

Keene State College and the Harris Center Year in Review 2023

The Harris Center for Conservation Education

supports undergraduate field study in environmental studies and related disciplines at Keene State College through internships, community science initiatives, and partnering with students and faculty on capstone research projects. We also offer educational programs on campus, with a focus on nature and conservation science.

“[This internship] was one of the most fulfilling experiences I’ve ever had. The people I’ve met and the skills I’ve learned, along with the knowledge I’ve gained, will be a great jumping-off point for the rest of my college career and beyond. Every day I woke up and couldn’t wait to find out what I was going to learn and experience.”

– RYAN ROTIGLIANO, '25



▲ **An Internship with a View** The 2023 conservation internship team takes in the view while documenting trail conditions in the Harris Center’s trail network.

© Ryan Rotigliano

Conservation Internships

In the tenth season of the Harris Center-Keene State College **conservation internship program**, four Environmental Studies and Sustainability students — Wyatt Ferrando, AJ Haskins, Ryan Rotigliano, and Donta Selden — explored many facets of the Harris Center’s conservation, education, and stewardship work during a two-month paid summer internship experience.

Under the guidance of Harris Center staff and KSC faculty mentor Karen Seaver, the internship team surveyed for vernal pools, conducted forest community inventory, monitored trail cams for a statewide mammal study, pulled invasive plants, assisted with Harris Center educational programs, and more.

Community Science

In the spring of 2023, dozens of KSC students, faculty, and staff participated in the Harris Center’s **Salamander Crossing Brigades** — a longstanding community science effort focused on reducing amphibian road mortality during the spring amphibian migration. Together with other community volunteers, the KSC crew provided safe passage for more than 2,700 individual amphibians over the course of nine nights at two Keene sites. In addition, two alumni of our summer conservation internship program returned for paid internships with the Salamander Crossing Brigades.

► **KSC Crossing Crew** Boxcar Fairbank '23, Taylor Jackson '24, and Aleksey Wirth '23, ready for a night of amphibian crossing at North Lincoln Street in Keene. © Karen Seaver



Wood Frog
© Jess Baum



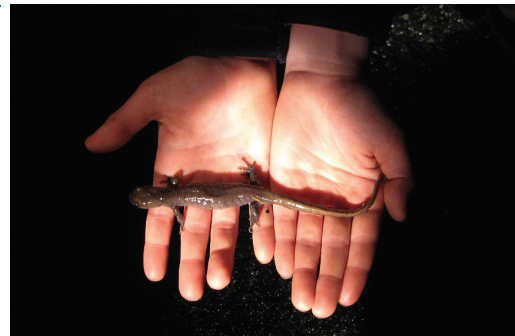
"Being able to do hands-on fieldwork or see the things I have learned from textbooks [during my internship with the Harris Center] recontextualized what an environmental major is to me." – AJ HASKINS, '27

◀ **Forest Inventory** Conservation intern AJ Haskins measures the diameter of a red oak for a forest inventory project on Harris Center-conserved land. © Karen Seaver

Undergraduate Research

During the spring semester, two seniors conducted **capstone research projects** in partnership with the Harris Center: one aimed at surveying bird-window collisions on the KSC campus, and another focused on the Salamander Crossing Brigades.

▶ **Supporting Jefferson Salamander Populations in Keene** For his capstone research, Aleksey Wirth '23 investigated the Harris Center's long-term amphibian crossing dataset and collected new field data, with a particular focus on Jefferson salamanders. © Sigrid Scholz



▲ **Insect Walk** Harris Center naturalist Jenna Spear leads a group of KSC students, staff, and faculty across campus on a search for butterflies, bees, beetles, and other intriguing insects. © Brett Amy Thelen



▲ **The Next Generation of Naturalists** In a new partnership, the Harris Center worked with KSC's Child Development Center to introduce young children to the natural wonders right outside their doors. © Ben Conant

Early Childhood Education

In a new collaboration, skilled Harris Center naturalists visited KSC's **Child Development Center** (CDC) for several place-based environmental education lessons, offering CDC preschoolers — and the KSC students who are preparing for careers in early childhood education — opportunities for hands-on learning about winter birds, ice and snow, and the natural history of KSC's campus squirrels.

Discovering Nature on Campus

As part of our **Discover Nature on Campus** series, KSC students, staff, faculty, and other community members joined Harris Center naturalists for three outings and one film showing to explore the natural world just outside their classroom doors.

Continuing Education

The Harris Center also offered a winter course on the natural and cultural history of trees through KSC's Cheshire Academy for Lifelong Learning (**CALL**) program.

Questions?

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FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION

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