

Northern Woodlands Conference 2026: *From Page to Place*

October 23–25, 2026 | AMC Highland Center, Bretton Woods, New Hampshire

Schedule with Session Descriptions

Updated August 17, 2026 (subject to change)

Friday, October 23

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Pre-conference Field Trips (*Directions provided in advance. Bring a bagged lunch.*)

- **The Bartlett Experimental Forest: A Quilt of Many Colors with Mariko Yamasaki, Coeli Hoover, and Chris Costello**

Join us as we explore the Bartlett Experimental Forest (BEF), a living laboratory and working landscape. Established in 1931, the forest has taught scientists and forest managers many lessons, while providing wildlife habitat, recreation, timber products, clean water for Bartlett Village, and inspiration for artists and visitors. We'll start our day at the Headquarters site with introductions and a brief overview of the history and mission of BEF, and then we'll set out on our journey. The forest is like a patchwork quilt, made up of different age classes and species mixtures, a result of both natural succession and different management treatments. In the patchwork of our forest quilt, not every fabric can be pieced in every position; soil type, elevation, and other factors influence the pattern. We will explore the changing nature of forests, visiting sites that have been managed in different ways as part of long-term experiments. We'll talk about the importance of early successional habitats, the role that a diverse range of conditions across the landscape plays in the ability of the forest to provide many values, and why different kinds of trees grow where they do. Our journey will take us to young forests and old forests, nutrient-rich sites and average sites, managed forests and unmanaged forests, and include some great scenery. Walking will be on forest roads and for short distances; good footwear is recommended. (*Limit: 20*)

- **Dry River Old-Growth Forest Field Trip with David Govatski**

Old-growth forests are rare in New Hampshire. The Dry River Old-Growth Forest is a northern hardwood forest of sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, and white ash, some exceptionally large. This field trip is a chance to learn how to recognize old-growth forests and why they matter for biodiversity, along with the other values these forests provide. David will share a checklist of old-growth characteristics to use here and on future visits, and will discuss how stand history and aerial imagery can help identify potential old-growth sites. He'll also provide references and a list of other old-growth sites to visit in New Hampshire. This easy-rated hike is a two-mile round trip with minimal elevation gain, though we will be off-trail for part of the session on uneven ground with fallen branches and logs. Bring water, lunch, a pencil, and weather-appropriate clothing. Binoculars, a camera, and a hand lens are helpful. David Govatski is a retired forester and silviculturist who has studied old-growth forests and ancient trees

across North America, and serves as a County Coordinator for the Old Growth Forest Network. (*Limit: 15*)

- **Willey House History, Geology, and Ecology Walk with Rex Wiley and Ted Loukides**

Description coming soon. (Limit: 15)

- **Wildlife Tracking Intensive: a Foundational Ecoliteracy with Daniel Hansche**

Explore wildlife tracking as a unique form of ecoliteracy. We'll read the tracks, signs, and trails of our wild neighbors as humans have since the beginning of time. The stories written in the soil have long informed the actions of those who can read them, whether following animal trails toward sustenance or helping manage and care for species of concern. This is, and has always been, a natural skill. As readers of Northern Woodlands, participants already hold many pieces of the puzzles we'll encounter. This offering provides the tools to put those pieces together and read the stories written in the natural world. (*Limit: 15*)

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Registration – *Washburn*

2:15 – 3:00 pm

Green Tech Tours with AMC Interpretive Team – *Washburn*

3:00 – 3:45 pm

Wildlife Encounter with Squam Lakes Science Center – *Washburn*

4:00 – 5:30 pm

Welcome & Plenary 1: Samaa Abdurraqib – *Washburn*

Description coming soon.

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Reception: Sponsored Drinks & Cash Bar – *Washburn*

Complimentary beverage selections courtesy of our sponsors, Cathedral Ledge Distillery and Schilling Beer Co.

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Dinner – *Crawford Dining Room*

7:30 – 8:15 pm

Music with Ben Cosgrove – *Washburn*

Traveling composer-performer Ben Cosgrove will play several selections of his geography-inspired instrumental music while sharing stories about the landscapes behind each song.

