



ALPINE

ACADEMICS FOR LAND PROTECTION IN NEW ENGLAND



Report on the
2017 ALPINE
Summer Institute

This report is a publication of the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative, in collaboration with the Harvard Forest, Harvard University and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Additional copies may be acquired on request from Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler at jsobrinhowheeler@lincolninist.edu.

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Introduction

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

For two weekends during the summer of 2017, Academics for Land Protection in New England (ALPINE), an effort of the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative, hosted a Summer Institute focused on leadership in land conservation for twelve undergraduates, graduate students and young professionals. The **ALPINE Summer Institute** benefitted greatly from its partnership with a handful of distinguished institutions, including: the Harvard Forest, Harvard University; the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School; Highstead; the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; and the Schoodic Institute.

The twelve ALPINE Summer Institute participants came from institutions across New England – two participants living, working or studying in each of New England’s six states. Furthermore, each of the young people participating in the ALPINE Summer Institute held internships or were employed for the summer by land conservation organizations based in New England.

The participants came from a variety of backgrounds and levels of experience in land conservation; all of them wanted to learn more about the theory and practice of large landscape conservation, and have a chance to carefully think through what role they individually might play in the future of conservation in the region.

After two intensive weekends of writing assignments, hikes in the woods and mountains, leadership training, prospective thinking and camaraderie, the answers that the participants offered to the question “what might you want to achieve over the next ten to twenty years as a conservationist?” were as varied as their authors. As the session organizers, we heard from young women and men who aimed high, aspiring to advance conservation through careers as: a state senator, a professor, a conservation organization decision-maker, an activist, a journalist, a cartographer, a trail builder, an artist, a forester, an urban ecologist and coder, a scientist, and a leader of public-private initiatives. As a community

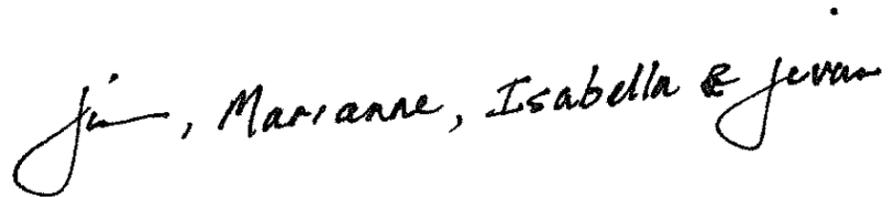


enterprise, land conservation clearly requires many kinds of talent, and we had the pleasure of spending part of our summer with a multi-talented group that will leave their own significant mark on this generation-to-generation work.

As you will see from their reflections that follow, the participants were highly articulate, thoughtful, curious, and ready to learn. They immediately showed the ability to collaborate on complex tasks, as well as strong listening and speaking skills. They were as respectful of one another as they were of the

natural environment. We could not have asked for a better group to set an important precedent. Their example paves the way for a new crop of ALPINE Summer Institute participants that we will recruit for the summer of 2018.

With best regards,



James N. Levitt
Manager, Land Conservation Programs, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Director, Program on Conservation Innovation, Harvard Forest, Harvard University; Senior Fellow, Highstead

Marianne Jorgensen
ALPINE Program Manager, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler
Project Coordinator, Land Conservation Programs, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Isabella Gambill
Master's Candidate in Conservation Leadership at the University of Cambridge
Former Program Coordinator, Land Conservation Programs, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

SPECIAL THANKS (in alphabetical order of organization) to:

Aaron Dority at the Frenchman Bay Conservancy

Rand Wentworth at the Center for Public Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School

David Foster, Edythe Ellin, and Laurie Chiasson at the Harvard Forest, Harvard University

Geordie Elkins and Jody Cologgi at the Highstead Foundation

Emily Myron at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Tim Glidden, Bob DeForrest and Caitlin Gerber at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Sarah Wells and Fletcher Harrington at the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Mark Berry, Megan Moshier, and the excellent kitchen staff at the Schoodic Institute

2017 ALPINE SUMMER INSTITUTE: Agenda for First Session: June 2 to June 4, 2017

Harvard Forest, 324 North Main Street, Petersham, MA 01366

Friday, June 2, 2017

Noon: Student arrival at Harvard Forest;

12:30 pm: *Opening lunch at Harvard Forest – student introductions*

1:30 pm: Jim Levitt Introduction to Summer Institute

1:45 pm: David Foster: student welcome, overview of Harvard Forest, the Wildlands&Woodlands vision, the story of Alyssa Goldetz and history of the Harvard Forest/North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership

2:30 pm: Three former interns tell their stories and how internships shaped their careers (Emily Myron, Sarah Wells, Jim Levitt)

3:30 pm: *Break*

4:00 pm: Guided walk through the Harvard Forest led by David Foster

5:30 pm: Return to lodgings, communal dinner prepared by interns for themselves

Homework: group to prepare arguments to defend US staying in the Paris agreement to present tomorrow

Saturday, June 3, 2017

8:00 am: *Breakfast at the Harvard Forest*

9:00 am: Rand Wentworth –leadership training discussion and exercises

Noon: *Lunch at Harvard Forest*

1:00 pm: Field trip to Mount Tully to observe the results of a public/private/non-profit/academic large landscape land conservation initiative

4:00 pm: Return to Harvard Forest; introduce idea of personal and organizational "BAR" (Before Action Review)

6:00 pm: *Dinner at Harvard Forest*

Homework: prepare personal statement to present

Sunday, June 4, 2017

8:00 am: *Breakfast at Harvard Forest*

9:00 am: One hour to complete personal essays on BARs

10:00 am: Verbal presentation of BARs by each of the students

Noon: *Lunch at the Harvard Forest*

12:40 pm: Adjourn

2017 ALPINE SUMMER INSTITUTE: Agenda for Second Session: July 26 to July 28, 2017

Schoodic Institute, 9 Atterbury Circle, Winter Harbor, Maine

Wednesday July 26, 2017

Noon: Student arrival at Schoodic Institute;

12:30 pm: *Opening lunch at Schoodic Institute*

1:30 pm: Jim Levitt Introduction

1:45 pm: Mark Berry welcome and overview of Schoodic Institute and surrounding area

2:30 pm: Guided walk around the Schoodic Institute led by Mark Berry

3:30 pm: *Break*

4:00 pm: retrospective look at summer work discussion

6:00 – 7:00 pm: *dinner at Schoodic Institute*

7:30 pm: work on reflections to be submitted tomorrow morning

Thursday, July 27, 2017

7:00- 8:00 am: *Breakfast at Schoodic Institute*

9:00 am: Tim Glidden, President of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust to talk about impact of internships

10:30 am *Break*

11:00 am Aaron Dority to talk about Schoodic to Schoodic Initiative

Noon: *Lunch at Schoodic Institute*

1:00 pm: Field trip to Tunk Lake, climb Schoodic Mountain

6:00 pm: *Dinner at Jim Levitt's house*

Friday, July 28, 2017

7:00 - 8:00 am: *Breakfast at Schoodic Institute*

9:00 am: presentation of revised personal narrative by each of the students

10:30 am *Break*

11:00 am presentations continued

Noon: *Lunch at Schoodic Institute*

12:40 pm: Adjourn

ALPINE Summer Institute 2017

Student Reflections

Matt Brewer

Matt Brewer is currently an Undergraduate Wildlife Ecology student at The University of Maine. He spent the summer interning with the Frenchman Bay Conservancy in Hancock, Maine.

