

# Naturalist in the Classroom

NEWSLETTER—Issue #1

January 2018

## Welcome!

Dear Teachers, Administrators, Parents and Friends,

The 2017-2018 school year is off to a great start! This year brings some exciting changes: new staff, a program newsletter, and expansion of the Naturalist in the Classroom (NIC) program to more schools.

First and foremost, we are excited to welcome two new educators to our team: Kate Banyas and Andie Hession. Both are enthusiastic and talented teachers and we're sure you'll find them to be a joy to work with. You can read more about each of them on the following pages.

Secondly, this newsletter is something that we haven't done before. We intend to publish a seasonal update of the work that we are doing in the schools and circulate it amongst all of our schools and in the wider community. It is our hope to inspire new ideas and more of a sense of community amongst our participating schools.

Finally, expansion. Our NIC program is now in its 14th year! We began in Gilmanton in 2004, Belmont in 2005, Inter-Lakes in 2015 and this year we are actively working to expand our program to other school districts. Please feel free to send us a testimonial regarding how the NIC program has benefitted your students and school.

Feel free to reach out to me with stories or pictures you'd like to share in upcoming issues of this newsletter, as well as your questions, ideas and suggestions to strengthen our NIC program.

Best,

*Sarah*

Sarah Dunham-Miliotis  
Director of Educational Programs  
[sdunham@prescottfarm.org](mailto:sdunham@prescottfarm.org)



*A first grader at Inter-Lakes dissecting a plant. See pg. 2 for story!*

*"...[Our 7th graders] don't want this unit [survival] to end. When I told them you might be working with us on our environmental unit, they were very excited!"*

*Amber Casale  
7th grade teacher, Gilmanton*



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## About Us

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

Founded in 1997 as Prescott Conservancy, Inc., Prescott Farm has helped awaken 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 an understanding of the natural systems that sustain us all and respect for the environment.

During the summer and school vacation weeks, our environmentally-themed WildQuest Camps offer children ages 4-12 the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow in nature for over 15 years.

Beginning in 2015 our nature-based preschool, Fledglings Pre-school at Prescott Farm, has offers children ages 3 to 5 the educational foundation they need to succeed in school while awakening in each child a natural curiosity and respect for nature which is at the core of every preschool lesson.

Our Naturalist in the Classroom program supports teachers in local schools and provides place-based, hands-on lessons that incorporate the natural world into satisfy curriculum requirements and help keep children engaged and excited about learning throughout the school year.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.prescottfarm.org](http://www.prescottfarm.org)

## Inter-Lakes Elementary

Kate and Mrs. Oliver's first graders got an inside look at how plants work! Plants have lots of parts that help them survive and some of these parts look different on different plants. The program began with a group discussion about parts of a plant and parts of a flower. Students broke into small groups and each group had a different species of plant to dissect. Each group had some tools to help the dissecting process, including scissors, tweezers, and a tray where they could sort their plant parts. We focused on 7 plant parts (roots, stem, seeds, flower petals, buds, and leaves). Students worked together to identify the plant part and sort them accordingly. At the end, each small group got to compare and contrast their plant to the other groups' plants. We made observations using all of our senses (excluding taste!) to describe the differences and similarities in these plants.

Kate also worked with kindergarten on using their senses to make observations; first and second grade on a fall walk looking at similarities and differences and seasonal changes; third grade on using a map & compass; fourth grade on animal adaptations, and with all grades on the school's composting program.



## Belmont Elementary

Andie spent much of late November and December working with kindergarten and first graders on winter animal adaptations ("Coping with Cold"). Students learn that mammals in New Hampshire have four strategies for surviving winter—migration, dormancy, hibernation and staying active. This very popular program allows student volunteers to act as "experts" on one of the four coping mechanisms. For example, the migration expert gets a suitcase, vacation shirt, and ticket south. Andie shared a funny anecdote from the one of the programs she presented: One first grader had been very attentive, polite, and respectful, so I chose him as a volunteer. When he found out he would be given an overlarge bathrobe and pillow to represent a dormant animal in the winter, the loud belly laughs began and did not stop! Almost immediately, the whole class caught the giggles, including the teacher. She was surprised and happy to see her most shy student come out of his shell. The only other time she had seen him this bubbly, engaged, and outgoing, was another outing on the school's nature trail. Engaging with nature brought both joy and new knowledge into the classroom.

Andie also worked with second graders on a Spider Quest and the Winter Solstice; third graders on the rock cycle; and fourth graders on NH archaeology (in partnership with the NH Division of Historical Resources).



