

Saco Ranger Station Native Plant Pollinator Garden on the White Mountain National Forest

2008 Accomplishments

The Saco Ranger Station is situated at the eastern end of the Kancamagus Highway in Conway, NH, the most visited ranger station on the White Mountain National Forest. It's original landscape, installed in the 1980's consisted of mostly non-native species including many now considered invasive. The invasives have been removed over the past decade and in 2008 a garden design highlighting species that visitors may encounter while walking the numerous miles of trails found on the Saco Ranger District was developed. Other themes of the garden are the use of native plants in the home or business landscape and the value of these plants to native pollinators.

During the summer of 2008 the garden area was reclaimed and converted from lawn by removing sod, stumps, roots, and rocks removed, the soils appropriately amended, and an automatic irrigation system installed. In early September, over 1,000 pots of ninety-two species were replanted. Species planted were of native New England genotype and included examples of native grasses, forbs, ferns, shrubs, and trees.

In addition to the plantings three interpretive signs, one each on woodland wildflowers, ferns, and meadow wildflowers were procured and installed. Each sign highlights roughly twenty species and their pollinators, and provides an overview of that habitat type. Individual plant signs were purchased and are currently being printed and will be put out in the spring of 2009. The impression these gardens made on the visitors to the Ranger Station was apparent immediately. Prior to installation visitors made quick trips from their cars into the building to use the facilities and gather needed information. Since the garden has been installed visitors move more slowly taking time to read the interpretive signs and observe the plants and pollinators.



Ranger station entrance and new gardens.
Photo: Chris Matrick

Year Awarded: 2008

Project completion: 2008

Report number: 1 of 1

Expenditures:

- FY2008 funding - \$22,000
- Site Prep/Staff - \$71,146.62
- Materials - \$11,643.83
- Interpretation - \$3,241.55

Contractors, Partners, Cooperators

- New England Wild Flower Society
- Van Berkum Nurseries
- White Mountain Garden Club

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Helianthus divaricatus and *Ilex verticillata* were just two of the 92 species planted in the native plant pollinator gardens.
(photos by Amanda Weise)



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