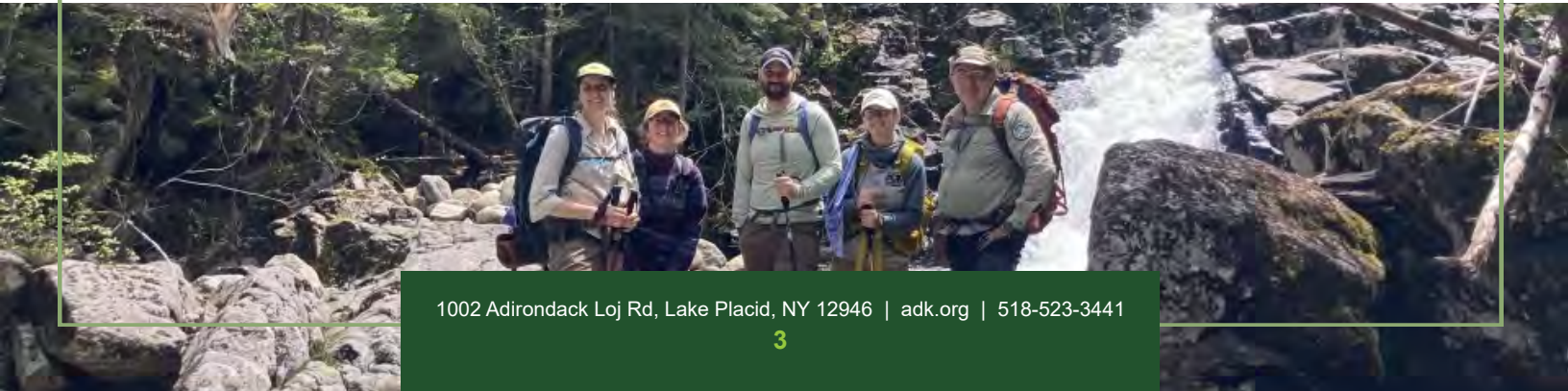


Trailhead stewards educated visitors and were at the trailhead only slightly less than last year. This year, the trailheads where stewards educated the most hikers were once again the Garden, Ridge, Roaring Brook, and Cascade trailheads (45%, 23%, 15%, and 12%, respectively). Cascade continues to be an impactful site even though our trailhead stewards are only there on Thursdays and Mondays when the 46er trailhead stewards are not there. Stewards did not visit Jewel's & Gems and the Creature Walls this year since visitor usage was very low last year.

	2024			2025		
Month	Contacts	Days*	AVG Person / TH / Day	Contacts	Days*	AVG Person / TH / Day
June	2,683	78	34	2,502	59	42
July	6,385	96	67	4,951	94	53
August	5,562	104	53	6,877	99	69
September	4,099	77	53	3,799	79	48
October	2,141	27	79	2,504	31	81
Total	20,870	382	55	20,782	366	57

The busiest days were the first two weekends in October at the Garden. The highest number of meaningful interactions by one steward in a day was on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend at the Ridge Trail (329 visitors educated).

On Saturday, October 4, trailhead stewards educated 225 for the morning shift (5 a.m.–1 p.m.) and 119 for the evening shift (12–7 p.m.), totaling 344 people for that day! The Saturday of Indigenous Peoples’ Day, stewards educated 234 for the morning shift and 66 for the evening shift. August saw the highest number of educational contacts overall. Looking at the average person educated per trailhead per day, August and the first half of October were the busiest.





TRAILHEAD STEWARDS' KEY TAKEAWAYS

Trailhead stewards complete end-of-season reports to summarize their field season. Here are some key takeaways paraphrased from those reports:

- Stewards felt that the Roaring Brook trailhead was an ineffective educational spot this year. The drought brought Roaring Brook down to a trickle, making the falls less of a destination for visitors looking for a nice frontcountry destination/waterfall. Hikers continued to be confused regarding the reservation system at the Adirondack Mountain Reserve (AMR) and used the Roaring Brook trailhead as overflow parking. Since the permit is for a parking spot, folks would park at Roaring Brook, pile into one car, and then park at AMR, leaving less space at the Roaring Brook trailhead.
- The Garden continues to be the most influential place to steward due to its diversity of destinations. Stewards are able to convince a substantial number of campers to go to The Mountaineer to rent bear cans who would have otherwise gone into the Johns Brook Valley without one. This was critical because there was a mother bear with cubs that were frequently seen in the area looking for food. However, since stewards are at that trailhead very early in the morning and late into the evening when The Mountaineer is closed, stewards did struggle to be able to offer an easily accessible alternative location to rent a bear can at those times.
- DEC staffed Forest Rangers at the Garden trailhead due to parking lot conflicts that occurred last year. The Town of Keene Front Country Stewards and our trailhead stewards appreciated the support. It's important to note that trailhead stewards are there only as an educational presence and not law enforcement.
- Chapel Pond is a difficult location to educate since people are mainly stopping there to use the bathrooms, swim, or rock climb. Those activities don't lend themselves to the most opportune time to give an educational message.
- Stewards wanted opportunities to give back and do more hands-on stewardship work like trail maintenance or clean-up days. They ended up organizing a clean up day after their shift in August.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review season with DEC and make programmatic decisions based off of data.
- Figure out a solution for bear can rentals near the Garden parking lot when The Mountaineer is closed.
- Consider adjusting hours based off of location, day of the week, visitation numbers, and hours of daylight.
- Add additional gear sizes and invest in hats and gloves (more cold-weather gear). Look into gear sponsorship. Replace pop-up tents and tables that have become damaged and invest in a light source for stewards.
- Continue to work with DEC and the Town of Keene on successful coverage at the Garden.
- Add to the educational materials stewards have for tabling.
- Continue to add additional metrics to document whether the program is being successful.

THANK YOU

The Route 73 Trailhead 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:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Town of Keene Front Country Stewards
- Adirondack Climbing Coalition
- L.L.Bean

And individuals:

Joe Pete Wilson, Tate Connor, Rob Daley, Chris DiCintio, Andrew Lewis, Jenna Curcio, Charlie Foutch, Nicole Duchene, Rob Prackajlo, Allison Rooney, Hanna Prackajlo, Assistant Forest Rangers, Alicia Bodmer and the entire Ray Brook Dispatch team, Jill Trunko, Will Roth, Jarrod Blundy, David Fadden, and ADK staff who assisted with training.

This is a new beginning in stewardship along the route 73 corridor! Thank you for all of your support. 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 better protect the Forest Preserve. Thank you.

Most sincerely,
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