Throughout my summer working with Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Frenchman Bay Conservancy, I have been able to experience (almost) all the inner workings of a land trust. These experiences range from community to landscape scale conservation, community outreach events, trail stewardship, and event planning. My summer experience was enhanced greatly by attending the first



ALPINE Summer Institute. Through ALPINE, I have been able to make numerous connections in the field of land conservation that I would otherwise not have. I was also able to enhance my understanding of land conservation while being surrounded by similar peers. Although there were many moments of self-awareness in which I determined that this was an extremely formative and important time in my career as a young conservationist, one of them stood out from the rest.

As part of my internship at Frenchman Bay Conservancy, I would plan, coordinate, and occasionally lead weekly volunteer trail work days. This summer we had a recurring group of younger volunteers from a summer camp that has an environmental focus. On a particularly hot, humid, and foggy day brushing trails on the top of Baker Hill, the campers made it clear that they weren't exactly loving volunteering at this exact moment. As I continued with our work of brushing, raking, and clearing overgrown trails, one of the campers very candidly asked me: "So what made you want to do all this yard work anyways?" Now this question caught me off guard for some reason because I wasn't doing measly yard work, this was trail stewardship! A much more honorable and worthwhile task in my mind than pruning grandma's rose bushes or putting out the sprinklers so the lawn is greener than a golf course. However, once I looked past the naivety of the question and its phrasing I found it more meaningful than at first glance.

Why *am* I doing this? As I thought of an answer I realized that this was the perfect teaching moment in which I could attempt to share my passion for conservation with another person. Ultimately, my answer was that I witnessed many environmental issues that needed to be addressed, so I decided to enter the field of conservation leading to a job working with Frenchman Bay Conservancy. This led to an elongated discussion about the work that Frenchman Bay Conservancy was doing, not only this "yard work" to ensure open access to trails and waterways; but also, larger landscape conservation goals that would be worked on relentlessly; far after my ten-week internship came to its end. Now I am not sure if this had any impact at all on these campers, whether they realized the importance of the work that they were doing and decided to take it more seriously, or if they continued to think about how miserable they were and how far away



11 o'clock was. Nevertheless, it reminded me of why I was doing what I was and my motivating forces behind it.

Throughout the summer I learned many lessons at my first job in the field of conservation. Admittedly, when I took the position of a summer intern doing mostly stewardship work, I was excited to be out in the woods by myself for most of the day. However, over the course of the summer it became evident to me that people and relationships are an extremely important asset in conservation. While I am sure many others have learned this lesson as well, it was new to me. From witnessing the love and connection to place by community members at weekly free concerts on our breathtaking Tidal Falls preserve to seeing extraordinary effort put in by volunteers to a wide range of projects, or even explaining why I was "doing all this yard work", people were always the common denominator. Certainly, Frenchman Bay Conservancy and many other groups could not function to the caliber that they do without these people and community relationships.

This summer, this internship, and the ALPINE Summer Institute have been very formative for me as a young conservationist with little experience in the field. Being passionate about a broad number of topics ranging from wildlife, forestry, fisheries, environmental sciences, and ethics, I was confused as to how I could incorporate as many of these related fields into my career. This summer I discovered that land conservation has the ability to address a majority of the issues that I am passionate about. Being early on in my career as I am, I still wish to explore other options but I have certainly enjoyed being involved with a land trust and working in the land conservation field for the summer. ALPINE specifically enhanced my summer internship by encouraging me to think critically about myself, my experiences, and how they relate to my future as a young conservationist. Without ALPINE, I would not have thought so deeply about these things, or considered such issues. One quote that seems to resonate with me from this summer and effectively describe my experiences, is simply put by Aldo Leopold in *A Sand County Almanac*: "Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."

Amanda Bunce

Amanda Bunce is a research assistant and lab technician at the University of Connecticut. Her undergraduate degree is in studio art, and she holds a Connecticut State Master Gardener certification and a certification in Environmental Management and Planning. Amanda is interested in forest ecology and conservation and is currently focused on the challenges of those fields in the densely populated northeastern U.S.



I knew I wanted to get into conservation as a career before coming to the ALPINE program, but I think my ideas about what that really meant were vague.

Through this program I have met people and heard stories about people: people that care. They care about panthers, birds, bats, timber, history, other people and environmental health and justice even outside of the U.S. I have a clearer picture of what conservationists are, and we are not all crazy people tied to trees, or research scientists trapped in labs. We are not just a few dedicated souls facing off against big greedy pollution machines, and we are not a couple of hikers and bike-riders trying to tell you about the healing vibes we've found in nature. The truth is that conservationists are so many people! And we are everywhere. I feel like people all have SOME reason to conserve SOMETHING!

But we do not always move together towards our goals. We are fractured, often contradictory and competitive. And there's probably no single solution that's right for everyone.

But working together is truly the way forward. Operating from the perspective that there is not just a single solution gives you flexibility, which is a strength. And if people are being flexible, listening to one another, and making efforts to see that everyone meets their goals, so very much can be done! This program has been series of lessons about how if you paste all your little conservation efforts together, you can achieve and exceed your goals! When you put reserves together, you can create habitat for bonus animals that need larger spaces or deeper forests. And if you string together enough green sapce to make a trail, you can attract bonus conservationists, who will help you to protect even more land! A positive feed-back loop!

It is my intent to take this theory, these lessons, the connections I've made here and the help I've gotten, back to southern New England and use it all in the forest management outreach and research that is my work. In southern New England there is a need to pull people together. The forest is stressed and physically fragmented, and the people are often of different minds when it comes to conservation and land use. I think of it as a goal of mine to foster community and conversation, and to bring people together with all their different perspectives and goals: farmers and hikers, hunters and kindergarteners, birders and snow-mobilers, loggers and artists.

My work is on a forest-management solution to a problem normally handled by arborists: Trees falling on power lines. The ecosystem services and aesthetics of southern New England's tree-lined roads are undeniable, and tree trimming, one tree at a time by arborists in bucket trucks, is currently the only solution to the utility troubles. Our initiative proposes that if we *manage* the forest – basically gardening, but with trees instead of tomatoes, and foresters instead of gardeners– we could grow trees that would be less likely to fail in storms. Forest management is not a concept familiar to people who don't grow trees for their wood, but it is an ancient and fine-tuned practice that could be leveraged to grow trees for strength in storms, for maple sugar, for animal habitat, for trails, for everything! But the challenge is to get folks on board, because these are their trees. Most of the forest of southern New England is privately owned, and sense of ownership is strong. And we can't just get a few people on-board. If this is going to work, entire communities full of these private landowners that each own a few hundred feet of the roadside forest need to buy into the idea.