# Gilmanton Elementary

Seventh graders in Mrs. Casale's English class read "survival" stories including, *Hatchet*, *Zane and the Hurricane*, and *The Night of the Howling Dogs*. Andie helped students relate to the situations the characters faced with hands-on programs teaching survival skills.

Before the classes went outside on the school nature trail, students learned about the hierarchy of needs in survival situations. Students had the opportunity to build debris shelters (pictured below). If they were lucky enough to be in a survival situation with the supplies, students practiced knot-tying to be prepared to create a rope and tarp shelter. At the Cogswell Mountain Conservation Area across from the school, students practiced fire building skills and safety, and accepted the "one match challenge" to build a fire only using one match.

Andie also secured a donation through the American Heart Association of New Hampshire (sponsored by Anthem) of 45 Hands-Only CPR kits. Each of these kits includes a personal mini CPR manikin and training materials. The school nurse will facilitate training the students in Hands-Only CPR, an important survival skill in and out of the wilderness.

Other Gilmanton students have enjoyed working with Andie this fall as well. First graders went on a Turkey Quest, fifth graders conducted an ecological species richness test, and third graders are learning about long term patterns and recording weekly weather reports to understand climate. In addition, fourth graders have investigated signs of erosion in the schoolyard and nature trail to gather evidence that landscape changes happen over time due to earth forces and human impacts and then experimented with engineering their own erosion control solutions.



**If there is a particular Naturalist in the Classroom program you'd like to see featured in an upcoming edition of our Newsletter, please contact Sarah Dunham-Miliotis at [sdunham@prescottfarm.org](mailto:sdunham@prescottfarm.org). Thanks!**

## Meet Our New Educators

### Kate Banyas

(Inter-Lakes)  
*Camp Director & Environmental Educator*

Kate started at Prescott Farm in September 2017. Native to New Hampshire, Kate spent her childhood exploring the great outdoors and attending summer camp. She graduated from Sterling College in VT with a B.A. in Natural History Education and also graduated from Lesley University with a M.S. in Ecological Teaching and Learning. Kate has a combined 12 years of experience working at summer camps, with 6 years working at traditional camps and 6 years working at science and nature themed camps. In her spare time Kate loves bird watching, hiking, camping, skiing, snowshoeing, traveling, kayaking, fiber arts, and gardening.

Contact Kate at [kbanyas@prescottfarm.org](mailto:kbanyas@prescottfarm.org)



### Andie Hession

(Belmont & Gilmanton)  
*Environmental Educator*

Andie started with Prescott Farm in October 2017. She graduated from George Washington University in Washington, DC with a B.S. in Public Health, where she became interested in the connections between food, the environment, and health. She spent two years as a FoodCorps service member in rural Arkansas where she managed a school garden and taught food and garden-based lessons to students of all ages. She has since returned to her native New England to continue working in outdoor education. Andie enjoys hikes with her dog, kayaking, gardening and cooking with veggies, and is always looking for new ways to engage in New Hampshire's great outdoors.

Contact Andie at [ahession@prescottfarm.org](mailto:ahession@prescottfarm.org)



# Coming up at Prescott Farm...

In addition to the Naturalist in the Classroom program, Prescott Farm offers a variety of onsite environmental education programs for all ages and 160 acres with approximately 3 miles of trails. For program descriptions, fees and online registration please visit us at [www.prescottfarm.org](http://www.prescottfarm.org).

## WildQuest Winter Camp

KIDS

Monday-Friday, February 26-March 2; 9:00-4:00; Ages 5-12

## Moonlit Walks

ADULTS

Wednesday, January 31 and Thursday, March 1; 6:00-7:30pm

## Our Big Backyard Series

FAMILIES

Animal Tracking— Saturdays, February 3 & 17; 1:00-3:00pm

Winter Birds—Saturday, February. 10; 1:00-3:00pm

Life Under the Snow— Saturdays, Jan. 27 & Feb. 24; 1:00-3:00pm

The Big Night for Amphibians—Sunday, March 25; 1:00-3:00pm

## Snowshoe Adventures

ADULTS

Saturdays in January & February; 10:00am-12:00pm

## March—Maple Syrup Season!

FAMILIES

Saturdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31; 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00 or 2:00

Weekdays with reservations for school and youth groups.

## Contact Us

### Prescott Farm

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(603) 366-5695

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Visit us on the web at  
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