



GREENBEAT

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GREEN TEAMS SOMERVILLE AND LAWRENCE

GROWING THEIR CONSERVATION ETHIC AT MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NHP



To drive from Somerville, Massachusetts to rural Vermont is like watching a time lapse photo in reverse. The buildings get smaller, the roads get narrower, and the tree cover gets thicker and thicker. The change in the landscape struck the 25 members of Groundwork Somerville's Green Team as they journeyed into Vermont in July. Team member Saladin Islam called it "going from a city world to this...beauty." Team leader Aviva Asher recalled that her favorite part of the trip was "hearing [her team's] first reactions to seeing Vermont" and, she added, "smelling the cows." The teens noticed a lot of differences as they worked with Groundwork Lawrence's 15-member Green Team to set up their campsite that first night. *(continued on back)*

The National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program (RTCA) and Groundwork USA have teamed up to engage teens from diverse backgrounds with their local National Parks as part of the Groundwork Green Team Program.

For more information visit: www.groundworkusa.net

Besides the swarms of insects, the air was cleaner, the water fresher, and, of course, there were trees everywhere.

On their first morning in Vermont, the Teams learned about and toured Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park with a National Park Service ranger. Rose Gonzales, Education Programs Manager at Groundwork Lawrence, especially enjoyed this part because the teens got “a feel of how [the rangers] got to those positions.” Green Team members began to realize that the trees they assumed had been growing for hundreds of years were in fact planted less than 100 years earlier. As team member Enxhi Popa explained, “all the trees were planted by people. It was nice to see that people really thought about it and wanted to change Vermont.”

The focus of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Park is exactly the kind of stewardship Enxhi described. At the end of the 19th century, Vermont was only 20% tree cover, and early conservationists George Perkins Marsh and Frederick H. Billings were concerned with deforestation and the failing farms around Woodstock. Billings began reforesting the hills around the Marsh estate, a trend that gradually spread to the rest of the state, and today, the tree cover has risen to 80%, a remarkable feat of reforestation. The Green Team members were able to see tangible results of the work of people like themselves. Oscar Murillo of Green Team Somerville explained that he liked seeing “how everything has changed over the years, going from no trees to trees.”

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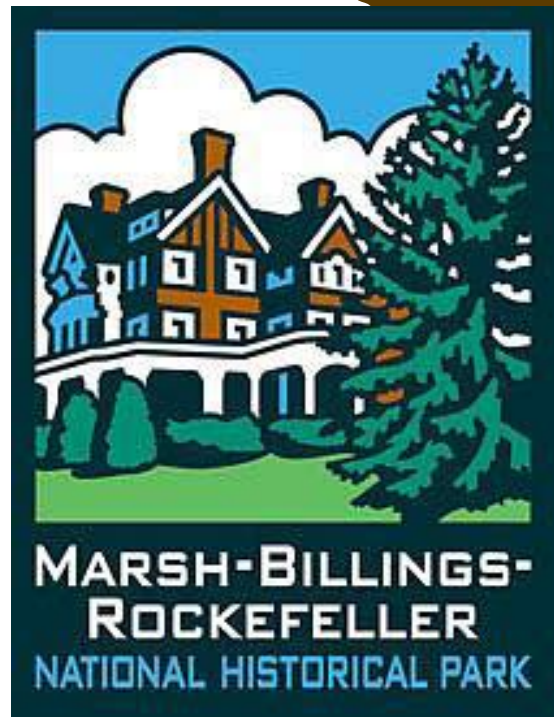
In this spirit, the Green Teams set to work after lunch maintaining the Marsh-Billings trails. They raked, weeded, mulched and laid down gravel. After a long day, they drove back to the campsite and lit fires for dinner. Here, relaxing after hard

work, the two green teams got to mingle, sharing stories and iPods. And then, Green Team Somerville member Charlie O’Leary recalled with satisfaction, “we went in the tent and got to sleep—I was tired after every day.”

The Green Teams parted ways in the morning: Green Team Lawrence headed home, while Green Team Somerville spent a few more days in Vermont, visiting King’s Farm, Emerald Lake State Park, and other Vermont attractions. Though they spent comparatively little time together, working with another Green Team was a valuable experience for both teams. Just as the visit to Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller allowed the Green Teams to be a part of a conservation effort over a hundred years old, working with each other gave them a glimpse of the vast network of conservation efforts that exist today.

My team loves meeting other youth that are doing similar work because it shows them that they’re not doing this in a bubble, there are other people out there doing what they do.

Rose Gonzales
Education Programs Manager
at Groundwork Lawrence



The focus of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park in Woodstock, VT is conservation. It gets its names from George Perkins Marsh, Frederick H. Billings, and Mary French and Lawrence S. Rockefeller, who pioneered and carried out mindful forestry practices, which turned the failing farms around Woodstock back into a thriving, tree-covered countryside. The area was made a National Historic Park in 1998, and today carries on the legacy of conservation with programs like “A Forest for Every Classroom” and the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute.