

# Naturalist in the Classroom

NEWSLETTER—Issue #2

May 2018

## Happy Spring!

Dear Teachers, Administrators, Parents and Friends,

Finally (finally!!) the snow is gone, green shoots are poking up, there's plenty of mud to stomp in, and a chorus of spring birds can be heard in the forests and fields!

As you'll read, all three schools did a lot of animal tracking over the winter; we were lucky to have plenty of snow to explore animal activity. Pine cone and acorn debris, scat, and tracks let us know that squirrels, deer, turkey, and foxes made the nature trails part of their winter homes, and melting-out tunnels showed us where voles, shrews and mice tunneled through the subnivean layer to stay warm. These discoveries helped students make connections to the critters that are active in winter in their own backyards, and enhanced what they learned in the classroom.

But tracking wasn't all we did! Belmont 4th graders learned about NH archaeology and Gilmanton 5th graders went on a unique Winter Grammar Quest, among other things. And the school year isn't over yet—April, May and June will bring many more exciting activities including field trips to Prescott Farm from Gilmanton and Belmont. We'll send a final newsletter in June with all the details.

As always, 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,

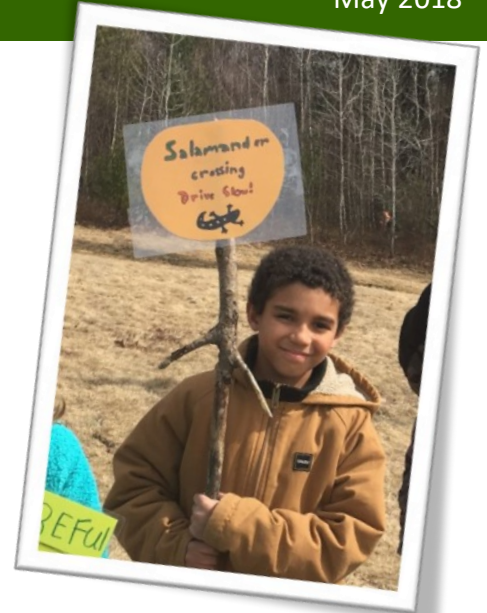
*Sarah*

Sarah Dunham-Miliotis  
Director of Educational Programs  
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**JOIN US FOR  
WILDQUEST SUMMER CAMP!**

9 wks: June 25-Aug. 24; Ages 4-14

Registration now open!  
[www.prescottfarm.org](http://www.prescottfarm.org)



A Gilmanton 3rd grader shares his "salamander crossing" sign (see pg. 3)!

*"The Naturalist in the Classroom program helps students to develop as naturalists. It also brings their learning into a greater, more meaningful context. It allows them to be exposed to something that they may not otherwise be a part of, and it allows them the opportunity to grow as observers of the world around them."*

Katie Bass  
5th Grade Teacher, Gilmanton School



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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.

Since 2015 our nature-based preschool, Fledglings Preschool at Prescott Farm, has offered 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

There was a lot of animal tracking at Inter-Lakes this winter! Kindergarten and first grade classes learned about animal adaptations for surviving the winter— how some animals migrate or hibernate, and that other animals are dormant or active. We learned about what animals we might find when we go out on our winter nature walks. Kindergarten got to use snowshoes as we trekked along the trails and looked for evidence that animals are active in winter. We searched for animal tracks, nibbled pinecones and twigs, tunnels and holes in the snow, animal homes, feathers, and more. We discovered that there are a lot of animals that are active on the trails at Inter-Lakes!

Third grade classes put on their detective hats and learned all about animal evidence and the clues we can look for to know if animals have been here. When we went to the Inter-Lakes trails, we discovered lots of evidence of hungry squirrels, feathers from turkeys, and even bobcat tracks in the snow! Third graders learned how some of this evidence can tell us a story of what the animals were up to as they interpreted animal track stories.