8:15 – 9:15 pm

Night Sky Presentation with AMC Interpretive Team – Washburn

Join the AMC naturalists for a talk on the importance of dark skies and how AMC is doing its part to keep night skies dark. Weather permitting, we'll head outside to view the stars, hopefully catching a few meteors. Please bring warm layers, a chair or blanket, and a headlamp with a red light setting if you have one; a limited supply of chairs, sit pads, blankets, and headlamps will be available to borrow. If weather doesn't cooperate, we'll set up our indoor planetarium instead. It holds 12 people at a time, so we'll run 15-minute sessions for multiple groups.

Saturday, October 24

6:30 – 7:30 am

Woods Walks with AMC Interpretive Team

6:30 – 8:30 am

Breakfast – Crawford Dining Room

8:30 – 9:30 am

Opening Remarks & Plenary 2: Biography of a Landscape with Sarah Garlick – Washburn

Our experiences of the land are shaped by the hidden histories of rocks, landforms, and ecological communities. Join Sarah Garlick for an immersion into the quiet tales held within and among the White Mountains' many forms: cliffs and boulders, ridgelines and soils, forests and floodplains. Her morning talk will journey across more than 400 million years of geologic time and consider the role this beloved landscape might play for the future of plants and animals in North America. Trained as a geologist and writer, with a career in conservation and a lifelong dedication to mountain adventures, Sarah brings a mix of experiential, artistic, and practical perspectives to science and scientific storytelling.

9:30 – 10:00 am

Coffee Break – Washburn

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Breakout Sessions: Select **one** 90-minute session **OR** two 55-minute sessions

10:00 – 11:30 am

Breakout Session AB: Select one (90-minutes)

- **AB1. Sensory Awareness, Story-seeking, and Writing with David George Haskell – Mt Avalon Room**
We'll explore ways of enriching and expanding our writing by using playful exercises in listening and other forms of sensory awareness. We'll use these exercises to enliven our writing and to excavate narratives and connections. Open to people with all kinds of hearing, and to anyone interested in experimenting with writing about "nature," place, and science, broadly defined. (*Limit: 15*)

- **AB2. Nature Illustration with Adelaide Tyrol and Nona Estrin – Library**

Anyone interested in the outdoors and willing to practice some basic art skills is welcome at this field drawing workshop. Participants will learn simple gestures, contour, and watercolor techniques for quickly recording observations and experiences in nature. We encourage people to bring a simple set of watercolors and/or watercolor pencils, a sketch pad, pen, and pencils. If you're more comfortable sitting on a seat than the ground, consider bringing a folding stool or chair. The workshop will focus on connecting visually with nature and exploring art as a tool for observation and communication. Like field science, field drawing takes curiosity, patience, and attention to detail. Drawing outdoors encourages people to slow down, look closely, and deepen their connection to the natural world. (*Limit: 20*)

- **AB3. Turning Stones: A Hands-On Look at Stream Life with Declan McCabe – Mt Webster Room**

Join Declan McCabe, author of *Turning Stones: Discovering the Life of Water* for a hands-on, microscopic exploration of macroinvertebrates collected from Gibbs Brook at the AMC Highland Center. Stream macroinvertebrates are excellent indicators of stream health. This workshop will introduce the major groups and tools for collecting and rapid identification to provide inspiration for your next piece of writing. Microscopes will be available to focus on the “catch of the day” and reveal some of the basic biology of this fascinating and ubiquitous group of organisms. Most of us live within half a mile of the nearest river or stream, so why not get to know the neighbors? (*Limit: 12*)

10:00 – 10:55 am

Breakout Session A: Select one (55-minutes)

- **A1. Forests in a Changing Climate: Building Resilience in Northeastern Forests with Alexandra (Ali) Kosiba, PhD – Washburn**

