



Naturalist in the Classroom

Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center Newsletter Spring 2025

Dear Teachers, Administrators, Families, and Friends,

We are so excited to continue working with your students in our Naturalist in the Classroom program and share their adventures and discoveries with you!

This program offers a wide variety of engaging, hands-on activities for each grade level. While our primary focus is on Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), we also integrate other state standards, such as history and English, to provide a more rounded educational experience. These activities support educational standards while helping students not only learn scientific concepts but also develop a sense of curiosity, appreciation for the natural environment, and a broader understanding of interdisciplinary subjects.

We are grateful to the teachers who welcome us into their classrooms, administrators who work with school boards, PTAs, and private donors who ensure their students' experiences are funded, and of course the students who bring their smiles and enthusiasm to the program each week!

Please enjoy the following pages which highlight some of the enriching experiences your students have had this fall. Stay tuned for more updates and stories from our Naturalist in the Classroom programs!

Best,
Phoebe Hartvigsen
Camp & School-Age Programs Director
phartvigsen@prescottfarm.org

- 4 school districts
- 2 dedicated environmental educators
- 138 hours of student engagement

Prescott Farm - Exploring and Preserving the natural world, one adventure at a time.

www.prescottfarm.org

Program Highlights by School

Belmont Elementary School

Belmont kindergarteners dove in by getting outside and exploring signs of autumn. They discussed their seasonal observations and how animals prepare for the cold. In their next lesson, students looked further into winter adaptations that animals use to survive through dress-up play and stories. Meanwhile the first graders started out by exploring the nature trail behind their school using a map and engaging with the space through their five senses. They later walked the nature trail to dive deeper into their understanding of wildlife by meeting our (taxidermy) black bear out on the trail and identifying tracks and scat in the forest. Belmont second graders looked deeper into how natural materials can be used as a waterproof and insulated structure whether for people or wildlife and built their own natural creations to test. The third graders explored the fascinating world of pollinators, searching for signs of them and modelling pollination through an activity using chalk dust to represent pollen. In their next program, they discussed the impacts of wind and learned to use the Beaufort scale, determining wind speed and intensity throughout the property.

Finally, the fourth graders revisited what they had learned from planting the previous year's corn crop. Using Abenaki flint corn, they hand-ground it into cornmeal and then had the opportunity to taste freshly baked cornbread made from the same heirloom variety. In their next programs, fourth graders either learned about energy by designing their own paper windmills or learning to use a drop spindle to spin yarn from wool, which explores potential and kinetic energy!



Gilford Elementary School

Kindergarteners were introduced to the term adaptation and explored a wide variety of (taxidermy) animals out on the nature trail and practiced observing the animals' adaptations. Meanwhile the first graders dug into exploring the incredible world of trees! They learned how to differentiate between broadleaf trees (deciduous) and evergreen trees (coniferous) and made leaf rubbings of their favorite leaves. Gilford second graders learned about how plants rely on animals to disperse their seeds far and wide and tested this using felt to see if seeds would come off of the plants and onto their "fur." Kindergarteners, first graders, and second graders also all had a chance to meet our resident box turtle named Bucky, who came with Mary to visit them at school! They discussed the various adaptations they noticed and were able to gently touch her shell. The third graders focused more on how humans use the land both in past and present. They explored and handled a variety of indigenous tools and practiced throwing the darts of atlatls (an ancient hunting tool). In their next program, they explored the nature trail and identified a variety of natural resources people can use from nature including edible plants and plants for shelter and then created their own miniature shelter. Second and third graders also each had programs in which they learned about how animals need energy for the winter and made natural wildlife feeders using pinecones, seeds, fruit, and popcorn.

Naturalist in the Classroom

Since 2001, Prescott Farm's team of environmental educators have connected students and teachers to their communities and the natural environment, integrates curriculum requirements into lesson plans for hands-on, place-based learning and facilitate an enhanced understanding and respect for nature, natural systems, natural history of the area, and the adoption of environmental stewardship practices.

Know a school that needs this program?
Contact Phoebe Hartvigsen, Camp & School-Age Programs Director at phartvigsen@prescottfarm.org or (603)366-5695

The fourth graders dove into the history of the landscape and the impact of both man-made and natural forces as they explored the nature trail and searched for signs of change. In their next program, they learned about the skeletal system, observing skeletons and designing their own model joint with wooden blocks.



Inter-Lakes Elementary School

Kindergarteners explored the forest trail to learn about the autumn season, doing leaf rubbings and playing games. First graders learned how to differentiate between broadleaf trees (deciduous) and evergreen trees (coniferous). Second graders learned about how plants rely on animals to disperse their seeds far and wide and tested this using felt to see if seeds would come off of the plants and onto their “fur.” First and second graders also all had a chance to meet our resident box turtle named Bucky, who came with Mary to visit them at school! They discussed the various adaptations they noticed and were able to gently touch her shell. Third graders explored how seeds are dispersed to help plants spread. In their next lesson made a compass out of a magnetized sewing needle and then practiced orienteering.

