

Keene State College and the Harris Center Year in Review 2021

The Harris Center for Conservation Education

facilitates undergraduate field experiences in environmental studies and related disciplines at Keene State College through internships, community science initiatives, and working with students and faculty on capstone research projects. We also offer public programs — with a focus on nature and conservation science — for the benefit of students, faculty, and the greater Keene community.



▲ **Invasive Plant Surveys** The 2021 interns (left to right: Walter Horgan, Macie Flammia, Michael Bullen, and Zoe Dreyfus) review invasive plant identification with KSC faculty mentor and Harris Center staff ecologist, Karen Seaver. © Brett Amy Thelen

Conservation Internships



▲ **Broad-winged Hawk Nest Monitoring** The 2021 interns help collect data on Broad-winged Hawk nests in the Harris Center's SuperSanctuary of conserved lands. © Karen Seaver

▲ **Forest Community Inventory** Together, the internship team surveyed nearly 30 forest community inventory plots. © Macie Flammia



Following a pandemic-related pause in 2020, we were delighted to return for our eighth season of the Harris Center-Keene State College conservation internship program in the summer of 2021. Under the guidance of Harris Center staff and KSC faculty mentor Karen Seaver, four hard-working interns gained specialized training and firsthand experience in many facets of the Harris Center's conservation, education, and stewardship work over the course of seven weeks in June and July.

Together, the team conducted forest community inventory, evaluated the accessibility of local trails for people with mobility challenges, collected data for a long-term red-backed salamander study, surveyed monarch caterpillars and butterflies at a Harris Center-conserved milkweed patch, monitored backcountry campsites for trash and safety hazards, maintained and improved hiking trails, pulled thousands of invasive plants, assisted with Harris Center summer camps, and more.

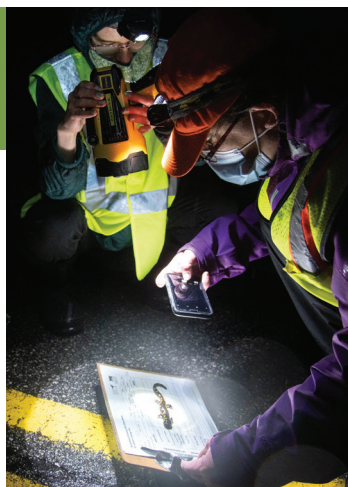
"This internship was quite a big step in my professional career. . . It is an excellent way to put everything you've learned in class to the test." — Michael Bullen, '22



▲ **Assisting with Summer Camp** Intern Macie Flammia shares a teachable moment with an agreeable milk snake and a group of fascinated summer campers.

Community Science

In the spring of 2021, dozens of KSC students, faculty, and staff participated in the Harris Center's **Salamander Crossing Brigades** — a longstanding community science effort focused on preventing amphibian road mortality during the spring amphibian migration. Together with other community volunteers, the KSC crew provided safe passage for more than 2,500 individual amphibians over the course of six nights at two Keene sites.



▲ **Community Science in Action** Salamander Crossing Brigade volunteers document the unique spot pattern of a spotted salamander at the North Lincoln Street amphibian crossing site in Keene. © Tim Briggs

Project Nighthawk volunteers monitor breeding success of Common Nighthawks in Keene, one of the last places in New Hampshire where this endangered bird still nests. For the last two summers, the only known nighthawk nest in the Monadnock Region has been on the KSC campus; in addition to the KSC staff and students who joined community volunteers to observe the birds from afar, Facilities staff offered essential support by providing access to the nest site for weekly monitoring visits.



▲ **KSC Nighthawk Nest** In the summers of both 2020 and 2021, state-endangered Common Nighthawks nested on the KSC campus, and students worked alongside Harris Center staff and community volunteers to monitor the rare birds. © Brett Amy Thelen

Community Programs

In April, the Harris Center partnered with KSC's Office of Multicultural Student Support and Success to offer a virtual **film showing and panel discussion** focused on LGBTQ+ experiences in the outdoors, with a follow-up nature walk on the KSC campus.

Several KSC faculty members were also featured in the Harris Center's **LAB GIRLS** afterschool program for middle and high school girls.



Research on Harris Center Lands



From spring through fall, as part of a two-semester **capstone research experience** in Environmental Studies, one team of KSC student researchers conducted wildlife surveys on two newly-protected Harris Center properties in Harrisville, and another evaluated wildlife use of a road crossing structure near Harris Center-conserved land in Stoddard.

▲ **Wildlife Surveys** Student researcher James Chevalier places a game camera as part of a capstone research project focused on documenting wildlife species diversity on Harris Center-conserved lands. © Karen Seaver



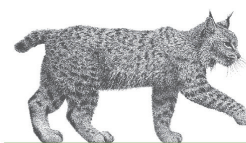
Continuing Education

▲ **Professional Development for Teachers** Elementary school classroom teachers work with Harris Center naturalists to develop and deepen their outdoor teaching skills. © Claudia Dery

In early 2021, the Harris Center offered a course on winter ecology through KSC's *Cheshire Academy for Lifelong Learning* (CALL) program. In addition, the Harris Center worked with the KSC Office of Graduate Studies and Extended Education to offer course credit for elementary school teachers participating in ongoing **professional development workshops** on nature-based teaching led by Harris Center educators.

Questions?

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