

NATURALIST IN THE CLASSROOM NEWSLETTER

FALL 2023

Nature Connections in All Seasons

When summer break ends and the cool fall weather arrives, many people choose to move indoors. Thanks to the team of Prescott Farm environmental educators, many New Hampshire youth are learning ways to interact with the outdoors all year long! Perhaps they are exploring the sights, smells, textures, sounds, and tastes of fall. Or, they could be getting their hands dirty by planting bulbs that will emerge in the spring. Maybe they're creating models that mimic animal shelters. In every instance, they are learning how to dress themselves in all weather conditions. Students at Naturalist in the Classroom (NIC) schools have been learning how to thrive in all seasons while learning how our native flora and fauna have adapted to live here.

The 2022-2023 school year was our most engaging NIC year-to-date with more schools and students than ever before involved.

- 452 hours of student engagement
- 528 classroom visits (average of 5 visits per class)
- 7,862 student contacts
- 6 school districts
- 2 dedicated Environmental Educators

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,



Chris Wellens

Camp & School Age Programs Director

cwellens@prescottfarm.org

**Welcome Sanbornton Central School
as our newest NIC partner school!**

**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

Belmont Elementary students have been using their five senses and making good use of our warm fall weather. Kindergarten classes organized a collection of colorful leaves and dissected some pine cones to find seeds inside.

One class was surprised by a flock of turkeys!

The 1st grade classes used a map to explore the nature trail, marking the smells, sights, sounds, and feels of autumn (and the taste of maple syrup from this past spring's maple harvest). Second grade students experimented with natural materials that would make a structure waterproof. The 3rd grade students were turned into pollinators with each student representing a bee trait used to gather pollen before observing several bumblebees and other species of bees pollinating flowers around the schoolyard.

Gilford Elementary School

After getting to meet Prescott Farm's taxidermy bear, fox, bobcat and fisher, Kindergarten students explored their nature trail looking for signs of animals. First grade focused their attention on getting to know the various species of coniferous and deciduous trees that thrive at



their school by playing a game of tree tag. Having learned about animals and plants in past NIC programs, 2nd grade investigated how animals and plants help each other, focusing on animal seed dispersal. Third grade is starting to experiment with traditional indigenous practices of using native plants to make tools, such as using cattails to make cordage and mats. Fourth grade is examined their new vermicompost bin as they get ready to turn their food scraps into garden compost with a little help from worms.

NEW Field Trip Opportunities at Prescott Farm for all abilities and levels

 - indicates handicap accessible programs

- Seasonal Discovery Walks (Available all year)
- Tap into Maple (Late February through March)
- Garden Ecology  (Available all year)
- Wild Orienteering (Spring, Summer, Fall)
- Wolf Tree Explorers (Available all year)
- Power of Pollinators  (Spring, Summer, Fall)
- Winter Track Detectives (Winter only)
- Garden to Table  (Available all year)
- Custom Programming Available for other topics




SCAN ME 



Inter-Lakes Elementary School

After a trail game of Owl and Mice, ILES Kindergarten students searched the nature trail for signs of animals getting ready for winter. There is no better time of year to learn about trees than fall when their leaves are full of color and at

easy reach as they drop to the ground. First and 2nd grade made use of this through observations and a couple different games: Tree Tag for 1st grade and Tree ID Bingo for 2nd grade to test their tree ID memory. Third grade collected seeds, finding examples of the various strategies plants use to disperse their seeds far and wide. Fifth grade has focused on the various historical ways cattails have been used for food, medicine, shelter, and tools. After collecting cattails leaves during their walk to Prescott Park, students made coasters with the dried, woven cattail leaves.

Loudon Elementary School

The Prescott Farm bear (taxidermy) visited the Loudon school woods to help 1st grade students learn how bears and other mammals have adapted to survive our winters. Second grade compared the different growth habits of birch, maple,



and hemlock trees by examining their leaves, branching patterns, trunks, and which grew deep in the forest versus on the forest edge. Then they made predictions about how the forest will look in the future, making use of the forest harvest map posted at the trailhead. Third grade theorized what makes a seed beneficial for plants and then tested out those theories by making their own seeds to test. Fourth grade learned about the ways indigenous Abenaki people used trees, including tasting Eastern Hemlock needles. Fifth grade examined a fallen log to observe fungal mycelium and insect holes that are working to decompose it along with a spider and salamander that are using it as their home before it completely turns into soil.



Gilmanton School

The Kindergarten classes at Gilmanton took their first walk on the nature trail while observing the signs of fall and played a game to mimic how squirrels gather acorns to eat during the winter. First grade followed "spider silk" clues on

a Spider Quest to learn about the benefits of these often feared creatures. Third grade has been busy learning the Beaufort wind scale which they will use all school year and were introduced to using a map and compass. Fourth grade took navigation to another level by learning about topographical maps before taking hike at Mount Major. Using "mini-earth" models, the 6th graders explored the impact carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has on temperature. Seventh grade classes received an introduction to survival skills, starting with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in a mock survival scenario.

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



Holiday Workshop for Kids!

Saturday, December 9; 1-3pm

Let your children learn the joy of gift giving with this unique opportunity to make nature-inspired gifts for the adults in their lives. Participants will be offered several options and will select which gift they want to make. We'll provide the materials and instruction while they add their own unique flair! This is a drop-off program (adults must sign children in and out). Pre-registration required at www.PrescottFarm.org.

WildQuest Camp Registration Coming in January!

Prescott Farm's environmentally-focused WildQuest Camps have offered individuals ages 5-16 the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow in nature. WildQuest campers develop ecological awareness through our enriching day camp programs. Teen leadership opportunities are available for ages 13-16. The camp day is spent outdoors taking part in nature activities, animal and plant identification, arts and crafts, cooking, games, and hands-on learning.

Winter Camp: February 26-March 1

Spring Camp: April 22-26

Summer Camp: June 24 – August 23

More details including weekly themes, tuition, scholarship applications, and summer employment opportunities at www.PrescottFarm.org



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  