



SCA New Hampshire Corps Final Hitch Report

The Student Conservation Association in Partnership with Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Coalition

Crew Leaders – Jordan Johnson and Alexandra Ratliff



Introduction:

From June 30 to July 13 a crew of six high school student volunteers and two trained leaders worked on Lincoln Trail to complete stone staircases, water-bars, drainage dips and other trail work.

The Crew:

The crew members included:

1. Evan Brennan-White
2. Saraswoti Dhimal
3. Depika Tamang
4. Mbambi Mbungu
5. Ihab Aged
6. Sam Shain



These students were led and supervised by SCA Crew Leaders Jordan Johnson of Marquette, Michigan and Alexandra Ratliff of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Jordan graduated from Northern Michigan University in 2013 with a degree in Outdoor Recreation Leadership and Management. He has 4 years of experience leading youth in the outdoors as well as experience volunteering for the North Country Trail. Alexandra graduated from Chatham University in 2013 with a B.S. in Environmental Science. She served as a SCA Restoration Management Assistant intern and has had previous experience leading youth.

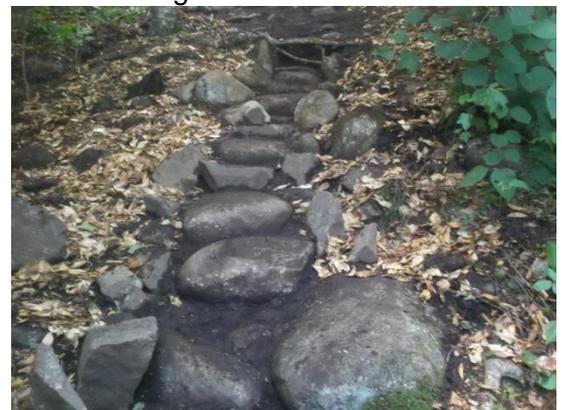
Accomplishments:

During the hitch, the crew completed three stone staircases, set 14 stepping stones, completed 6 drainages, enhanced 2 drainages, put in one rock water bar and cleared one blowdown. The Lincoln Trail is a beautiful trail on the side of Mount Kearsarge that is a bit hidden away from the public. The back-woods feel and challenge of the trail are certainly part of its charm. Like any other New

England trail that ascends toward the top of the Mountain, it was very steep at points and needed improvements to harden and stabilize the trail. As a group, the crew was very deliberate in what they did to minimize site impact. The trail was very steep where they were working; they tried to stay on the beaten path, so to speak, as much as possible. After the project was complete, the crew re-vegetated and naturalized area.

Project Summary:

- 1 rock water bar
- 3 stone staircases
- 14 stepping stones
- 6 drainages
- 2 drainages enhanced
- 1 blowdown cleared
- Total Number of Crew Leader Service Hours: 192
- Total Number of Crew Members: 6 (5 after the first week)
- Total Number of Crew Member Service Hours: 528
- Total Number of Service Hours: 720



Youth Development:

This crew featured a very diverse group of high school members. Members were from various countries as well as varying ages. The crew included one member who was just entering high school and another that was

preparing to start his college experience. Throughout the two weeks, the team came together to form a very cohesive group. They did everything together and loved it. For a few of them, this was their first time away from their family for a night. For others, they were hardened veterans of the hitch experience and were invaluable to help the others learn. During the second recreation day of the hitch, the group was able to see llamas, a Revolutionary War village set up, and a demonstration on a Revolutionary War reproduction musket. By the end of the hitch, the crew members were all very proud of the work they had accomplished, the skills they learned, and the experiences they gained.



Crew Highlights:

The day the crew finished the largest staircase they were working on, the members were so proud of the work they had accomplished. Looking at what had to be done the first day, they all got a little glazed over in the eyes and could not grasp the scope of the project. As they worked day after day on the project and got to see it come together, it was easy to sense the ownership they were taking over it. Many of the crew members started to want everything done not only well, but well to the point where it would last forever. They wanted their stone staircase to be a sort of legacy they left behind. When they finally did finish the staircase and had the chance to take pictures with it, there was nothing but joy and pride to be seen on their faces.

During the first week of hitch, the crew encountered a series of unexpected thunderstorms. One stormy day in particular, the crew reluctantly sought shelter in the van. After many hours of playing riddles and eating a PB&J dinner, they were finally able to step foot out of the van. The sun started to peak through the mist and the members were so excited that they insisted on climbing the fifteen-minute hike to the peak of Kearsarge Mountain. As they climbed and the wind started howling more and more, the anticipation grew until they laid eyes on the fire tower, signaling that they had made it to the top. The members were thrilled as they saw the deep hues and textures of the setting sun. This adventure was great to enhance the crew's experience with the natural world. It was a perfect ending to an unpredictable day.

Project Challenges:

This project offered a great deal of challenge. The sheer amount of work to be done was impressive, let alone the fact that it was to be done with high school students in just ten work days. An added challenge was the weather. On several occasions the crew was forced to stay in the van for hours at a time due to thunderstorms. Twice, dinner was eaten inside the van. The crew kept up morale by playing games and bonding throughout the many hours. On the worksite, the crew also battled mental and physical fatigue to be able to produce great results for the Lincoln Trail as well as for their partners and the SCA.



Thank you:

Great appreciation goes out to Gerry Gold for helping to coordinate the project. His assistance in and out of the field meant a great deal to both the crew leaders and members. Having the crew over to his house for dinner and games was a highlight of the hitch. Also, thanks goes out to Craig Sanborn for his help in the field. His ideas, leadership, and teaching were all warmly received. Thank you partners!