



NPS-RTCA FELLOW BLOG

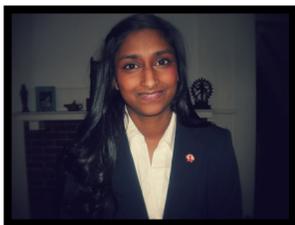


Blog #1: Groundwork Somerville (MA)



February 2015

Hi! My name is Rani Jacobson and I am the newest Fellow at the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (NPS-RTCA) program at the Boston office. I am funded through Conservation Legacy and working a lot with the NPS as well as Groundwork USA (GW). Throughout the next year, I will be blogging about all the interesting experiences I get and amazing work NPS and GW is doing!



Special points of interest:

- *Community Boil Down Day is March 7th from 10-2 pm at the Grow Center (7 Vinal St., Somerville, MA)*
- *For more info about Groundwork Somerville visit: www.groundworksomerville.org*
- *For more info about the Rivers, Trails and Community Assistance Program visit: www.nps.gov/rtca*

It is only my first "full" week of my fellowship, mainly due to the 8 feet of snow Mother Nature dropped on Boston, and I am already out in the field! I met up with Groundwork Somerville (GWS) at Tufts University for their annual Maple Syrup tapping expedition. Over the last few years, GWS has engaged their Green Team and their community through New England's favorite breakfast condiment, maple syrup! Every year, people get to participate in everything that goes into syrup production: from the tapping to the boiling to the tasting.

Due to the extra cold and snowy conditions, the actual tapping was postponed, but when it was safe enough, I trekked across Boston to Tufts' Somerville campus and met up with Executive Director Chris Mancini, Program Director Jess Bloomer, MASS-Lift/Americorps Service Coordinator Sarah Lindsay, and the majority of the Green Team. After a quick demonstration, we broke up into groups and started tapping our own trees.

In order to get the most amount of sap out of the tree, we had to drill the hole on the south-facing side of



Two Groundwork Somerville Green Team students standing proudly next to their freshly tapped sugar maple tree at Tufts University on February 17th, 2015.

the tree and as directly under a branch as possible. Then we fit the spile into the hole; hammered it about an inch and a half into the tree. We placed our metal bucket so that it hung right underneath the spile so that the sap would drip right into the bucket. Lastly, we placed the lid right over the bucket to keep snow, rain and dirt out.

Over the next two weeks, Green Teamers, GWS staff and other interested community members will wait for the sap to fill up in the buckets and then start collecting it. The biggest challenge to the project this year is the temperature. In order for the sap to collect in the buckets, the temperature has to be above 32 degrees Fahrenheit. So no more snow or freezing temperatures, Boston!

On March 7th, GWS will be hosting a Community Boil Down at the Growing Center on Vinal Street. There will be fun, games and stations demonstrating each part of the maple syrup process. Check it out if you have the chance!

My favorite part about my first GW Trust visit was watching how the Green Team students enjoyed working in conservation and how special the relationship between the GWS staff and the Green Team was. It brought me back to my high school days working on the trails in Boston's Urban Wilds and being inspired by my crew leaders' passion and commitment to the environment. Who knew that I'd be back in Boston working with the next generation of young environmental leaders?



A Green Team member hammers a spile into the sugar maple tree to promote the flow of the maple sap out of the tree and into the bucket.