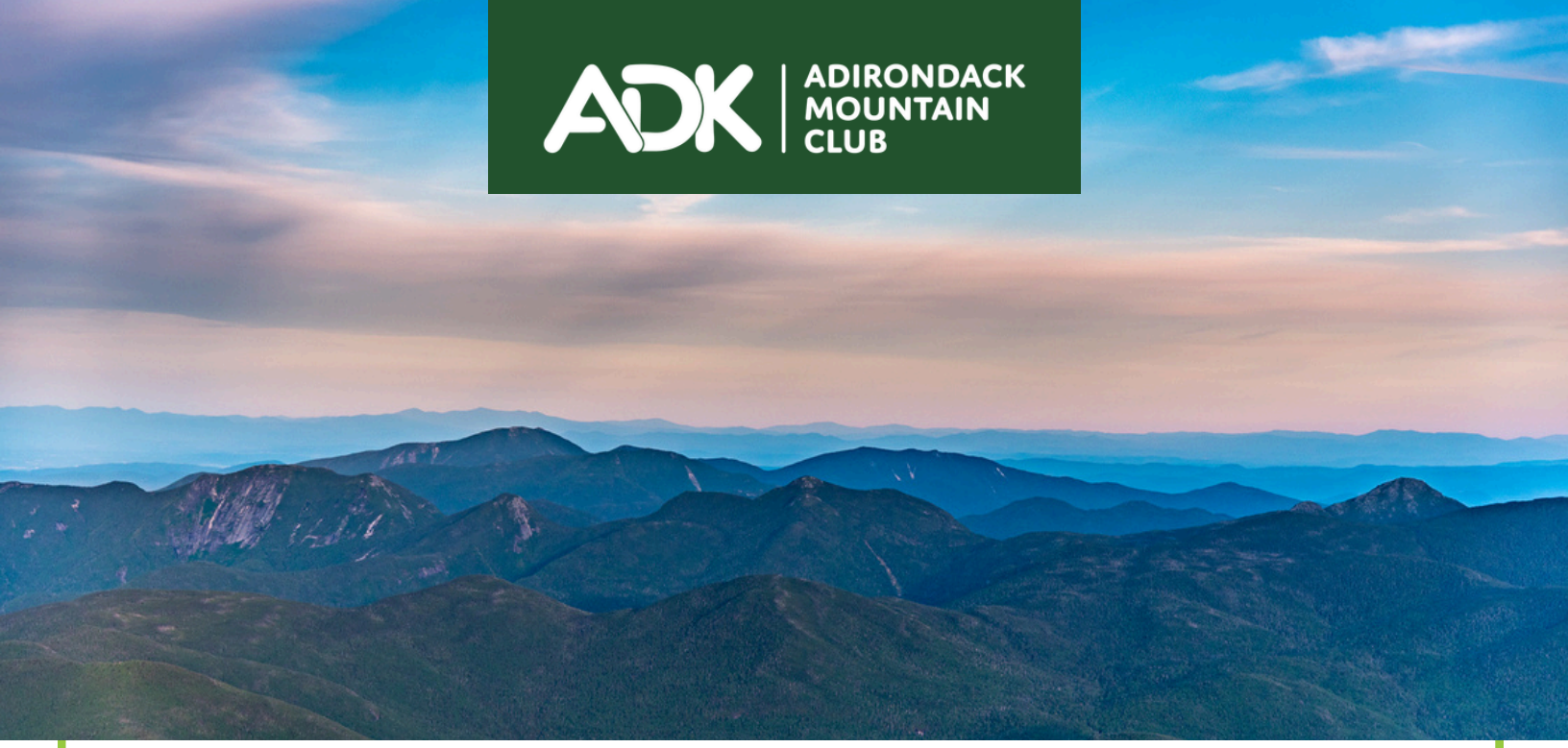


EDUCATION DEPARTMENT END OF SEASON REPORT SUMMER 2026 (MAY–OCTOBER)

The Adirondack Mountain Club's (ADK) Education Department is dedicated towards making outdoor recreation accessible for everyone, no matter age or experience. Through education and hands-on learning, our department strives to empower individuals to explore the outdoors safely while fostering a life-long appreciation for the natural world.