Climate change is no longer a future concern—it is already reshaping forests across the Northeast. Warmer winters, longer growing seasons, heavier rain events, drought, invasive pests, and shifting tree species are changing how forests grow, regenerate, and respond to disturbance. What do these changes mean for the future of our forests, and how can we respond? In this engaging, science-based presentation, Ali will explore the latest research on climate change impacts in northeastern forests and translate it into practical strategies for stewardship. Drawing from forest ecology, climate science, and decades of applied research, she will examine how changing temperature and precipitation patterns influence forest health, regeneration, and species composition, while highlighting approaches that can help forests adapt to an uncertain future. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the ecological processes already underway, learn why resilience depends on maintaining diverse and structurally complex forests, and discover management practices that support healthy forests capable of continuing to provide clean water, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, recreation, and sustainable wood products.

- **A2. Plants of the Northern Forest: Making a Landscape-based Field Manual with Jerry Jenkins**

– *Fred Stott Room*

For those of us who work with living plants in natural landscapes, field manuals are essential tools. The great ones, which I take as scientific masterpieces, both help us identify plants and understand them. Indeed, I would assert, they make a strong case that identification and understanding are co-functional: to do either well, you must do both. After fifteen years and over forty publications on northern forest plants, I have decided that it is time to write a field manual myself. It will be, by design, a small manual rather than a great one: about 1,600 species, grouped in seven landscape groups, with about 40 individual landscapes within these groups. It will, however, be innovative: the first manual to use color vector drawings throughout; the first to be organized by landscape and vegetation; the first to tell you what you are likely to see as well as what you have seen; and the first to present, in drawings and pictures, the plant-landscape relations of an entire flora. The project is well underway. This talk will be about where we are and where we are going. I'll talk about why prediction matters and when it fails; how to reduce a flora, divide and order landscapes, and parse species; why floras show patterns that species don't; and why microclimate, habitat diversity, life forms, and species pools are (still) the keys to these patterns.

10:55 – 11:05 am

Break (*move between sessions*)

11:05 am – 12:00 pm

Breakout Session B: Select one (55-minutes)

- **B1. Your Mushroom Teacher with Maria Pinto** – *Washburn*

During this interactive workshop, participants will take a mycelial tour of Northeastern fungi, explore the concept of mycofuturism, and investigate what fungi and their fascinating lifeways might teach us about how to live now. Come prepared to write and share!

- **B2. Dead Ups and Downs with Steve Roberge** – *Fred Stott Room*

Snags and coarse woody material (CWM) serve a critical function in our northern forests. They provide unique habitat, create forest structure complexity, store carbon, protect and regenerate soils, and serve as nurse logs for regenerating trees and understory plants. The amount of snags and CWM in many of our forests is low due to past land use. This session will cover the functional and ecological roles these often stepped over, walked by, and ignored features in the northern forest. We will also discuss best management practices for increasing snags and CWM during management and over time.

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Lunch – *Crawford Dining Room*

12:40 pm – 1:25 pm

Editors Panel with Meghan McCarthy McPhaul, Catherine Wessel, Chris Woodside, and Todd Davis

– Washburn

Join this group of editors for a conversation about how to successfully pitch a story idea and get your writing published. What aspects make a successful pitch? What can derail a pitch and send it to the NO pile? If an editor *does* accept your idea, what happens next? Panelists include Meghan McCarthy McPhaul (editor of *Northern Woodlands*, author, former freelance writer), Catherine Wessel (assistant editor of *Northern Woodlands*, editor for *The Outside Story* series, writer), Christine Woodside (editor of the journal *Appalachia*, writer, author), and Todd Davis (writer, poet, editor, and *Northern Woodlands* columnist).

