

A photograph of the Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center, featuring a large white building with a grey roof and a smaller wooden building with a green roof, surrounded by lush green trees and a grassy field.

Prescott Farm
Environmental Education Center

NATURALIST IN THE CLASSROOM NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024

Nature Connections in All Seasons

Dear Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and Friends,

Welcome to our latest edition of the Naturalist in the Classroom newsletter! We're thrilled to share the incredible adventures and discoveries our students have experienced this year.

The Naturalist in the Classroom program offers a range of immersive, 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 holistic 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. Research shows that these hands-on, nature-based activities instill a lifelong respect for the environment in young learners.

Here are a few snapshots of the enriching experiences our students have had this year, reflecting a total of over 800 hours of nature education, which includes planning, travel, and administration time. We can't wait to continue these exciting programs and look forward to many more adventures in nature. Stay tuned for more updates and stories from our Naturalist in the Classroom programs!

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

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Wellens".

Chris Wellens
Camp & School Age Programs Director
cwellens@prescottfarm.org

- 6 school districts
- 2 dedicated Environmental Educators
- 452 hours of student engagement
- 528 classroom visits

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

www.prescottfarm.org



Program Highlights AT CURRENT NIC SCHOOLS

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.

Naturalist in the Classroom Program

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 NIC? Contact Chris Wellens, Camp & School Age Programs Director at cwellens@prescottfarm.org or (603)366-5695

Belmont Elementary School

Kindergarten students engaged in outdoor lessons that immersed them in nature. They observed the changing seasons, explored pumpkin life cycles, and learned about animal behavior in cold weather. Winter activities included a snowshoe walk to identify animal tracks and a maple sugaring lesson. For Earth Day, students sorted trash and made seed paper from recycled materials.

First grade lessons began with mapping the five senses on the nature trail, learning about animal behavior and adaptation through activities like "Bear on the Nature Trail," and studying New Hampshire mammals. Winter lessons included tracking animals by their prints and patterns, while spring featured another visit from Bucky the Box Turtle. Finally, students explored seed dispersal by designing and testing wind-dispersed seeds, integrating creativity with scientific observation.



Gilford Elementary School

The kindergarten program included explorations of animal adaptations by examining animal pelts and tracks, learning about the life of an Eastern Box Turtle by meeting Prescott Farm's live turtle, Bucky, understanding the principles of sled physics by experiencing gravity and friction through sledding, and learning about stream ecology by investigating stream macroinvertebrates—providing students a concrete understanding of the natural world. Activities in the 1st grade included tree tag games and bark rubbings to learn how to identify trees, exploring stream life and stream insects to understand the interconnectedness of stream ecosystems, studying animal tracks, and meeting Bucky the turtle for a tactile learning experience about reptile adaptations and the unique characteristics of turtles. Second graders focused on the relationship between seeds and how animals help in seed dispersal, properties of matter, a scavenger hunt that taught about the impact of natural forces on the landscape, and building structures to test erosion. Activities like making cordage from cattail leaves and examining lichens deepened their understanding



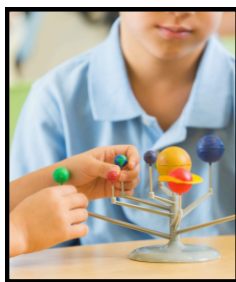
Inter-Lakes Elementary School

Kindergarten students explored seasonal changes through autumn walks, winter tracking, and spring stream exploration while identifying tree species, playing nature-themed games, and experimenting with physics principles; both indoors and outdoors.

First and second graders engaged in practical exercises like planting flower bulbs and examining compost samples. Their explorations extended to tracking animals and pond studies, where they observed and documented local wildlife. These activities illustrated the interconnectedness of ecosystems and the role of living organisms within them. Upper grades explored advanced studies such as orienteering skills, roller coaster physics—testing roller coaster models to learn about forces—and understanding Native American tools and foods, providing cultural and historical context, enriching their understanding of local natural resources and sustainability practices.

Loudon Elementary School

Kindergarten and 1st grade students observed Prescott Farm's Bucky the turtle's shell's camouflage and created their own, explored animal preparations for winter, learned about den-building and foraging, and used their five senses to explore the forest. During the solar eclipse, students made pinhole viewers and used solar glasses to observe the solar eclipse safely.



Second grade students studied individual tree characteristics and sunlight preferences, studied beaver adaptations, and engaged in an insulation design challenge to protect model squirrels. Third graders investigated plant trait selection, practiced using compasses, dissected owl pellets, and navigated a compass course to uncover animal adaptations. Fourth grade students examined forest plants and erosion, created windmills, and explored nature with personalized walks. Fifth graders focused on decomposers, water quality, and survival in space, culminating in a Solar System Scale Model Walk to grasp planetary distances.

Gilmanton School

In our "Bear on the Nature Trail" program, students observed and listened for animals signaling the arrival of spring. They practiced bear safety protocols and examined the bear's adaptations, learning about its life cycle, diet, and winter den preparation. Students observed shadows and documented moon phases using models.



They also discussed various sky patterns and their effects on Earth, enhancing their understanding of celestial movements and their impacts. In our "Fill the Bill" program, students conducted an outdoor experiment to understand bird beak adaptations. Using utensils as beak models, they discovered which beak worked best with different food types. The lesson concluded with a discussion on other bird adaptations, highlighting the diversity and functionality of avian features.

Meet Our Team

Chris Wellens

Camp & School Age Programs Director



Chris earned a BA in International Studies from Northern Michigan University. Since moving to New England in 2011, he has worked at various camps and environmental non-profits in roles including program instructor, wilderness trip leader, environmental educator, nature director, farm camp director, botanical garden director of education, and residential camp director. He is also an avid gardener, beekeeper, food preserver, traveler, hiker, and cross-country skier.

Ashleigh Roberts

**Environmental Educator
(Belmont, Gilmanton, Loudon)**

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, Sanbornton)**



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.

COMING UP AT PRESCOTT FARM

**There is something to do,
for every level, at Prescott Farm!**

- Gardening classes
- Soapmaking workshops
- Naturalist-led hikes
- Nature-based Preschool
- Wilderness skills
- Summer & break camps
- Moonlit hikes
- Cooking classes
- Harvest Festival (Sept.)
- Rent a pair of snowshoes (winter)
- Natural Playscape

•And so much more!

Prescott Farm's Harvest Festival 2024!

September 14th 10 am - 3 pm

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 Gravy 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.



Natural Playscape & 3+ Miles of 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 your children exercise their bodies and imaginations!

Contact Us

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Find us on  