



WE'RE GEARING UP FOR SUMMER!

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH CREWS





APRIL ON THE TRAIL WITH THE CREW

The world of trail building is relatively small. Some consider it to be one of the last oral traditions - we use techniques that cannot be learned online, they must be taught to you by someone who learned it from someone else years prior. Last week the Greenagers Trails Team attended a week-long event in the White Mountains centered on teaching and building skills pertaining to trailwork. Sawyers, masons, carpenters, scientists, and trail enthusiasts traveled to New Hampshire to attend or give presentations on the best practices for restoring problematic trails. Notwithstanding the differences in experience, professional and

personal histories, and specializations between the presenters of the workshops, the sacredness of trail building and trail maintenance was consistent from one professional to the next. What became apparent, despite how introverted we all tend to be, was the common desire to create and sustain the trail community by teaching each other how to be safe and practical in a dynamic and sometimes dangerous workspace.

The exercise at hand is always completing a given project—be it a bridge, culvert, staircase, or retaining wall. The true exercise; however, is always social in nature. A crew’s performance hinges on the flow of communication and reassurance. The challenge for a crew member may be to listen to a crew leader, while the crew leader strives to balance production and happiness among crew members. The project, however, belongs to the crew as a whole. The ones more likely to show that site to their loved ones are not the directors, but the crew members.

“I feel more confident. I feel way more connected with the community. Being able to work around the county and make it a better place is very satisfying.”

- Trail Crew Member

As with the trail crews, there is a hierarchical system introduced at Greenagers for creating and maintaining accountability and expectations. As the overarching mission remains, each position from crew leader to director has different expectations for those whose growth they are responsible for. As the threads are followed to where the work is performed, not everyone is visible. Greenagers, at every level of management, seeks to provide an outdoor education that is empowering and liberating for youth. As it happens, the outdoors makes a great classroom.

April Albano
Conservation Coordinator

IN THE WORKS
FOR 2024

80
youth employed

13
crews

15,000
hours of work

TRAILS

SNAPSHOT OF SPRING TRAIL CREW PROJECTS (ONGOING)



Retaining wall rebuilding on Tom Ball Mountain in Great Barrington.
Building a short accessible trail at the Egremont Library.
Rehabbing Greenport's accessible trail in Hudson.
Bog bridging and clearing trails at Yanner Park in Sandisfield.
Moving tent platforms at April Hill in Egremont.

TRAILS

SNAPSHOT OF SUMMER TRAIL CREW PROJECTS

A 0.3mi accessible trail in Sheffield Land Trust's Ashley Falls Woods property in Sheffield, MA. The trail will highlight calcareous rock outcroppings and a test marble quarry, features that speak to the town's unique natural and economic history.

Trail improvements and invasive species control for Great Mountain Forest and the Norfolk Land Trust in Norfolk, invasive species control for the Sharon Audubon in Sharon, and trail improvements for the Cornwall Conservation Trust.

A reroute of the Taconic Crest Trail in Pittsfield State Forest.

Trail improvements in Longcope Park for the Town of Lee, trail rehabilitation in Lake Mansfield Forest, trail improvements for the Bidwell House Museum in Monterey, among others.

Appalachian Trail improvements including stone staircases and waterbars on Schaghticoke Mountain in Kent and a reroute in Bennington.

Another 0.3-mile accessible trail in the Town of Dalton's "The Pines" property. The trail will wind through a mature forest parallel to Walker Brook.



GREENAGERS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Max Whalen

Pronouns: He/Him

What years did you work for Greenagers? What was your role?

I started at Greenagers in 2020 as an assistant crew leader. Since then, I worked as a TerraCorps member in the winter and spring of 20/21 and then worked as a crew leader for the summers of 21 and 22. After graduating from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in May of 2023, I started working for Greenagers in a full time capacity as Trails Project Coordinator.

What are you currently doing for work and/or education?

Since I left Greenagers, I have been working for Off the Beaten Path Trail Works based in Turner, ME.

Has working with Greenagers impacted your current work and/or educational path? If so, how?

Working with Greenagers gave me an opportunity to learn new skills that I would have otherwise never have gotten a chance to. Greenagers really excels at getting young people engaged in the work that they are doing and educating them in whatever field that they are in. While working in trails, I was able to take deep dives into lots of different facets of trail construction like carpentry, stone masonry, chainsaw work, milling and even heavy equipment operation. I don't think that I would have been able to have all these different experiences at a different job. All these skills were very marketable in my job search and made me an attractive candidate.

Has working with Greenagers impacted you personally? If so, how?

Greenagers has absolutely impacted me in a personal way. Before Greenagers, I was not sure what my career

path would be and was not particularly excited about any of the prospects. I was unsure of my future- I was struggling in school because I hated my major (business) and work that I was doing was not fulfilling. When I started at Greenagers I could not believe my luck. I loved the people I worked with, loved the work and loved the field. I switched majors and started to excel in school. The work that I was doing was extremely fulfilling and I was presented with all these new opportunities and new experiences and so many ways to learn and grow.

Has working with Greenagers impacted your relationship with the environment? If so, how?

I have always loved being outside. Growing up I was outside more often than I was inside and it has always been my safe place. Working with Greenagers, I have been able to work in so many of the places I grew up going to. Now I go to these places with my family and friends and I can share the work that we have done with them.

Has working with Greenagers impacted your connection with your community? If so, how?

