

Keene State College and the Harris Center Year in Review 2024

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 for the campus community, with a focus on nature and conservation science.

“[Every day] I learned more and more about tree identification, land use history, and the ecology of central New England forests. There is no way that I could have gleaned all of this valuable knowledge from a classroom. The hands-on field experience that this internship has provided has prepared me for life after college. I have the tools to succeed in any direction I choose in ecology and/or field research.”

— CHLOE MARCH, '24

Community Science

In the spring of 2024, 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 11 nights at two sites in Keene. In addition, two alumni of our summer conservation internship program returned for paid internships with the Salamander Crossing Brigades.

► **KSC Crossing Crew Salamander Crossing Brigade** interns Taylor Jackson '24 (left) and Veronica Kroha '23 (right), ready for a night of amphibian crossing at North Lincoln Street. © Brett Amy Thelen



▲ **Wood Duck Nest Box Monitoring** The 2024 internship team checks a nest box on Harris Center-conserved land. © Ben Conant

Conservation Internships

In the eleventh season of the Harris Center-Keene State College **conservation internship program**, four students — Lexi Barrett '26, Chloe March '24, Carissa Miller '25, and Irini Stefanakos '25 — explored many facets of the Harris Center's diverse 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, established a long-term emerald ash borer monitoring plot, contributed to a statewide trail cam study, monitored nest boxes, inventoried the Harris Center's teaching collection of bird nests, and more.



© Chloe March





Undergraduate Research

For their two-semester **capstone research project** in Environmental Studies, a five-student team (pictured, right) — Liam Conley '25, Chloe March '24, Wyatt Ferrando '24, Ryan Rotigliano '25, and Declan O'Hare '25 — collected tree data on Harris Center-conserved lands to investigate how forest management practices affect plant diversity over time.



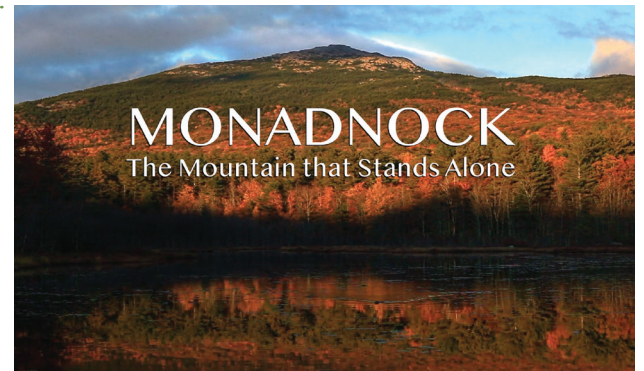
▲ **Forest Inventory** Ryan Rotigliano '25 measures the diameter of an Eastern white pine.

© Ethan Davis

© Karen Seaver

Discovering Nature On Campus & Beyond

Through our **Discover Nature on Campus** series, KSC students, staff, faculty, and other community members joined Harris Center naturalists for on-campus winter tracking and spring birding outings, as well as two documentary film showings. The Harris Center also hosted an **EcoReps field trip** to the **Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory**.



▲ **Nurturing the Next Generation of Naturalists** Harris Center programs at the CDC foster hands-on learning about nearby nature.

© Ben Conant

Early Childhood Education

Harris Center naturalist Jazimina Creamer-MacNeil visited KSC's **Child Development Center (CDC)** for three 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 evergreen trees, the decomposing superpowers of worms, and the natural history of KSC's campus chipmunks.

Continuing Education

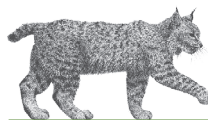
The Harris Center also offered a course on winter mushrooms through KSC's Cheshire Academy for Lifelong Learning (**CALL**) program.

Looking Ahead

Stay tuned for the **Monadnock Region Natural History Conference**, coming in November 2025! This full-day conference — hosted by the Harris Center, KSC, UNH, and other partners — will feature presentations on a range of natural history topics, with a focus on local conservation research, land management, and environmental education efforts.

Questions?

Brett Amy Thelen, Science Director
Harris Center for Conservation Education
thelen@harriscenter.org
harriscenter.org



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FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION

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