1:30 – 3:30 pm

Breakout Sessions: Select **one** 90-minute session **OR** two 55-minute sessions

1:30 – 3:00 pm

Breakout Session CD: Select one (90-minutes)

- **CD1. Drafting New Ideas using the Crawford Notch Landscape as Inspiration, a Writing Workshop with Chris Woodside** – *Mt Webster Room*
This workshop will begin inside and then quickly proceed outside. We will walk around the nearby lake for about 40 minutes, observing signs of wildlife and human marks on this area. Using observation and guided prompts, we will then return inside. We'll examine how historic cataclysms such as wildfires, the Willey House destruction, extreme weather, and navigation challenges can bring out new stories from your own past. Come to this ready to listen, look, and write new words. We will explore personal and land histories, fear, joy, and more. (*Limit: 15*)
- **CD2. Intimacy and Perspective: How to Begin Making a Poem with the Forest, a Writing Workshop with Todd Davis** – *Mt Avalon Room*
In this generative workshop, we will try to answer the question, *What is required of a writer to make a poem with the help of the forest?* By looking at matters of framing and perspective, as well as the notion of intimacy, we'll begin to draft lines that address our relationships with the greater-than-human natural world, seeking to represent its complexity, questioning traditional ideas of what is beautiful or ugly, and learning how image, metaphor, and sound carry such possibilities. (*Limit: 15*)
- **CD3. Wild Sounds Experience with Skooby Laposky** – *Library*
Description coming soon. (Limit: 12)

1:30 – 2:25 pm

Breakout Session C: Select one (55-minutes)

- **C1. Three Moss Lessons with Jerry Jenkins – Washburn**

The mosses—old, imaginative, nonintuitive, enduring—are special favorites of mine. Liverworts are ok, or better than ok, and lichens a lovely sort of micro-scenery. But mosses are special, deep even, and I look forward to talking about them with you. My premise is that, because they are small and choosy, mosses see things differently than larger plants. Thus a forest that might be one world for trees is a batch of islands to mosses. A bog is an ancient kingdom where the sphagnums still tell stories of the Permian ice. A wet cliff is a lush but dangerous mountainscape, fed by glaciers, structured by frost and avalanches. In this lecture, drawn from the moss lessons I write for the Atlas Project, I'll take you to three moss worlds and introduce you to some favorite mosses. Lesson 1, Slabs Aren't All Bad, is about how a small and persistent group of mosses in the Champlain Hills survives in episodically wet habitats on rocky xeric hills, and how they may have changed the hills in the process. Lesson 2, Philanthropy and Competition, is about the sphagnum mosses of poor fens and the peatlands they construct. Lesson 3, If We Must, is a parable about cleverness. It is about how the dungmosses, a tiny, high-northern group, developed an amazing evolutionary solution to a patchy-resource problem, and then found it didn't help them all that much.

- **C2. Setting Up a Seasonal Nature Journal with Clare Walker Leslie – Fred Stott Room**

Join Clare Walker Leslie to set up a Seasonal Nature Journal, for your own use, personal or professional. As our climate and environment change, Citizen Science and Phenology Records are increasingly valuable for recording these changes, even in your own backyard. Nature Journaling has long been a historical way of recording, and is now increasingly used, in this country and internationally. Clare will show ways to document in both word and image, through direct observation. No previous drawing necessary. Clare has kept 62 Nature Journals since 1978, and is seeing increasing changes in her own recordings. With fifteen books in print, her ways of teaching Nature Journaling have grown in popularity. Bring paper and pencil or pen, as we plan to walk and record outdoors, so bring suitable clothing. (*Limit: 20*)

2:25 – 2:35 pm

Break (*move between sessions*)

2:35 – 3:30 pm

Breakout Session D: Select one (55-minutes)

- **D1. Logging Railroads of the White Mountains with David Govatski – Washburn**

Description coming soon.

