

Naturalist in the Classroom

NEWSLETTER—Issue #5

November 2019

Transitions

Dear Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and Friends,

This time of year feels like a period of quick transitions— summer break to the new school year, the colorful change of the leaves, and the first sudden cold snap that always feels like we skipped autumn. At Prescott Farm our favorite transition of the season is returning to local schools to explore and learn with students.

In these few short months, students at Grantham have dissected tomatoes and learned to identify leaves. Inter-Lakes students have completed orienteering courses, explored the compost pile, and buzzed about pollinators. Belmont classes that accomplished a “good hallway behavior challenge” were rewarded with a visit from Prescott Farm’s resident turtle ambassador, Bucky. The nature trail at Gilmanton has been busy with students measuring wind speed, observing fruits of different wild plants, uncovering camouflaged critters, and completing quests.

Inside these pages, discover more details about some of these adventures, and ask us (or your favorite student) to find out about the rest.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with stories or pictures you would like to share in upcoming issues of this newsletter, as well as your questions, ideas and suggestions to strengthen our Naturalist in the Classroom program.

Best,

Andie Hession

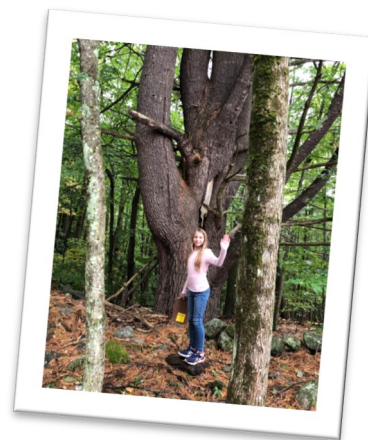
Andie Hession
School & Community Programs
Director
ahession@prescottfarm.org

Funding Available!

New Hampshire Environmental Educators (NHEE) has a grant available to sponsor transportation costs for an environmentally-focused field trip.

Find out more at nhee.org.

Book a Prescott Farm field trip!



A Gilmanton 5th grader finds a “Wolf Tree” at her school. Just a few weeks later, she searched for Wolf Trees on a field trip to Prescott Farm.



Grantham second graders are challenged to match a fallen leaf to the tree it grew on.



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Meet Our Team



Andie Hession
School & Community
Programs Director,
ahession@prescottfarm.org
(Grantham)

Andie started with Prescott Farm in October 2017. She graduated with a B.S. in Public Health from George

Washington University in Washington, DC. Andie worked with several environmental education programs in Arkansas and across New England before joining the team at Prescott Farm. Andie enjoys hikes with her dog, gardening and cooking with the veggies, and exploring New Hampshire's great outdoors.



Jake Newcomb
Camp Director,
jnewcomb@prescottfarm.org
(Inter-Lakes)

Jake received his B.A. in History with a secondary education minor from UMaine Orono and holds a

Maine teaching certificate. He worked for all three 4-H camps in Maine before joining the team at Prescott Farm in July 2018. Jake enjoys all things outdoors – including hiking, camping, backpacking and canoeing – when he is not at home with his cats Chloe and Mabel, as well as occasional foster kittens.



Alex Dyer
Environmental Educator
adyer@prescottfarm.org
(Belmont, Gilmanton)

Alex joined Prescott Farm as our newest Environmental Educator in May

2019. She received her B.S. in Biology from the University of Maine. At Prescott Farm, Alex hopes to bring her science and conservation background to the community while she pursues her M.S. in Sustainable Natural Resource Management. In her free time, she can be found mountain biking at Bear Brook State Park or red-lining the White Mountain National Forest.

Belmont Elementary

Belmont 2nd and 3rd graders were introduced to the scientific method using something they were already familiar with: seeds! Students discussed what they already know about seeds, used their observation skills to describe the differences between seeds such as an acorn, pine cone, walnut, milkweed seed, and more, then walked the trails to continue to use their observation skills.

On the trail, we covered the steps in the scientific method: question, research, hypothesis, experiment, and conclusion. Students split into three teams, Team Acorn, Team Samara, and Team Milkweed Seed. The question was asked, "Will your seed float in water?" Students were then required to discuss as a group what their hypothesis was and why. Then comes the fun part... experiment! Was their hypothesis correct? It was up to them to decide! Could they come to a conclusion? Or do we need more data?



Belmont students search for seeds on the Tiger Trail with Ms. Alex.

Gilmanton School

Since breaking ground last year, the dedicated staff, students, and community of Gilmanton are making great progress to transform a courtyard into an outdoor classroom space. This fall, Naturalist Alex is assisting with the effort, educating about different components and working with students to build community and connection to the space that they will share for years to come.



Gilmanton students hard at work to form a gravel path to a new learning center.

This is truly a team effort. Members of Green Club built rock rings around newly planted trees, which 3rd graders from Ms. Perrin and Ms. Friend's classes helped fill in with mulch. Students also bucket brigaded small stones to the path for the gazebo and mulched around plants and trees that were added to the space last year, to prepare them for winter. The excitement and energy that these students displayed with these tasks was phenomenal. They cannot wait to use the space for more outdoor educational opportunities. Ms. Alex cannot wait either!