## Belmont Elementary

BES students learned how to be animal track detectives! Earlier this year, we learned which animals we expected to see in our forests working hard to survive and who we would not see while some species avoid the cold by sleeping or leaving NH. Students put themselves in the “shoes” of our active animals by learning how different animals move through the snow. Second grade imagined life as a squirrel in winter. Students learned different strategies squirrels use to collect and store food for the winter. Each student received a single “acorn” (film canister containing one bean) to hide near the entrance of the nature trail. After a trail investigation, students were challenged to find any “acorn,” not necessarily their own. Many “squirrels” had their acorn stolen and a few were just plain lost! Students experienced the challenges and opportunities that animals face finding sources of energy in the winter.

As part of their unit on Native Americans, fourth graders learned about archaeology and NH pre-history. Working in partnership with the NH State Archaeologist and the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR), Prescott Farm’s Director of Educational Programs, Sarah, visited Belmont and presented a slideshow about how archaeologists conduct their research as well as some of what has been learned over the last few decades about how the native people of NH lived here over the last 11,000 years or so! Finally, students had the opportunity to handle real artifacts on loan from the NHDHR and theorize what they were used for.





# Gilmanton Elementary

It was a busy winter at Gilmanton School! Students across grade levels experienced winter hikes and snowshoe adventures to investigate the school's nature trail and the Cogswell Mountain Conservation Area. One lucky group found fox scat!

In mid-February, 5<sup>th</sup> graders completed a special Winter Grammar Quest (something we haven't done before!) which tied together students' work in both science and literacy. Students were challenged to think creatively to observe and infer signs of animal activity in winter. They applied various parts of speech to communicate their observations from the nature trail: nouns, adjectives, prepositions, transition words, interjections, conjunctions. To practice **adjectives**, groups were given the outline for an acrostic poem (Signs of Winter), and filled in each line with at least one adjective to describe the landscape that surrounded them. At the **interjection** station, students created a skit imagining a scene that might occur between a fox and mouse (see picture below!). They created sentences using **transition words** and **prepositions** to describe the path of a laminated chickadee across the trail. Groups used **conjunctions** to link markers left out in pairs (for "vole" and "snow," they could create: "The vole is active in the winter, for it tunnels through the snow"). If groups completed an activity before it was time to switch stations, they listed as many different **nouns** as they could find and sorted each into biotic and abiotic factors.



Even as we enjoyed all of this winter excitement, we are looking forward to spring! Third grade learned about the "Big Night" migration for amphibians such as spotted salamanders and wood frogs and made signs to alert cars to slow down. Be on the lookout for warm, rainy spring days when the rain persists into the night. You might see spotted salamanders, spring peepers, wood frogs and other amphibian species slithering and hopping to their vernal pool breeding grounds!

**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 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 more upcoming programs, descriptions, fees and online registration please visit us at [www.prescottfarm.org](http://www.prescottfarm.org).

**FAMILIES** **Spring Polliwogs Series** – Wednesdays, May 2-June 6, 10:30-12:00; Ages 3-5

**ADULTS** **Eyes on Migrants** – Saturdays, May 5 & 12; 8:00-10:00am

**ADULTS** **Woods Walk with an Herbalist**—Saturday, May 5; 10:00-12:00

**ADULTS** **Introduction to Organic Gardening**—Saturdays, May 5-June 9; 10:00-12:00

**ADULTS** **The Art of Aromatherapy**—Saturday, May 12; 10:00-12:00

**FAMILIES** **Our Big Backyard: Beginner Birders** – Saturday, May 19; 10:00-11:30

**FAMILIES** **Our Big Backyard: Spring at the Pond** – Saturday, May 26; 10:00-11:30

**ADULTS** **Herbal Spa Treatments**—Saturday, June 2; 10:00-12:00

**FAMILIES** **Our Big Backyard: Dragonflies**—Saturday, June 9; 10:00-11:30

**ADULTS** **Making Natural Baskets**—Saturday, June 9; 10:00-12:00

## Contact Us

### Prescott Farm

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(603) 366-5695

[info@prescottfarm.org](mailto:info@prescottfarm.org)

Visit us on the web at  
[www.prescottfarm.org](http://www.prescottfarm.org)



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Environmental Education Center

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