We have lots of tools with which to bring people together: public education programs, years of research on trees, wind and forest management, a multitude of land conservation organizations, experts with best management practices for logging, or for dealing with invasive species, and maps... so many maps. We can use these things to piece together private landowners, by making them see what objectives they have in common, how they can help each other achieve goals, and how they are part of a larger picture even if their primary objective is to be a hermit in the woods.

ALPINE has asked us to get very introspective, which is something I'm not always comfortable with. However, by examining what's important to me and what are my own strengths and weaknesses, I have figured out how I can do the best work that I can, how I can urge this initiative forward, and (most importantly) that I truly feel that this is important work.

Caroline Colan

Caroline Colan studies Geography at Middlebury College and will graduate in February of next year. She spent the summer working as a Conservation Associate with The Nature Conservancy in Keene Valley, New York



I am from Readfield, Maine where I have grown up in an old yellow farm house all my life. I currently attend Middlebury College in Vermont which sits just below the Green Mountains in the Champlain Valley. At Middlebury, I study Geography and Environmental Studies, and am very involved with the Mountain Club as an Advanced Winter Hiking Guide and former president. This summer I have moved across Lake Champlain to the New York side, where I work as a Conservation Associate for the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy in Keene Valley.

I have always lived in a small place with a tight community; I feel at home when I know a place well and why it is the way it is today. Maybe that's why I became a geography major. Often when I say I am majoring in geography, people ask what that means and what I do. Some of my professors describe the study most simply as *"the why of where."*

During my time at Middlebury, I have traveled to the Adirondacks to hike and cross country ski, but never spent more than a weekend in the Park. I could tell from the long drives and my friends tallying their '46ers that the Adirondack Park was a big place, but through living, working, and exploring here this summer, I have begun to really figure out the Adirondack's why of where.

The park's boundary, referred to as the "Blue Line" contains 6 million acres, 2.5 million of which are part of the state forest preserve and are protected as Forever Wild "for the use of all the people forever (T. Morris Longstreth)." This patchwork of private and public land makes up the largest state park in the country.

All this came to be at the 1894 Constitutional Convention when the Forever Wild amendment passed, requiring all future state land acquisitions in the Adirondack region to become part of the forest preserve. The uses of this land are regulated by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and designated as wilderness, primitive, canoe, wild forest, or intensive use. Any development on these lands requires approval by two consecutive legislatures for a constitutional amendment.

While not everyone in the park feels the same way about conservation, forestry, tourism, the economy, or climate change, it is clear that because of the way the park was created, even topics like healthcare, schools, attracting families to the area, etc. are all environmental issues here. And increasingly, environmental issues today have become political and often partisan issues.

A couple weeks ago, I attended the Common Ground Alliance, a conference of more than 180 people of the park who work for non-profits, town governments, higher education institutions, businesses, state agencies, and government offices who came together for the purpose of addressing the most pressing issues and working to create solutions through creativity and compromise.

While Forever Wild may sometimes be controversial, it's also what makes this place so special, and as we've discussed at ALPINE, our landscapes – wherever they may be- connect us in powerful ways.

Seeing the work of this group, particularly in the context of today's political climate, has been really inspiring. While all these different organizations have slightly different goals, missions, and visions for the park, they were all willing to come to the table.



It is also a really interesting and inspiring time to be working at The Nature Conservancy as they work to adapt their traditional mission of land acquisition to include more of a human focus, doing more projects that are focused on benefiting both nature *and* people. For example, The Conservancy is retrofitting culverts to increase stream connectivity for fish migrating upstream in the warmer months which also reducing flooding, and sponsoring micro-enterprise grants for businesses in the central region of the Adirondack Park in order to strengthen communities with large amounts of protected lands.

Between my studies at Middlebury College, my work at The Nature Conservancy, and my participation in the ALPINE Summer Institute, I have seen again and again how important it is to take a multi-disciplinary approach to conservation that focuses on creative and collaborative solutions based upon a place's unique history, culture, socioeconomics, and particular environmental landscape. We need to understand *the why of where* before we can fix it.

While this method of conservation problem solving is more complex than straight land acquisition of the past, the challenge excites me! Participating in ALPINE with a diverse group of students and young professionals all at different points in their career development has helped to focus my energy and ideas about my own next steps in this field. It has been inspiring to see what my peers are doing, the passion for their work, and their drive to make change. It has also resulted in colleagues and friends in the field who I'm sure will work together again in the future.

As I head into my last semester at Middlebury College, I hope to do senior work on the relationship between conservation and socio-economics in Adirondack Park, and post-college, pursue

environmental law and policy, and the intersection between conservation and working lands. I'm sure the contacts I have made through my internship at The Nature Conservancy and through the ALPINE Network will aid me in this research and in my future work.

Desiree Demski-Hamelin



Desiree Demski-Hamelin is pursuing a dual-master's degree in regional planning and public policy and administration, as well as a graduate certificate in cultural landscape management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

During the summer of 2017, I served as a Conservation Legacy Environmental Stewards AmeriCorps member in the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Fellows program (NPS-RTCA). I was stationed at Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (Freedom's Way) based in Devens, Massachusetts, an organization that I had been interning with since 2015. Through this position, I was invited to participate in the first cohort of the ALPINE Summer Institute. These opportunities enriched my academic and professional careers, and challenged me to think critically about the future of land protection in New England.

The NPS-RTCA program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. There are sixteen Community Assistance Fellows currently serving at NPS regional and field offices, as well as partner organizations. Freedom's Way NHA is a federally-designated living landscape that tells a uniquely American story and includes forty-five communities in north central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Freedom's Way connects the people, places, and communities of the Heritage Area through preservation, conservation, and educational initiatives that protect and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the region. It is important to note that I was born and raised within the Heritage Area and remain deeply connected to the region. This connection drives my passion for the work that I do.

My primary service project was to coordinate the inaugural event for the Freedom's Way Thoreau Trail. This six-day community-led walking experience was designed in the spirit of Henry David



Thoreau and intended to explore the path from Concord to Princeton, Massachusetts that Thoreau traversed and wrote of in his 1842 essay, "A Walk to Wachusett." Each evening the Massachusetts Walking Tour musical troupe performed a public concert in a different community along the route. They shared the stage with local musicians and poets whom they invited to showcase their talents. This undertaking aligned with a number of other bicentennial legacy events in 2017 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Thoreau's birth.

This experience provided me the opportunity to foster partnerships with numerous organizations such as land trusts, trail committees, and historical societies within the Heritage Area. Getting to know the staff and volunteers and understanding the work they have been doing in their communities gave me an even better appreciation for the area that I call home. These relationships are critical to the success of Freedom's Way's programs and initiatives. I look forward to strengthening these bonds as I continue my work with the organization through my final year of graduate school.

The ALPINE Summer Institute was an excellent venue for me to reflect on my internship experience at a critical juncture in my life. Throughout the Institute, we were encouraged to ask ourselves why we do the work that we do and what we value about it. I found this exercise useful in analyzing other aspects of my life as well, such as my education and volunteer work. Additionally, my participation in the Institute significantly expanded my professional network outside of Massachusetts and into the rest of New England. I value this greatly as I look to launch my professional career next spring.

