

WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST — HISTORICORPS REHABS FABYAN GUARD STATION

— Sarah Jordan (Heritage Program Manager, WMNF)

The Fabyan Guard Station, located near the junction of Old Cherry Mountain Road in Twin Mountain in the Town of Carroll, is a one-room log cabin constructed by White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) rangers in 1923 as a base for managing surrounding National Forest lands. The cabin's historic significance was recognized in the 1980s, when it was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



In 2011, the WMNF's Heritage Program, in partnership with local history group WhiteMountainHistory.org, began to search for opportunities to restore the cabin as an important piece of local and WMNF history, spurred by the centennial celebration of the Weeks Act and the inclusion of the cabin on the Weeks Act Legacy Trail and the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance's "Behind-the Scenes Tour and Talk: Historic Bretton Woods and Crawford Notch." The United States Forest Service's Eastern Regional Office included the project in a larger effort to bring HistoriCorps to National Forests in the eastern United States. HistoriCorps is a national organization

whose mission is "to save and sustain historic places for public benefit through partnerships that foster public involvement, engage volunteers, and provide training and education."

For the 2014 project, HistoriCorps recruited volunteers online, who signed up for one-week sessions of the three-week project. Participants came from northern New Hampshire as well as other parts of the state, and from as far away as Chicago and Spain. They camped near the cabin, and HistoriCorps provided group meals at a camp kitchen. The WMNF engaged youth in the project by involving the forest's Youth Conservation Crew (high school students) and Youth Environmental Leadership Crew (college students). Under the guidance of two HistoriCorps historic preservation professionals, volunteers helped raise the cabin on jacks to replace rotten logs, rebuild the stone foundation, and repair the door and windows. They learned historic preservation ethics and skills in carpentry and traditional tools, and enjoyed the camaraderie and satisfaction of contributing to a meaningful project. At least two of the youth involved expressed interest in working on other projects with HistoriCorps and potentially pursuing a career in similar work.



The Fabyan Guard Station project stemmed from forming relationships with partners, both local and national, whose interests matched the building's needs. The HistoriCorps model of teaching hands-on historic preservation skills to volunteers was a key element of the project, and a good fit for a project on publicly owned land, such as the National Forest. Volunteers provided labor, generated local support, and contributed to media interest in the project. The oversight and direction of volunteers by qualified specialists was critical for the integrity of the historic structure and the safety of the volunteers. I encourage historic preservation and restoration professionals in New Hampshire to consider the challenges and rewards of directing a volunteer workforce on projects. Volunteers are an immediate way to connect people to a project, to enhance understanding and appreciation of historic preservation, and to foster both the demand for these important skills by a public that values them and a workforce with the ability to provide them.