



The New York Sea Grant waterfront stewards program educated the public and prepared students for eco-careers

NYSG Stewards Find Career Success

Since 1985, students working as stewards in New York's Eastern Lake Ontario region have educated local citizens and visitors about how to enjoy New York's natural resources in an ecologically-friendly way. Since 2006, New York Sea Grant has managed the steward program as an environmental science workforce incubator providing students with valuable career development experience.

NYSG Responds with Eco-Career Training

The stewards' focus on ecologically-responsible use of the Eastern Lake Ontario Dunes and Wetlands Area and Salmon River Corridor in Oswego County expanded over time to include education on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species in seven counties stretching from Sodus and Port Bays in Wayne County to Black Pond in Jefferson County, inland to Oneida Lake, and sites in Oswego County Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga and Madison counties.

The stewards reached audiences through public outreach events, the development of publications and PowerPoint presentations, one-on-one interaction, and assisting implementation and shoreline stewardship projects.

In 2014, NYSG tracked the "where they are now" career success of former stewards. The stewards credit the program with contributing to their futures as scientific professionals, conservationists, and environmental educators.

Former stewards are now employed with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Terrestrial Environmental Specialists, Inc., United States Geological Survey, Washington State University Extension, and The Nature Conservancy's Growing Leaders on Behalf of the Environment internship program; other agencies and organizations; and by industry.

Former stewards value their NYSG experiences:

"My time as a NYSG steward prepared me to think on my feet, be adaptive to situations, and react to diverse stakeholders respectfully and professionally" — *Shelby Persons, Terrestrial Environmental Specialists*



The New York Sea Grant Launch Stewards Program helped prepare college students for eco-careers. Photo: NYSG/David G. White

"Becoming a NYSG steward made me more aware of the importance of stakeholder engagement in the conservation process" — *John Koltz, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.*

"Being a NYSG steward really opened my eyes to the amount of debate that surrounds environmental issues and policies" — *Kyle Teufel, Baltimore Woods Nature Center*

"I gained the ability to translate complicated scientific information, making it more easily understood by the public" — *Ryan Thompson, Bristol Myers Squibb*

"Being a NYSG Scholar and Launch Steward, I developed an understanding of how to work collaboratively with private and public interests" — *Matt Brincka, Washington State University Extension*

Partners:

- Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance
- Municipalities
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York State Parks
- The Nature Conservancy
- US Fish & Wildlife Service

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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