Emily Erdos

Emily Erdos grew up in Harvard, MA. Currently, she is a rising junior studying sociology at Princeton University. This summer, Emily interned for the Quebec-Labrador Foundation in Montreal and New Brunswick, Canada.

Me, Myself, and Meredith Blake



I used to sheepishly joke that my hiking skill level was that of the “almost-step-mother”, Meredith Blake, in *The Parent Trap*. For those unfamiliar with the film, Meredith is a novice. Although I know better than to spray sugar water on myself as bug spray and can rock scramble with slightly more audacity than the delicate blonde actress, my hiking experience is nearly null. However, there are some key differences between myself and Meredith, or this “Cruella de Vil”, as Meredith was nicknamed.

My diversion from Meredith Blake begins with her occupation as a publicist, and my aspirations as a journalist. I’ve always had a passion for writing and telling stories. However, my prior summer experience at a local television station drove me to try something new search for something more than my childhood journalism aspirations of becoming the next Katie Couric. So, I decided to put myself outside of my comfort zone, and immersed myself in something new.

Arriving to the inaugural ALPINE program with Rachel Carson as a stranger and “conservation easement” as a vocabulary word, I immediately self-identified myself as the neophyte in the room. Young and already very accomplished conservation professionals surrounded me. The first three days of ALPINE were my conservation boot-camp.

Prior to being invited to the ALPINE program, I had accepted a summer internship working with the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, an international conservation and stewardship non-profit, to work on their Global Leadership Network, interviewing alumni and sharing their stories.

Despite my insecurities rooted in inexperience, the first thing Program Director Jim Levitt did at ALPINE was require the twelve student participants to become friends. As comforting as new friends was Jim and Marianne Jorgensen’s assuagement that not all of us were destined to become conservation professionals.

Jim’s honesty, acceptance, and support of our range of careers allowed me to relinquish my silence and share my distinctive story, but also to relinquish my pride and open myself to learning.

As much as the redhead twins in the *The Parent Trap* disrespected Meredith Blake’s amateurism, my ignorance for the conservation field was not only accepted, but respected. ALPINE

fostered a welcoming environment which encouraged us to expose our vulnerabilities through discussion, leadership exercises, self-reflection, and presentations.

I carried the skills from the first session of ALPINE with me throughout my summer internship. Without an open-mind, I may have never been able to fully understand or appreciate the profound achievements of my interviewees (who were conservation “celebrities”, if you will). Additionally, the self-exploration skills that I learned at ALPINE helped me contextualize how a summer working in conservation fit into my journalism career.

In all honesty, this contextualization was tricky. And without ALPINE, I may still be wrangling with doubt about my decision to spend a summer outside the newsroom. My ALPINE mentor enabled me to see the value of my summer. One of the most rewarding parts of the program, each participant had a mentor that they connected with during the sessions and throughout the summer. In one reflective conversation, my mentor challenged me: “How would you explain in your next journalism job interview the value of having someone who took a summer away from hard news?” In other words, my mentor was asking me my convergence plan for my past and my future.

After some rumination, I realized that the first step in linking these two diverse fields is to do what Meredith Blake didn’t: give up. After this summer, I understand the persistence required to bring attention to an underappreciated subject. Conservation never appears as the “click bait” news stories. But if I can make the conservation stories, or more generally, the underrepresented stories, as glittery and attractive as the over-told stories, therein lies my potential niche. As my peer mentor eloquently analogized, “If you can make candy sweet, okay. But if you can make bark sweet, awesome”.

Without ALPINE, I might still be Meredith Blake with that sweet, overripe candy. I am so grateful for the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and to find the intersection between journalism and conservation. Thank you, Jim. Thank you, Marianne. Thank you, ALPINE.

Shea Flanagan

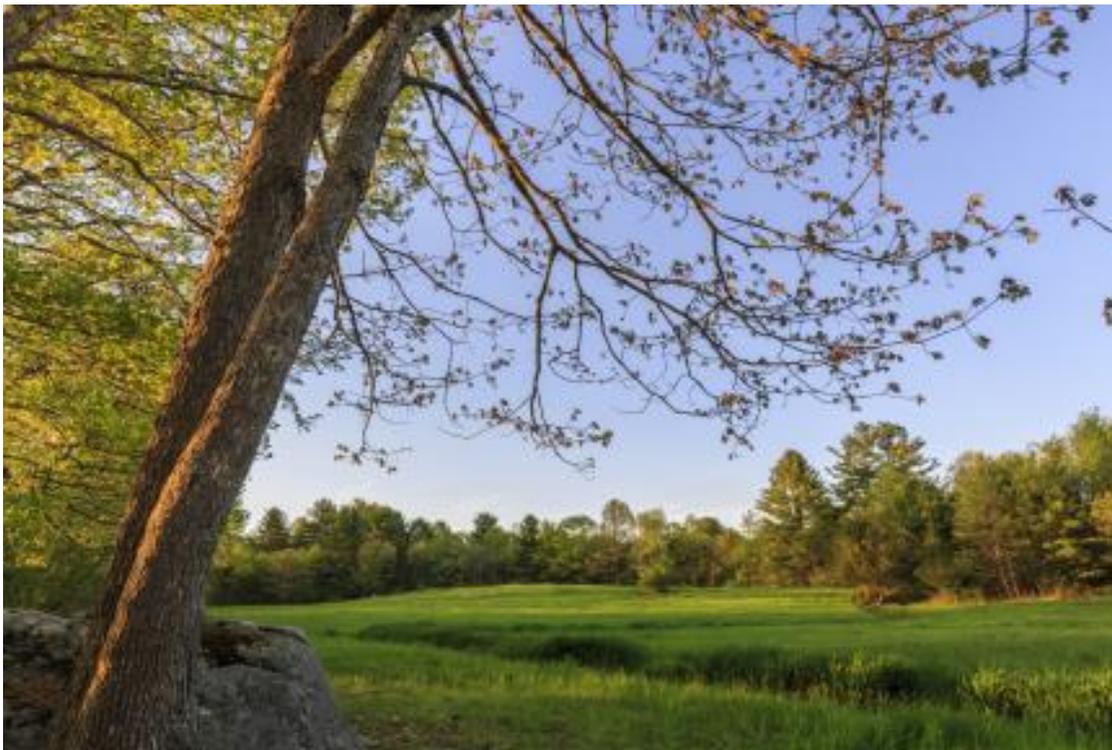
Shea Flanagan is the Conservation Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire, where she supports the conservation team in terrestrial, marine, and freshwater conservation planning and implementation. She previously worked for the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy on the stewardship and conservation teams. She is a 2014 graduate of Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Ecology and Environmental Studies and is now considering pursuit of a Master’s Degree.