We take pride in the multitudes of programs we offer as well as the hours we spend with our boots-on-the-ground to make it happen.

For a peek into the work of the Education Department, including program summaries, program highlights and accomplishments, keep reading!

1002 Adirondack Loj Rd, Lake Placid, NY 12946 | ADK.org | 518-523-3441

MEET THE EDUCATION TEAM

DARIA STACY
Education Director



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NAI Certified Interpretive Guide
NYS Licensed Guide

LORELEI MEIDENBAUER
Education Manager



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
ACA Swiftwater Rescue
Mental Health WFA
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NAI Certified Interpretive Guide
NYS Licensed Guide

KAYLA BECK
Environmental Education Coordinator



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NYS Licensed Guide

ELAINA LANPHEAR
Outdoor Education Specialist



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Project WILD & Aquatic WILD, K-12 Educator
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NAI Certified Interpretive Guide
NYS Licensed Guide

NOELLE WOBIG
Programs Coordinator



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Mental Health WFA
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NAI Certified Interpretive Guide
NYS Licensed Guide

GUIDES

This summer season, ADK worked with more guides than ever before from various deparments! Thank you ADK Guides for your knowledge and the care you put into the work, it makes all the difference!

ZACH LAWRENCE

INTERPRETIVE MANAGER



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
Certificate in Interpretive Planning
Certificate in Intermediate Methods of Interpretation
NAI Certified Interpretive Guide
NYS Licensed Guide

SAM FAIRCHILD

HIGH PEAKS INFORMATION CENTER STRATEGIC COORDINATOR



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NYS Licensed Guide

NATE FISCHER

HIGH PEAKS INFORMATION CENTER TRIP PLANNING COORDINATOR



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Leave No Trace Level 3 Instructor
NYS Licensed Guide

HEIDI NYDHAM

PART TIME OUTDOOR EDUCATOR



Certifications
Wilderness First Responder
Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor
NYS Licensed Guide

GUIDED TRIPS

In the 2026 summer season, ADK's Education Department **led 35+ trips into the backcountry,** trips led were **day hikes**,1–3-night **backpacking trips**, and **paddling trips.** ADK Staff took **183 participants** into the backcountry this season and collectively hiked over **543 miles of the Adirondack Park** with active field time totaling at **over 1000 hours.**

GUIDED HIKES

- Allen
- Cliff & Redfield
- Dix Range
- Esther Mountain
- Iroquois
- Mount Colden
- Mount Marcy
- Mount Marshall
- Phelps Mountain
- Seward Range
- Santanoni Range
- Street & Nye
- Tabletop Mountain
- Hurricane Mountain
- Northville Placid Trail Sections: Wakely Dam to Long Lake & Long Lake to Lake Placid

PADDLING

- Long Pond Paddle & Long Pond Mountain Hike
- Seven Carries Paddle
- Raquette River Paddle



Guide Nate leads Joe Wiegand, Teddy Roosevelt Interpreter near the summit of Mount Marcy for TR weekend in Newcomb



Guide Zach with participant on Long Pond Mountain after paddling to the trailhead

WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

ADK workshops and trainings expand knowledge and build confidence to increase your ability to safely navigate backcountry conditions and go on the adventures you want.

Workshops & Trainings we offered this summer season...

This season, we trained **171 participants** and spent **281 hours teaching.** Courses offered were **Wilderness First Aid**, **Map & Compass Fundamentals**, **Beginner Backpacking**, **Novice to High Peak Hiker Series**, **CPR/AED**, **Leave No Trace Level 1 Instructor, & Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor Courses.**

LEAVE NO TRACE

DID YOU KNOW...?

On average, each person trained in Leave No Trace goes on to educate 256 other people in their lifetime!

25 staff members were trained as Level 1 Leave No Trace Instructors

9 staff members were trained as Level 2's this summer, totalling **13 Level 2 Instructors on staff this summer season!**

NEW PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The Novice to High Peak Series program offers three progressive hikes over three weeks, starting with a lesson on Leave No Trace & Outdoor Preparedness, leading up to a final High Peaks adventure. The program builds skills and camradarie to help increase hiking confidence in Adirondack terrain.