- **D2. Tracking Spring Wildflower Climate Vulnerability Across Spatial Scales with Morgan Southgate – Fred Stott Room**

In this breakout session, we'll explore the stories of the wildflowers that brighten the understory of temperate deciduous forests across eastern North America in early spring. Once the canopy leafs out, this habitat becomes extremely light-limited, so these species compensate by emerging shortly after snowmelt to take advantage of unfiltered sunlight on the forest floor. Canopy trees in these forests are leafing out earlier with climate change; are spring wildflowers keeping pace, or are they at risk of losing their spring light window? For the past two years, this question has been the focus of my postdoctoral research with the Appalachian Mountain Club. After introducing you to some of the spring wildflowers found across eastern North America, I'll explain how we use community science and gridded climate data to track spring wildflower phenology (the timing of seasonal life history events, like flowering and fruiting) at a regional scale. We'll then move into a workshop where you'll learn to use iNaturalist to contribute observations to our research and practice recording phenological data from wildflower photos. Finally, I'll share what it's like to study spring wildflowers at a landscape scale in southern Vermont, and why this field-based research offers some hope for the resilience of these species in a warming climate.

3:30 – 3:40 pm

Break (*move between sessions*)

3:40 – 4:25 pm

Plenary 3: How Flowers Made our World with David George Haskell – Washburn

Flowers are revolutionaries. When flowering plants evolved, they swiftly transformed the planet, and their productivity sustains much of life today. Flowers also shaped human biological and cultural evolution. They catalyzed our origins on the grasslands of Africa, feed us today, and at the center of many cultural rituals from perfume to burial. Yet, our culture often dismisses flowers as merely ornamental. Instead, they belong at the center of the story of how our world came to be. Flowers are great cooperators, uniting plants, fungi, and animals into fruitful collaborations. They are also innovators, using radical genetic flexibility to thrive in a changing world. Illusion is also an important part of the story of flowers, from the deceptive displays offered by some blooms to the hidden costs of modern horticulture. Using examples from his latest book, *How Flowers Made our World*, David Haskell will illuminate the many ways that we live on a floral planet.

4:25 – 4:35 pm

Break – *Washburn*

4:35 – 5:30 pm

Plenary 4: Penobscot Stewardship Panel with Charles Loring Jr, Alivia Moore, and Bonnie Newsom, moderated by Nolan Altvater – *Washburn*

A conversation with three Penobscot Nation stewards about the lands and waters they care for. Chuck Loring, Director of Natural Resources for the Penobscot Nation; Alivia Moore, Co-Director of *Niweskok: From the Seeds to the Stars*; and Dr. Bonnie Newsom, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Maine, bring expertise in forest and fisheries management, food sovereignty, and community-engaged archaeology. They'll explore what land return, cultural access, and long-term stewardship look like in practice.

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Reception: Sponsored Drinks & Cash Bar – *Washburn*

Complimentary beverage selections courtesy of our sponsors, Cathedral Ledge Distillery and Schilling Beer Co.

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Dinner – *Crawford Dining Room*

8:00 – 9:00 pm

Plenary 5: Skooby Laposky – *Washburn*

Description coming soon.

9:00 pm

Campfire

Sunday, October 25

6:30 – 7:30 am

Woods Walks with AMC Interpretive Team

6:30 – 8:30 am

Breakfast – *Crawford Dining Room*

8:30 – 10:30 am

Breakout Sessions: Select **one** two-hour session **OR** two 55-minute sessions

8:30 – 10:30 am

Breakout Session EF: select one (2 hours)

- **EF1. Mushroom Foray with Ari Rockland-Miller, Jenna Antonino DiMare, and Maria Pinto – Washburn**

Are you intrigued by the wild world of mushrooms? Join Ari Rockland-Miller, Northern Woodlands foraging columnist and co-founder of The Mushroom Forager, LLC, and Jenna Antonino DiMare of The Mushroom Forager, on a tour of autumn's wild mushrooms. This session will begin with a presentation covering mushroom hunting safety, strategy, sustainability and ethics. Next, put on your forager's eyes and enjoy a guided foray, fostering a sense of wonder and appreciation of our region's mycological diversity. We'll be joined by mycophile, writer, and naturalist Maria Pinto for the foray. We will not be harvesting beyond educational specimens. For the foray portion, please bring sturdy footwear, a water bottle, and a camera if you're interested in photographing specimens. Attendees will receive a ForageCast handout highlighting distinctive and gourmet seasonal wild mushrooms. (*Limit: 40*)