Let me start off by saying that my participation in the first cohort of the ALPINE Summer Institute was well worth the time and effort. It truly inspired me to consciously think critically and act intentionally in all aspects of my work in the conservation field. Stepping back, I’ll provide you with some context about myself and my relationship to conservation. I work as a full-time Conservation Coordinator with The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire, so my summer experience has involved a variety of projects that span beyond the scope of the ALPINE Summer Institute’s tenure, making my experience somewhat different from those of Institute participants involved in discrete internships. I have been with the New Hampshire Chapter since March 2016. Previously I worked as an intern with the Adirondack Chapter for nearly a year upon graduating from Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Ecology and Environmental Studies in 2014. In my role with the New Hampshire Chapter, I support the conservation



team in terrestrial, marine, and freshwater conservation planning and implementation. I am involved in a wide variety of projects and efforts, ranging from land protection work, strategic conservation planning, project implementation, and GIS and map-making support.

My participation in the ALPINE Summer Institute left me with a variety of new tools in my toolbox that I sought to apply to my work throughout the summer at The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire. I really enjoyed the leadership development training offered by Rand Wentworth, the former president of the Land Trust Alliance, which taught me that leadership is more about “reading the room” and reacting and guiding appropriately, rather than influencing through formal authority – the loudest voice in the room is not necessarily the best leader. The training also made me consider the importance of leadership traits that may not seem as obvious as some (e.g., empathy, selflessness), and the importance of being resilient in the face of failure. The cohort also practiced public speaking, which I thought was quite beneficial, given that that skill is something I strive to develop. My participation in the Institute boosted my confidence in my abilities as a conservation practitioner, which allowed me to return to work with a renewed sense of purpose and drive.

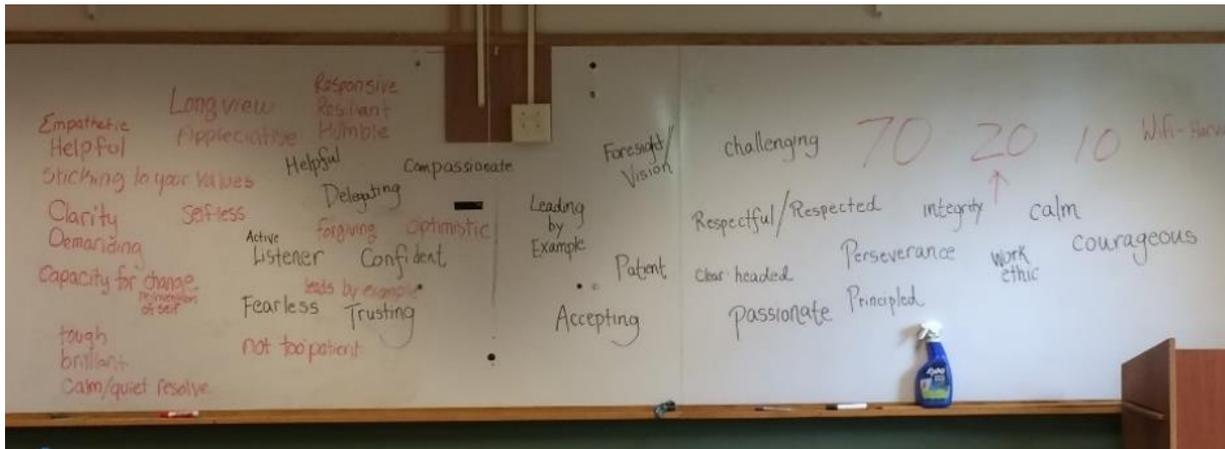


The Seacoast farm property to be protected by an Agricultural Lands Easement.

During the summer, one project in which I was deeply involved was the preparation of a grant application to support the protection of an agricultural property in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire. Efforts to protect the property have been ongoing for over two decades, and The Nature Conservancy recently partnered with the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire to move the project forward. We are seeking to protect the 100-acre property through a Natural Resources Conservation Service Agricultural Lands Easement, thereby ensuring that the farm’s agricultural uses and conservation values are maintained in perpetuity. The Nature Conservancy and the Southeast Land Trust identified the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, run by the state of New Hampshire, as a

relevant potential funding source to support the protection of this property. I crafted the application and some of its supplemental materials, including a variety of maps to illustrate the property’s conservation values. We submitted the application at the end of June, and we are eagerly awaiting a response – anticipated in late November – regarding the funding decision. This was my first experience fully taking the lead in writing a grant application, and I felt that the experience provided me with a sense of ownership over the product. I navigated working with our conservation partner to complete the application, which was an opportunity for me to apply Rand’s leadership guidance in influencing without authority.

Another project that I have undertaken has been the completion of an environmental hazard assessment for a property in the Mount Washington Valley region of New Hampshire on which The Nature Conservancy intends to hold a conservation easement. The Nature Conservancy conducts environmental hazard assessments to identify, avoid and address practical, financial, and legal risks that may arise from environmental concerns or conditions prior to acquiring a property or an interest in a property. This 600-acre forested property owned by a family partnership lies along Whitton Pond. To conduct the environmental hazard assessment, I have interviewed town code enforcement officers, collected historic aerial photographs, and ordered an environmental data resources report. These



Results from a brainstorming session done by the ALPINE Summer Institute’s cohort identifying traits of a good leader.

sources help to elucidate whether there may be any environmental records of concern on or near the property. My next step is to interview the primary landowner and visit the site in order to walk the property to look for and document any potentially hazardous occurrences. Finally, I will compile this information into a report that summarizes the condition of the property and the findings of my investigation; I’ll also provide a recommendation as to whether The Nature Conservancy should proceed with acquiring an interest in the property. Similar to my experience writing the grant application, this has been my first time conducting an environmental hazard assessment, so it provided me with an opportunity to build my skills base and work more independently in my role.

Overall, my summer experience has been a whirlwind of activity. It’s difficult to pare down my work into a few paragraphs, but the two that I highlighted have given me the chance to learn and grow in my position. I am so grateful to the ALPINE Summer Institute for providing me with an opportunity to advance myself to better achieve meaningful and lasting conservation impacts in New England through continuing this important work with The Nature Conservancy. My participation in the ALPINE Summer Institute reinforced my passion for conservation, and confirmed my decision to pursue a career in this work. I couldn’t imagine doing anything more meaningful.

Catherine Fraser

Catherine Fraser, a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, is an Environmental Policy major at Colby College. She interned for the Frenchman Bay Conservancy and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.



I am a rising junior Environmental Policy major at Colby College. After learning about land conservation and management in a Domestic Environmental Policy with my professor, Philip Nyhus, I was interested in interning with a land trust or some sort of urban planning organization this summer. Through Professor Nyhus, I was able to connect with Jim Levitt of the Lincoln Institute and become a part of the ALPINE Summer Institute. As a native of Minnesota, I have enjoyed spending my summer in Downeast Maine, while participating in the ALPINE Summer Institute! This summer, through the Lincoln Institute, I have been interning for the Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC) and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), working mainly on their Schoodic to Schoodic Whole Place Plan. The Plan envisions a corridor of conserved land from Schoodic Point to Schoodic Mountain, connecting the ocean to inland forest. If completed, the corridor would be one of the largest of its kind on the eastern seaboard and would greatly benefit wildlife, especially given the ongoing and impending threat of climate change. In 2015, FBC and MCHT received a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to help conserve lands with significant wetland acres along the Schoodic Corridor. In the last year, important strides have been made to conserve 1,000 acres of land in the Whole Place Plan using the NAWCA funds.