"The program was awesome! I feel accomplished and was pleased to participate in the entire program– proud of hiking my first high peak. Will happily recommend future ADK programs to others."

NATURALIST PROGRAMS

Our Naturalist Series offers family-friendly programs designed to help people connect with the unique environment of the Adirondacks. These programs are free or low-cost to keep education accessible.



TOPICS

ADK History
Archaelogy
Alpine Ecology
Art with Natural Resources
Birds
Geology
Herpetology
Nature Journaling
Moths
Mushroom Identification
Poetry
Summer Solstice

COLLABORATORS

Bruce M. Beehler
Bruce is a published ornithologist & conservationist. He presented on migratory birds and led a Birding Walk at Heart Lake

Alexander K. Stewart, PhD
Alexander is an Associate Professor of Geology at St. Lawrence University. He guided three geology-themed walks around Heart Lake this summer.

Daniel Babicz
Daniel is a NYS-Certified Mushroom Identifier & Forager. He led a mushroom identification walk around Heart Lake.

Natalli Amato
A North Country poet & journalist. Natalli led a poetry workshop to help participants channel their love of nature into the poetic word.

Thank you to those who share their knowledge and expertise with us to further ADK's mission!

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Working with our local community and partnering with organizations expands ADK's reach. We appreciate all of the collaborative efforts that go into making ADK programs possible.

Lake Placid Public Library
Children were led through a lesson on archaeology and geology, where they unearthed soil layers.

Shenendehowa High School
40 high school students from Shenendehowa's ENL (English as a New Language) program hiked Mount Jo with ADK Educators.

Lake Placid Summer School
20 elementary-aged students from Lake Placid Summer School joined ADK educators for a hike around Heart Lake to learn about ADK flora & fauna.

2026 ACW Kickass Writers Festival
ADK guided a naturalist walk at the Adirondack Center for Writing's biennial event celebrating writing & storytelling.

Outdoor Afro
Working with the Nature Conservancy, ADK hosted Outdoor Afro for the weekend and guided a hike up Mount Jo.

SCHOOL OUTREACH



ADK's ***Marie L. Haberl School Outreach Program: Three Seasons at Heart Lake*** is a free program that gives local fourth grade students the opportunity to experience the seasonal transformation of the Adirondacks with four educator-led classroom sessions and three field trips to the Heart Lake Program Center each school year.

SPRING

Last Spring, ADK Educators wrapped up programming for ten participating elementary schools. On their final field trip they used their map & compass skills to map spring growth!

WRAPPING UP

At the end of the 2025–2026 school year, reviewed our year together. We also distributed free parking passes to every student to encourage them to return to Heart Lake with family and friends to explore the 4th season with their family and friends: summer!

SUMMER

While schools were on summer vacation, ADK educators implemented program updates based on teacher feedback and scheduled a full schoolyear of programs for the next class of 4th graders. In the 2026–2027 school year, we were able to offer the free program to twelve schools in and around the Adirondack Park.



LOOKING AHEAD

In September, we met the new class of 4th graders. We taught students local Adirondack history, how to be a steward of nature, and how to prepare for outdoor adventures. Shortly after, the students visited Heart Lake for their first ADK field trip of the year: a hike up Mount Jo!

Our team is excited to continue to learn alongside this year's 4th grade class in the coming seasons!

SUMMER '26 MAY–OCTOBER REPORT

We take pride in educating the public. This summer season our department more ran guided trips than ever before. We continue to stay true to ADK's mission to protect New York's wild lands and waters by promoting responsible outdoor recreation and building a statewide constituency of land stewardship advocates. We are looking forward to the upcoming winter season and all of the outdoor adventures ahead.

ADK
ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB

ADK's Education Department would like to thank our collaborative partners, ADK members, donors, and ADK chapters. You make all of this possible. Thank you!

Feel free to reach out to the Education Department with any questions.

Email: education@adk.org
Phone: 518-523-3441 Ext. 2