Grantham Village School

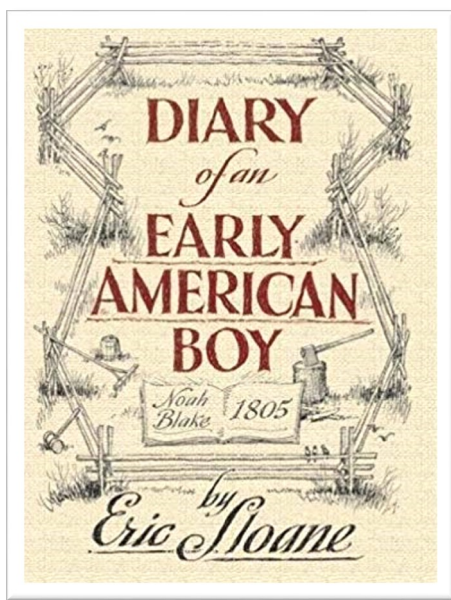
This school year 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders at Grantham Village School will learn and explore with Naturalist in the Classroom. In their first meeting with Ms. Andie, fourth graders applied the five step “Learning to Look” framework, that students used in third grade to observe art, to make observations in nature. We followed the five steps: close observation, preliminary analysis, research, interpretation, critical assessment and response.

Seated in a circle on the forest floor, students looked down at the mass of shapes and colors, then shared preliminary observations. Step one encourages students to focus closely to examine details, so students then placed a circle of yarn on the ground in front of them. What did they notice now? Did they see anything they had missed the first time they looked? Twigs, soil, differently shaped leaves, and insects appeared. They repeated the process while looking at the sky above them. While following the remaining steps in this guided strategy of making observations, students made connections to the natural world and reinforced classroom processes. Fourth graders will use these observation skills again as they begin nature sketching and journaling with Ms. Andie throughout the year.

Inter-Lakes Elementary

In social studies, 5th graders are reading Eric Sloane’s *Diary of an Early American Boy*, about the day-to-day projects of a family from 1805. With Mr. Jake and Mr. Reidy, students will emulate how this family accomplished several technical marvels with simple tools, a lot of ingenuity, and hard work through a season-long project based engineering design challenge. They will design on paper, revise, and finally use hand tools to construct a 3-legged stool of fresh harvested white pine without screws or fasteners. Look out for the stools on display later this winter.

Jake taught second graders about tree science and identification before a field trip to hike Rattlesnake mountain. One highlight of this lesson was the classic activity, “Meet a Tree.” In pairs, one blindfolded student is led to a tree by their partner. This student must use their remaining senses to touch, smell, and investigate the tree. After returning to the starting point, they must identify the tree that they “met.” Bonus points if they can tell us what species the tree is!



Naturalist in the Classroom makes connections with social studies and literature.

Explore at home!

Learners of all ages benefit from strong connections with the natural world. Not sure how to get started? Try these fun and engaging activities:

Tree Silhouettes

Play this version of charades in an area with a variety of tree species. Have one person shape their body to copy on of the species. Keep guessing until someone has identified this new “tree” in the forest!

Bird Calling

There are many online databases with common bird calls. Learn a few, then head out to the forest to “talk” to the birds. Don’t be surprised when you get a response. Start with the chickadee or try a sequence of “pssh... pssh... pssh-pssh... pssh...” to attract a variety of birds.

Shelter Building

Want a way to spend hours in the woods? Find a support tree with a “V” shape, prop a long, sturdy branch against it, and build out cover. Be sure to “Leave No Trace” and only use dead (nothing green), down (on the ground), and detached (already broken) materials.

History in the Forest

You can learn a lot about historical use of land with a few clues. A rock wall might mark a farmer’s field or a neighbor’s property boundary. Or, search for a “Wolf Tree.” At one point in time, these trees were the only ones standing in an area and used the space to grow and grow. These awe-inspiring trees are identified by: a large trunk; surrounded by smaller trees; signs of age; signs of wildlife use; and multiple, low, large branches.

Try a new trail.

We have 3 miles at Prescott Farm to choose from! See the sugar house, pond, or gardens. Visit our website for a trail map.

Inspiration from: Prescott Farm educators;
Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Cornell;
Seeking the Wolf Tree by Natalie Cleavitt and Marjorie Leggitt.

Do you know a school that needs *Naturalist in the Classroom?*

We are always looking to expand the program into more Lakes Region schools. Since 2001 Prescott Farm's team of Naturalists and Environmental Educators have connected students and teachers to their communities and the natural environment. The staff works directly with teachers to integrate curriculum requirements into lesson plans that utilize the resources at hand. These lessons create opportunities for hands-on, placed-based learning and facilitate an enhanced understanding and respect for nature, natural systems, the natural history of the area, and the adoption of environmental stewardship practices.

Contact Andie Hession, School & Community Programs Director at:

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(603)366-5695 ext. 304.

Up Next at Prescott Farm: Community Connection Programs

DECEMBER

6	Friday	6-8 pm	Soapmaking for the Holidays [ADULTS]
7	Saturday	10-12 pm	Foodcrafting for the Holidays [ADULTS]
7	Saturday	1-3 pm	Nature-Inspired Wreaths [ADULTS]
14	Saturday	10-11:30 am	Our Big Backyard: Gifts of the Night Tree [FAMILIES]
14	Saturday	10-12 pm	Soapmaking for the Holidays [ADULTS]
14	Saturday	1-3 pm	Nature-Inspired Holiday Ornaments [FAMILIES]
21	Saturday	3-5 pm	Winter Solstice Celebration [MEMBERS-ONLY]

Check our website for the **NEW 2020 Nature Connect 365 Program Guide**—
featuring our annual **Community Connections** calendar. Coming soon!

WildQuest Camps

Register online beginning in January.

Winter & Spring Vacation Camps

February 24-28, 2020
April 17-May 1, 2020

*For campers age 6-12.
Available by the day
or for entire week.*

Summer Camp

8 nature-themed weeks
June 29-August 28, 2020

*For campers aged 4-14, including half-day programs
for our youngest campers and a Leadership in
Training (LIT) Program for campers age 13-14 during
selected weeks.*

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.

For more information:

Contact Us

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Visit us on the web at
www.prescottfarm.org