This summer, my job was to help construct various conservation scenarios of a variety of parcels along the Schoodic Corridor with the remaining funds. In addition, I created a map using ArcGIS with various layers, aimed at helping FBC and MCHT to prioritize different parcels of land for conservation depending on resilience, diffuse flow, local connectedness, presence of imperiled species, etc. Before this, I had no formal GIS training, so I spent a great deal of time watching online tutorials and working with the GIS instructor at Colby to create this map. It was challenging and frustrating at times, but I am pleased with my final product and feel rewarded by my ownership of the project. I am hopeful that this map will be useful as a strategic planning tool in conserving land not only on the Schoodic Peninsula, but also throughout Maine. In addition to those projects, I also helped update a slideshow from an April 2016 conference on the Schoodic Initiative at Colby College and create a write-up detailing progress on the Schoodic Initiative for Jim Levitt to present/handout at the FBC Annual Meeting in August 2017. In updating these slides, it was amazing to see the progress (conservation of 1,000+ acres) that has been made in the last year, largely as a result of the 2015 NAWCA grant! It truly is an exciting time for land conservation in Downeast Maine.

Throughout this internship, I've really enjoyed learning about the rich history of land conservation in Downeast Maine. While perusing the Hancock County Registry of Deeds online to look at some properties of interest, I happened upon some of the original deeds the Rockefeller, Eliot, and Door families signed when conserving and donating their land back in the early 1900s. The long history of land conservation in Downeast Maine is fascinating, and I am happy that I got to play a part, however small, in conservation efforts in the region. Over the course of my internship, I really liked working with GIS, and was continually amazed by how much data and information you can access for free on the internet.

It was cool to be able to synthesize data from a variety of sources, like the Nature Conservancy, the Office of Maine GIS, and Nature's Network, into one comprehensive map. I would like to spend more time with GIS and take an actual class on it at Colby in the coming year.

Next spring, I am studying abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and I'm interested to see how my work this summer may inform the independent study project I will do as a part of my study abroad program. I've enjoyed learning about land conservation in Downeast Maine, but would love to learn about land conservation in another region of the world. I have been inspired by the strong connection to place that has driven many to conserve and advocate for their land. I am excited to see where my work with land conservation this summer may take me this year, whether that's continued GIS work this fall at Colby, or potential land conservation research next spring when I am studying abroad in Argentina! I am thankful to ALPINE for opening my eyes to the world of land conservation and for allowing me to explore and think deeply about my future education and career paths alongside a diverse group of young conservationists.

Lance Gloss

Lance Gloss came to New England from Colorado in 2014 to pursue an urban studies degree at Brown University. He spent the summer interning for the International Land Conservation Network in Cambridge, MA.



"Everyone is influenced by everybody but you bring it down home the way you feel it."

– Thelonious Monk

I had the good fortune to spend this summer as a research intern with the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN). This work exposed me to a host of brilliant thinkers dealing with all dimensions of land use policy—the team of conservationists, property tax experts, and community planners that make up the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, where the ILCN is housed. It was a lucky fit, as the ideas on discussion at Lincoln covered the spectrum of my professional interests, and brought these dimensions into a lively exchange.

If for that reason alone, the experience was life-changing. It has given me perspective on the work that led up to this point, shedding light on my undergraduate coursework in urban studies, my research at the Brown University Herbarium, my time working on trails and on farms and in greenhouses as a teen, and my experiences with international study and travel. Such reflections came naturally, but they were spurred to new vigor by the ALPINE Summer Institute. Alongside a gifted group of New England conservationists, I was pushed to continually reconsider my intent.

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When I drop my workbag by my bedside I do not slough my sense of purpose. I do, though, miss the enclosure of a job's arms—the comfort of a distinct mission. During

down time, aspirations burst from the tunnel onto a wide plain that is at once lonely and gorgeous.

What is that all about?

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I found the passion with which my summer co-workers approach their work infectious. I found myself excited to explain how land trusts work to everybody and their mother, or else inadvertently spending my Sundays cooking up questions to bring into work on Monday. Ideas at Lincoln are everywhere, and they are big. The staff regularly work on issues at the hemisphere scale. At the ILCN, 'perpetuity' is the standard timeframe for a successful project.

My own project had me studying the land laws, ecologies, and economic development patterns of a dozen countries across the globe. I was asked to make connections between these factors that would open up new opportunities for private involvement in land conservation, and to suggest conduits for the transfer of best practice across contexts. This kind of thinking is, to my mind, a lot like juggling. One must keep all of the pertinent concepts afloat and active, cycling through them to produce innovative combinations. Operating at such a conceptual altitude plays to my strengths, and replicates much that I love about the academy, where I've spent so much of my time. Few would contest that, on the spectrum from thinking to doing, the work at Lincoln is on the thinking end.

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O, the irony, when I closed my eyes after a day in office and saw the hot sun and soil and sweaty crew of labor days past! Desire swelled!

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Funnily enough, what drove me to pursue a university degree three and half years ago was the sense that hands-on jobs in landscaping and conservation—jobs I loved—lacked the intellectual engagement for which a part of me longed. University sure gave me that intellectual engagement, and my project this summer was arguably the most cognitively-stimulating so far. Yet, there is certainly something frustrating about researching for weeks on end with only concepts and pages to show for it—however impactful or beautiful they may be.

I started to think that that thinking about problems wouldn't bring me the satisfaction I needed from work, unless I had the chance to bring that knowledge to bear.

As I carried on reading and thinking through the land laws of Liberia, Malaysia, Argentina, South Africa (a form of travel), I also observed my own thoughts. I was looking for something true about me that could serve as a guide as I embark on my career, degree in hand. What thoughts were bubbling in the background of my research and conversations? What did I want?

Turns out, whatever I'm doing, I'm thinking about the places involved. Places are finite (an address on a map) or abstract (the sensation of belonging) or immense (our big beautiful biotic orb). For me, passion sits in place. That same passion motivates almost everyone that works in this multi-faceted field of land-use—from gardener to architect to environmental lawyer. What makes the ILCN a special place to work is that everyone *cares*. A love for land is what brought them into the field. For many, this love is what keeps them around.



People who care about what they do invest passion in what they produce. The folks that make up the Lincoln Institute may work with concepts, but they do so that others can discover the beauty of a pulsating neighborhood, a smooth train trip, or a glen resounding with bird calls. Whatever their day to day task, each of them is engaged in stewardship.

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More than thinking or acting, it is feeling that makes work worth doing. Work should provoke passion. No—work should elicit intimacy.

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Intimacy is not specific to either thinking or doing. A person can feel whole love for a place, a people, an object, an idea, a dream, or a data point. Intimacy derives from a combination of commitment, desire, and respect.

I walk away from the summer with new knowledge of self: if loving land comes easy to me, and one must love his or her work, then I would do well to keep working with land. I will find a place where I can employ conceptual abilities *and* my capacity to apply and share knowledge, in a way that cultivates my relationships with places and people. Whatever form that takes, let it be something like this summer's internship: worth the effort, and of worth to the world.