- **EF2. A Place in Mind Writing Workshop with Kateri Kosek – Mt Avalon Room**

In this writing workshop, we'll step into the beloved last page of *Northern Woodlands* to study the magic of short, place-based personal narratives in the spirit of the "Place in Mind" column. Participants can, if they like, come with a place they'd like to capture in writing. We'll read examples, thinking about what makes them succeed, and use those models along with writing prompts to focus on the places we hold within us. We'll consider how place has shaped us and our affinities, and what correlatives we might find in landscape. Along with imagery, tension, and dialogue, how might the patterns of the natural world lend structure to our writing? How might we use our unique knowledge to see and characterize a place compellingly? At the end of the weekend, we'll head outside to reflect on the layers of history, ecology, and geology at work in Crawford Notch, and weave those into our own experience of this place. (*Limit: 15*)

- **EF3. Wildlife Tracking: A Foundational Ecoliteracy with Daniel Hansche – Library**
(Repeat of pre-conference field trip session, see description on page 2.) (*Limit: 15*)

8:30 – 9:25 am

Breakout Session E: Select one (55-minutes)

- **E1. Dead Ups and Downs with Steve Roberge** – *Fred Stott Room*
(Repeat of B2, see description on page 5.)
- **E2. Tracking Spring Wildflower Climate Vulnerability Across Spatial Scales with Morgan Southgate** – *Mt Webster Room*
(Repeat of D2, see description on page 7.)

9:25 – 9:35 am

Break (*move between sessions*)

9:35 – 10:30 am

Breakout Session F: Select one (55-minutes)

- **F1. Forests in a Changing Climate: Building Resilience in Northeastern Forests with Alexandra (Ali) Kosiba, PhD** – *Fred Stott Room*
(Repeat of A1, see description on page 4.)
- **F2. Setting Up a Seasonal Nature Journal with Clare Walker Leslie** – *Mt Webster Room*
(Repeat of C2, see description on page 7.)

10:30 – 10:45 am

Break – *Washburn*

10:45 – 11:45 am

Plenary 6: Reconstructing Past Fire Histories of the White Mountains to inform Future Forest Management with John Neely, Simon Pendleton, Chris Guiterman, and Lisa Doner – *Washburn*

In the face of changing climate, the need for data driven management practices of Northern Forests, especially with respect to the use of fire, is becoming increasingly vital. Changes in climate, land use, and fire suppression attitudes since the 1910s have all but removed fire the region, shrinking and fragmenting the fire-adapted forest ecosystems that are home to a range of rare and threatened species. Here we report on ongoing work in the Upper Saco and Swift River Valleys in northern New Hampshire to combine tree-ring records from fire-adapted red pine stands with charcoal and pollen analyses from nearby lake and bog sediments to build comprehensive regional records of fire from modern to pre-colonial times. By reconstructing fire histories using a multi-directional approach, our research provides context for fire in the Northeast Region and wildfire preparedness, and informs efforts to conserve and maintain fire-dependent forest communities.

11:45 am

Thank You & Group Photo – *Washburn*

12:00 – 1:30 pm

Lunch – *Crawford Dining Room*

1:30 pm

Post-conference Field Trips

(Directions provided in advance.)

- **Hikes with AMC Interpretive Team**

- Gibbs Falls
- Saco Lake / Elephant Head
- Mt. Willard

- **Pondicherry Autumn Gold Woods Walk with David Govatski** (2:00 – 5:00 pm)

Visit the spectacular Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge in Jefferson and Whitefield for Autumn Gold. Tamarack, aspen, and birch will be golden, and we'll have a good chance of seeing migrating waterfowl on Cherry Pond. Learn about this 6,500-acre refuge and the partnership between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, NH Fish and Game, and NH Audubon. This easy trail walk is a bit over three miles, flat and on a rail trail. Bring a camera, binoculars, water, weather-appropriate clothing, and curiosity. Maps will be provided. David Govatski, the trip leader, has volunteered at Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge for thirty years. *(Limit: 20)*