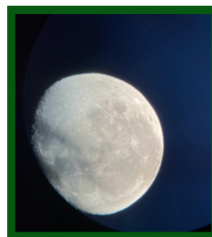
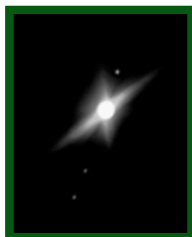
Fourth graders learned about indigenous crops, ground Abenaki corn into cornmeal, made cornmeal pancakes, and then tasted them with Prescott Farm maple syrup! In their next program, they made cordage from natural plant fibers, twisting them into rope.



Gilmanton School

Gilmanton School hosted a Skywatch with the NH Astronomical Society coordinated by environmental educator Ashleigh Roberts and Mrs. Hollingsworth. Students came in the evening with their families and, using telescopes and sometimes just their eyes, students were able to see all kinds of celestial objects including planets, star clusters, and the moon! This was an exciting and fun opportunity for the school to come together and discover the wonders of astronomy.

For their in-school programs, all of the students went outside on their nature trail and explored their environment. Kindergarteners learned about winter animal adaptations, first graders explored the Earth’s rotation and spiders, third graders practiced using a compass, fourth graders used nature journaling to study plants, fifth graders did a stream study, sixth graders became archeologists, and seventh graders dove into wilderness survival strategies.



About Us

Prescott Farm is a nonprofit dedicated to environmental education and preservation. We provide year-round environmental education programs for all ages, and we are a place in the Lakes Region that encourages curiosity, discovery, fun and connection to the natural world.

Founded in 1997 as Prescott Conservancy, Inc., Prescott Farm has helped build appreciation for nature and concern for the environment in thousands of program participants. We offer a wide range of programs designed to preserve and pass down knowledge and skills that encourage understanding of the natural systems that sustain us. Programs include: Naturalist in the Classroom, Field Trips, WildQuest Camps, Community Connection Programs, Fledglings Nature-Based Pre-School, and volunteer opportunities.

Meet Our Team

Phoebe Hartvigsen

Camp & School-Age Programs Director



Phoebe grew up as an avid animal lover in a small town in western New York. She earned a B.S. in Biology from SUNY Geneseo and has since worked as an educator at a variety of nature centers across the country. Phoebe is passionate about helping people of all ages and backgrounds have positive experiences in nature and with wildlife. When she’s not at work, Phoebe enjoys hiking, reading, crafting, drinking tea, and hanging out with her cat June Bug.

Ashleigh Roberts

Environmental Educator (Belmont & Gilmanton)

Originally from Ohio, Ashleigh began teaching outdoors as a camp counselor while earning a BA in Middle Childhood Education from Ohio Northern University. She also holds an



MA in Education from Muskingum University. She has worked across the United States as an outdoor/environmental educator from Virginia to California. Ashleigh enjoys hiking—with lots of stops to enjoy the tiny things, being curious, and learning about how people relate to the outdoors.

Mary Doyle

Environmental Educator (Gilford & Inter-Lakes)



Mary holds English, Psychology, and Secondary Education degrees from Alma College and Central Michigan University and an M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction from Plymouth State University. She has worked as a classroom teacher and an environmental educator in public and private schools and nonprofit orgs. She is also a NH certified ELA teacher. Mary lives on an old farm with her husband John and daughter Joanna. She loves to garden, cross country ski, listen to the birds, practice qigong, and discover nature’s stories.

Visit us at Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center!

- Nature arts & crafts
- Naturalist-led walks
- School break camps
- Gardening programs
- Candle-making workshops
- Homeschool series
- Cooking classes
- Snowshoe rentals
- Tadpoles & Polliwogs for preschoolers

Programs
for All Ages!



Natural Playscape & Trails Open All Year!

Our trails are open daily from dawn to dusk, year-round. 5 trails to choose from that wind through forests, fields, our sugar bush, vernal pools, and a pond.

You can climb, “cook” and create in our Natural Playscape, a unique playground that lets children exercise their bodies and imaginations!

Prescott Farm Harvest Festival

Saturday September 13, 2025 10am - 3pm

The Harvest Festival is our most popular family event of the year, drawing over 500 people of all ages to our property for a day of fun on the farm. Admission is *free!*

Featured activities at the Harvest Festival include horse- and tractor-drawn wagon rides, petting farm, outdoor family yoga, ukulele singalongs, field games, a hay jump, natural crafts, nature-based stories and activities, live music, colonial trades fair, and food by Beans and Greens Farm and the Gray Train! PLUS – Alice in Wonderland characters by Powerhouse Theatre Collaborative, and the Puckerbrush Band! Guests can also enjoy Prescott Farm’s 160-acre property at their own pace, including 3 miles of hiking trails, a natural PlayScape, and heirloom gardens for all to enjoy.

Free!