Owen Krol



Owen Krol is originally from Massachusetts and recently completed his Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science at Colby-Sawyer College. His academic interests include aquatic ecology, forest ecology, and conservation. Owen interned with a New Hampshire land trust to help them identify climate change resilient lands in their region to be made priorities for protection. My experience with the

ALPINE Summer Institute occurred at a time of considerable flux in numerous aspects of my life. I graduated from Colby-Sawyer College in May of 2017 and had spent the better part of my senior year trying to devise a plan for myself - academically, professionally, and otherwise - once I received my diploma. During this time, a professor of mine told me about ALPINE, their mission, and the Summer Institute which they were offering over the coming summer. Having an interest and some experience with land protection (via some GIS work I had done for a land trust near Colby-Sawyer), it seemed to me that this would be good opportunity.

The focus of the first session of the Summer Institute was prospective thinking, especially with regard to our educations and careers. At the time, I knew that I was not sure which of my interests I should pursue further, in terms of either professional or academic growth. Therein lies the other question that troubled me: how soon do I want to go to graduate school? What I did know was that I would be working two different types of jobs that each represented an interest of mine that I couldn't decide between. During the course of the summer, I would be working on freshwater cyanobacteria research as a research assistant at Dartmouth College as well as a couple of stewardship projects for a Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust and the New London, NH Conservation Commission.

I had hoped that the experience I would gain from these jobs would help me in determining what academic and professional path would be my ultimate preference. The freshwater ecology research on which I was working was part of a years-long study examining the environmental drivers responsible for the emergence of a particular species of cyanobacteria in oligotrophic lakes. This job was primarily comprised of technical field and lab work, which comprise the "hands-on" components of science - which I have enjoyed both the practice and the notion of since I was a child. However, I found myself worried at times that this research was too esoteric to be impactful to society at large.

Juxtaposed to this was the work I was doing for Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust and the New London Conservation Commission, which was to be accessible to the public for their use. I was working on creating and updated various trail maps for town lands and conserved parcels that would be available online or at trailheads for use by any and all individuals that may want to explore the area. This work seemed to satisfy me in the way that my work in the lab could not. I found something meaningful in the notion that people were going to be seeing and using a product of my work on a fairly regular basis.

During that first ALPINE Summer Institute session, one of the exercises we did was thinking about our lives in terms of a narrative, and to use that narrative of our past as a touchstone in helping us form some projection about what our future may look like. With this and other exercises fresh in my mind from that first session, I spent much of the summer thinking about how the narrative of my life led me to where I am, the interests I have, and the work I was doing. Such thinking led me to realize something that I should have realized much earlier: these two interests are easily reconcilable. My interest in the natural world was born of the experiences I had growing up. The time I spent swimming in lakes (which I credit for my interest in freshwater ecology) and my time spent hiking in state parks and privately protected lands (generating my interest in land protection) fit together so seamlessly in my memory. Why then do they have to be so compartmentalized now? I could get involved with research examining the ecological impacts of land protection, or research that may be helpful in informing land protection decisions. These paths and many more could easily result in finding an opportunity do research, something I enjoy and find satisfying in one way, and impacting the way people interact with and protect land, which satisfies me in other ways entirely. It also helped me realize that I should seek more work as a research assistant or



technician in order to gain more exposure to the types of research and work that may be attractive to me.

All of this is to say that ALPINE really helped me in stepping back from my summer experiences to see why it was troubling me and understand my summer in the context of the course of my life, my interests, and my ultimate goals. Thinking about what I have been working on for the last few months as well, as the questions I've been asking myself, I feel more confident in what I am looking for in my future. I hope that this will serve as a seed for future personal growth, and as a framework for mental exercises I should revisit in the future.

Katie Michels

Katie Michels works for the High Meadows Fund, a Vermont-based foundation that supports work in the areas of resilient land use, farm and forest enterprises, and energy. She graduated from Middlebury College in February, 2015, with degrees in Geography and Environmental Studies. In August 2017, Katie will start a new job with the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program at the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.



Parallel to the course of the Lincoln Summer Institute, my 2-year position at the High Meadows Fund wrapped up. I welcomed the Summer Institute not only for its content and the community we developed, but also because its lessons and exercises offered me an opportunity to reflect on and refine where I wanted to go next. I had a broad idea of where I wanted to land: I was hungry for an opportunity to engage with private landowners to help them protect and steward their land. During the Summer Institute, we each developed a personal narrative. This verbal exploration of who we are and how our stories have been influenced by the landscapes in which we have lived and worked helped me articulate a few concepts that I know will influence my career.

I am motivated by values. I am motivated to understand and protect the values that I and others attach to place. Recreation, contemplation, wildness, science, and food have each helped me connect to the landscapes I have lived in. And, *I very much want to understand the individual relationships others have developed with their places.* The challenges, the stories, the special spots. I have been struck by the layers of attachment to a place and community that have motivated individual land conservation projects. These layers aren't predictable, and I love that. In the spring of 2014, I interviewed stakeholders associated with the Bread Loaf conservation project to understand why Bread Loaf matters to them. This project helped me understand that the reasons why a place matters to an individual might have nothing to do with their career or degree. An ecologist told me how excited she was to play a role in preserving Robert Frost's literary legacy on the landscape, a project manager celebrated the history of the sawmill that was used to cut the logs for the Bread Loaf Inn one hundred years ago, and a poet described the imaginative space that Bread Loaf's forest vistas offer. I need to be careful to ask questions without assumptions in order to understand why an individual cares about a place. I look forward to continuing to listen to these stories.

I appreciate working within a broader context. This is why I like hiking so much... because as much as I enjoy each step and conversation along a trail, my favorite part of a hike is getting to a scenic vista, where I can look out over where I am, and remember how I got there. In our first Summer Institute session, we went for a hike up Mount Tully. From the top, we looked out over privately- and publicly-

owned land, much of which was protected by the Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust as part of the North Quabbin Regional Conservation Partnership. Understanding how each individual parcel fit into a larger landscape conservation initiative gave me a greater appreciation for the place. In a similar vein, I appreciated learning about the Wildlands and Woodlands vision from David Foster, because it helped illustrate how individual conservation projects across multiple states can support far larger, regional forestland conservation goals. Working on an individual part within a broader system and purpose is exciting to me.

I want to not just understand how to protect land, but also how to steward protected land. High Meadows has helped me appreciate the important role that for-profit businesses play in land protection and stewardship. Growing vegetables, tapping trees for syrup, raising cows, and harvesting wood are each ways that Vermonters connect to and take care of this place. Without a forest products or local food economy to incentivize responsible land management, the Vermont landscape would grow more houses than apples. High Meadows has helped me recognize that both for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises play a central role in land protection and stewardship.

Towards the end of the summer, I was offered a job working for the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program at the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. I very happily accepted. The Viability Program provides business coaching, technical assistance, and grants to Vermont-based farm and forest businesses. I believe that, through this position, I can learn what it means to steward land *and* livelihoods. This position will offer me an opportunity to understand what it takes to run a viable, responsible working lands enterprise, and the factors that influence business owners, farmers, and foresters' relationships to their land.



