

Trail Apprentice, age 9, highlights the New England NST



To find out what has been happening on the New England National Scenic Trail (NET), the Partnership for National Trails System (PNTS) caught up with Jayde Surette, a 9-year-old “Trail Apprentice” who works with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). The Appalachian Mountain Club is one of two trail organizations dedicated to the New England NST; the other is the Connecticut Forest & Parks Association (CFPA). Jayde works as an apprentice for the AMC NET office based out of Northampton, MA.

How did you get involved as a Trail Apprentice for the New England National Scenic Trail?

My dad works for the Appalachian Mountain Club as the Trail Planner for the NET, so he thought it might be cool for me to be his trail apprentice, since we have been hiking the M-M for the past nine years. The NET goes past our favorite outdoor rock-climbing and hiking areas. Also, I have gone to an outdoor adventure education camp since I was 4 years old, so my dad thinks I can tell what kids like and don't like about being outdoors.

Can you tell us a little about what has been going on with the AMC office of the NET recently?

We have been working on some ways to protect the land around the NET, and on creating fun trail events for people of all ages. We are planning to protect 2.5 miles of the NET this year, and to hold at least 2 fun trail events.



Jayde Surette painting trail blazes for the NET.

Photos submitted by Joshua Surette.

Can you tell us more about the trail events?

We are holding two events during National Trails Day weekend. One will be at Rising Corner's in Southwick, MA, and one will be in Wendell State Forest. We are going to put up kiosks, do trail work, have AMC guided hikes and rock-climbing.

What do you know about the NET in Connecticut?

I learned a lot about NET activities in Connecticut when I interviewed Clare Cain. Clare has been working as the Trail Stewardship Director for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) and the NET for over a year. Clare also worked for 3 years as the Director of Trail Management for the North Country Trail Association, which she said was fantastic because she got to work with great volunteers and partners in 7 states! Clare also said that she “had the good fortune to lead trail crews in both Montana and Maine where we worked on portions of two other national trails, the Continental Divide NST and the Appalachian NST.

Is Clare planning any fun events in Connecticut this year?

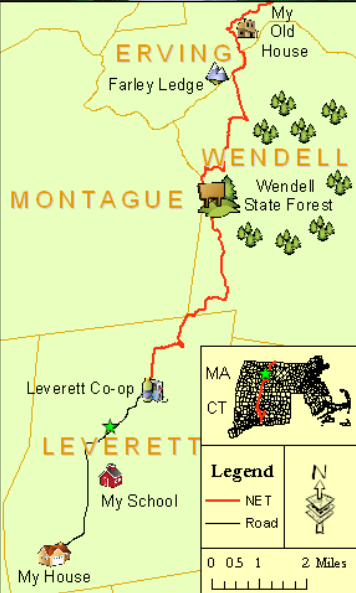
Clare says “Always!” Right now they are planning for some trail improvement projects for the spring & summer. She said she is planning on a few trail relocations, installing new signs, and organizing National Trails Day hikes. Also, Clare is working on some maps of the trail. Clare and I both love making maps!

Jayde- Congratulations on being selected to attend the National Trails Conference in Abingdon, Virginia as a Trails Apprentice! Are you looking forward to it?

Yeah, I can't wait! My dad and I are especially interested in the Environmental Health workshop track. I want to learn about how trails can protect corridors for wildlife migration and can protect open space for wildlife habitat.

Wow! Sounds like you are getting to do a lot of neat stuff as a Trail Apprentice! Thanks for your time, Jayde. See you in Abingdon!

Article Submission by Jayde and Josh Surette.



Despite her young age, Jayde has a long history with the NET, having first hiked it at the age of seven months with her parents -- well before it became a National Scenic Trail in 2009. Since that first hike in the baby-backpack strapped to her dad, Jayde has been involved with the trail doing trail work such as pruning and blazing, by exploring potential new routes, and hiking it to arrive at her favorite rock-climbing and scenic destinations.

So tell us Jayde - Do you have a favorite section of the New England National Scenic Trail?

Sections 15 & 16! Section 15 starts at the Leverett Co-op, which is close

to my house. From there it eventually goes north through Wendell State Forest, and then up to the Miller's River in Wendell, MA. Wendell State Forest is one of my favorite places to camp, climb, ski, hike and bike. Section 16 starts near Farley Ledges--which IS MY FAVORITE place to climb and hike. It goes up the beautiful waterfall at Briggs Brook, and then to Hermit Mountain. I used to live in that area, so I think it is cool that the NET can connect me from where I live now, to where I used to live, and that two of my favorite places are along the way!

What interests you about being a trail apprentice?

I like pruning the trail corridor so people can have a nice open path to walk on. It's also fun to work outside in the summer when it's warm and sunny. I also like to play around with ArcGIS and Google Earth to see interesting places.

Jayde Surette, at age 6 in 2008, helping prune a section of the New England National Scenic Trail.



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