My sense of community has definitely changed when I worked with Greenagers. I worked with a lot of young people who were not very comfortable in the outdoors or who had never worked before. I am really grateful that I was able to help them through their first job and hopefully be more comfortable in the outdoors. While working on the trails it's also so great to have hikers come through and thank us for what we are doing. It made me and the crew members really feel like what we are doing impacts our community in a positive way.

What skills have you taken with you from your time with Greenagers?

Every skill I learned at Greenagers I have been able to use in the real world. Whether it be something as simple as using a ratchet strap to something like moving an 11,000 pound log over a stream, or interacting with my coworkers, each one is as valuable as the next. I could list all the skills that I have gotten from my time with Greenagers but the list would simply be too long.

Do you have future goals you'd like to share?

I am not sure about my long term career goals, there are too many things that I am excited about to choose just one. For the time being, I am going to continue to do trail work for OBP and dip my toes in different areas of work. Long term I would like to go back to school for restoration forestry.

Something special about yourself you'd like to share?

I love cozy socks and am a leftie.



TRAIL CREW WATCHING THE 2024 ECLIPSE



FRONT LAWN FOOD

Two youth crews - one from South County and one from North County - came out over April vacation to construct veggie and pollinator garden beds for households around the county. These dedicated and efficient youth installed 27 beds, including 15 at no cost for income eligible families.



PERENNIAL



Silflower
Silphium integrifolium

ANNUAL



Common Sunflower
Helianthus annuus



Lewis flax
Linum lewisii



Common Flax
Linum usitatissimum



Sainfoin
Onobrychis viciifolia



Soybean
Glycine max

PERENNIAL ATLAS PROJECT

This spring, April Hill Farm will begin a three year project through the Land Institute, titled the Perennial Atlas Civic Science Project. The Land Institute has long been a leader in diversifying agriculture and creating perennial polyculture systems to restore native ecosystems.

This year, our farm crew will become civic scientists as we plant three perennial grain crops and their annual counterparts. Over the course of three years we will engage as researchers and keep in dialogue with The Land Institute about our findings. Activities include: various soil tests, tracking and photographing flowering periods, monthly observation updates and seed collection. Throughout the country, many other civic scientists: home gardeners, farmers and schools, with varying climates and landscapes will do the same.

CREW SPOTLIGHT



Iris Arboreal

Pronouns: she/her

Program: Farm

Job Title: Farm Crew Coordinator

IRIS AND FARM MANAGER MAEVE WILBUR

What were you doing before you began working with Greenagers?

After graduating college in May 2023, I managed the cafeteria/community garden at a biological field station in northern Michigan. Then, I traveled for a few months before starting up with Greenagers in March 2024!

What types of farms have you been involved in before April Hill?

I grew up on a small organic vegetable farm in Michigan, and in college I worked on our Campus Farm for 3 years. At Campus Farm, we sold produce to the dining halls, donated to on- and off-campus food pantries, and co-led a bunch of cool educational collaborations with other student organizations.

What is something you are excited about for the upcoming season?

I'm excited to get to know the youth crew, keep learning, and eat so many yummy fresh veggies!

When you're not farming, what do you enjoy doing?

I love hiking, exploring, dancing, cooking, reading, and making art, usually printmaking and watercolor!

TRADES

SNAPSHOT OF UPCOMING PROJECTS

We're so excited for season two of our newest crew: the Build Crew (a project of the Pathways to the Trades program). 5 young people will learn a variety of building and construction skills as they work on projects related to conservation and agriculture.

A sampling of 2024 Summer Build Crew Projects

- Building a mobile and towable shed to be used at the A.T. with the help of the Berkshire Waldorf school.
- Building firewood storage structures with Indian Mountain School.
- Constructing a kiosk, signage and picnic tables for the Sheffield Historical Society.



CREW SPOTLIGHT



Gabriel Doudna

Pronouns: he/she/they
Program: Trades/Build Crew
Job Title: Crew Leader

GABRIEL BUILDING AN OUTDOOR READING ROOM FOR THE EGREMONT LIBRARY

What were you doing before you began working with Greenagers?

I worked at a convenience store which was one of those jobs that was “just a job.”

What types of (Trades/Conservation/Farm) work have you been involved in before Greenagers if any?

None! I learned almost everything I know about construction from the Trades Program directors.

Has working with Greenagers changed your relationship with work? If so how?

Working here has provided me with an example of work that’s personally fulfilling. It’s fulfilling to me to build and restore and provide lasting contributions to my community.

What is something you are excited about for the upcoming season?

I’m looking forward to figuring out how best to teach the skills I’ve learned to new students. Teaching was never something I thought I’d be any good at, but since starting my little adventure in education as a crew leader I think I’ve been getting the hang of it.

Outside of Greenagers, what do you enjoy doing?

I make music! I play in and write songs for my jazz band and produce dubstep and rave music on the computer.

MISSION

Greenagers works to inspire teens and young adults to develop deep connections to land, work, and community. We prepare youth for success in work and life by offering paid jobs and education in the areas of conservation, sustainable farming, and related trades.

VISION

Greenagers envisions a culture of community where young people work together to restore forests and fields, grow food, and build spaces that support natural systems and sustainability.

To realize this vision, we work to get young people outside; working with their hands; talking to each other and their elders; listening, leading, and learning. We believe that this work is foundational and the heart of a culture that values education, stewardship, and community.

STAFF

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GREENAGERS

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