Without the Summer Institute, I am not sure that I would have had the space or inspiration to articulate these ideas as clearly. The Summer Institute helped me articulate not only the fact that I care about land, but also the reasons *why* I care about land. I look forward to a career in land conservation and land stewardship, and I thank the Lincoln Institute, Jim, Marianne, Isabella, Jivan, and each of our guests for providing the inspiration and questions to help us each articulate why and how we will make our way in this important field.

Alicyn Murphy

Alicyn Murphy is a Masters of Environmental Science and Management student at the University of Rhode Island and holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts from New Hampshire Institute of Art. Alicyn spent the summer interning with the Napatree Point Conservation Area.



This past Spring I took my first steps in the Masters of Environmental Science and Management program at University of Rhode Island. My undergrad degree is in fine art which gives me a unique perspective as well as plenty of opportunity to play catch-up. In order to begin to bridge the gap I felt between myself and my peers hailing from science programs, this summer I had the good luck to have the the opportunity to participate in conservation land stewardship activities in the Napatree Point Conservation Area. My focus was on bat activity. My contribution to the summer stewardship activities fits into the ALPINE vision of conservation through academic collaboration. Monitoring is key to being able to deploy successful conservation and stewardship practices; many organizations collaborate to make the summer monitoring programs at Napatree Point possible, including the URI Coastal Institute, the University of Connecticut, and University of Massachusetts Amherst. The results of the monitoring programs that are compiled at the end of each summer season into The State of Napatree Report. All of these reports are made available online [<http://portal.napatreepoint.info/>].



In order to ascertain the bat activity on Napatree Dr. August and I set up a Pettersson D500x bat detector in a grove of pitch pine. The Pettersson is an ultrasound recording system designed to pick up high frequency sounds, which makes it well-suited for bat calls. We set it to run from roughly dusk until dawn. It is left unattended for about a week at a time—at which point we swap the memory card. Each detection is converted into a sound file that I then process with the software SonoBat. I run commands that scrub out sounds that aren't bat calls and identify by species the ones that are. I can then generate reports from Sonobat that show how many bats of each species passed by the detector while hunting, complete with date and time.

Dr. Charlie Brown of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management introduced us to the SonoBat software. I also accompanied him on two “extracurricular” bat monitoring activities that allowed me to have real-world encounters with these amazing little mammals. The first was an exit count, conducted at dusk, of a nest colony of little brown bats in Arcadia park in Southeastern Rhode Island. Four of us flanked the known exits and held counters. I stood gazing into the lowering light, straining my eyes and my ears, hoping to spot bats emerging. It was only as bats were taking wing from the vertical face of the barn that I began to finally see their distinct silhouettes.

The second activity I joined in on was mist netting. The mist nets were raised 25 feet in the air, stretched across a dirt road that cuts through Great Swamp Preserve. Bats fly right into the fine black mesh where they instantly struggle mightily, and quickly become very tangled up. When we let down the nets and the naturalists reached out with gloved hands the bats went berserk, squeaking frantically and biting fiercely. The minute that each bat was safely untangled from the netting the naturalist positioned it at the mouth of a cardboard envelope. Each bat slipped inside and was comforted and quieted by the dark, close space. They were then weighed, sexed, measured and banded. They were



checked for signs of white nose syndrome. I couldn't resist asking if I could take photos; when I had permission, I snapped a few of each bat that was netted. At ALPINE I met people in so many different programs and professions hailing from so many different disciplinary backgrounds. Their kindness and willingness to share their varied experiences with me is something I will not soon forget. Surrounded by such intelligent and accomplished people I felt unsure that I had anything to contribute. But our workshop leader Jim Levitt encouraged us to consider our strengths, and he specifically mentored me to incorporate my background in the arts into my summer work. This resulted in the illustrations included, drawn from the photos I took that night in the woods.

Eliot Volin

Elliot Volin attended Florida State University, where in 2011 he graduated with a BS in Environmental Studies and a BA in History. Currently, he is a graduate research assistant at the University of Connecticut, pursuing a Master's degree in Natural Resources, with a focus on urban forestry. Elliot spent the summer working as a Graduate Mentor for the Natural Resources Conservation Academy



I ventured far from the straight and narrow path on my journey to contribute to land protection and conservation efforts. Though I graduated with a BS in Environmental Studies from Florida State University, I entered the U.S. Army immediately following college. As an officer, I commanded Cavalry Scouts and Infantrymen. For nearly five years, land protection and conservation rarely crossed my mind. However, upon leaving the Army, I weighed several options for my post military career. Ultimately, I decided to continue my education and entered graduate school at the University of Connecticut, seeking a Master's of Science in Natural Resources. I spent this summer conducting research in urban forestry and worked as a Graduate Mentor for the Natural Resources Conservation Academy (a high school outreach program conducted by UCONN).

I spent the first half of this summer focusing on urban forestry research. Moving forward into the 21st Century, urban forests will be key to sustainable development and healthy cities. Urban forests provide many social and ecological benefits to metropolitan areas, which impact the environmental and social welfare of an urban area. Ecologically, urban forests include storm water mitigation, carbon sequestration, air and water quality improvements, energy savings, and increased wildlife habitat (Dwyer et al. 1992; Nowak 1993).

Urban forests provide social benefits to the population as well, including a greater sense of safety amongst the population, reduced respiratory illnesses, increased property values, and increased use of neighborhood common spaces (Kuo 2003; Price 2003). Unfortunately, inequities exist in the amount of ecosystem benefits received among neighborhoods within urban areas, and these differences are often related to socioeconomic conditions.

My research focuses on identifying trends between tree canopy coverage and socioeconomic predictor variables, such as education levels and poverty percentages, across twenty-five U.S. cities. Ultimately, this research could help highlight larger environmental injustices across U.S. cities. This

research could influence land protection and tree planting initiatives in urban areas. ALPINE highlighted the importance of small land contributions as part of a larger conservation effort. This is perhaps more relevant to urban areas than any other type of environment because of the disturbances caused to the



natural ecosystems by man-made structures. Protecting small plots of land can have a drastic effect on the urban ecology and ecosystem.

The second half of my summer was spent as a Graduate Mentor for UCONN's Natural Resources Conservation Academy (NRCA). This program focuses on connecting high school students with nature and then pairs them with community partners to work on local conservation projects across the state. I helped mentor 24 high school students, exposing them to conservation and natural resources topics ranging from forestry to wildlife, hydrology to biodiversity. Some participants had never been hiking or fishing, watching their apprehension about nature turn to enthusiasm was incredibly rewarding. Local community involvement in conservation and land protection was a topic frequently addressed by ALPINE throughout the summer. The NRCA has helped to solidify this concept.

ALPINE and the NRCA have helped to change my perception of land protection and conservation. At the beginning of the summer, I was focused solely on my research. I hoped to publish my findings, attend a few conferences, graduate, and move on to the next stage. However, I now wish to seek other ways to help implement by research. Publications and conferences are an excellent, necessary means to communicate with fellow academic professionals. In addition, I wish to find ways to connect with community partners, local conservation organizations, and professional urban foresters to help enact change.

