What is Squam Lakes Natural Science Center?

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, founded in 1966, is a non-profit organization located in rural Holderness, New Hampshire on 200 acres adjacent to beautiful Squam Lake. Our mission is to advance the understanding of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world. The Science Center's main attraction is a live animal exhibit trail featuring native wildlife in natural enclosures. At each animal enclosure there are related interactive exhibits that teach about the natural world. Featured attractions also include beautiful Kirkwood Gardens and nature cruises aboard pontoon boats on Squam Lake.

Share your love of Nature!

What are the age and experience requirements for youth volunteers?

Youth volunteers with all levels of experience are welcome. Most services require volunteers to be at least 14 years old. Youth volunteers must submit the following information before their first day of service, using forms provided by the Volunteer Manager. NH Youth Employment Certificate required by youths 12 through 15 years old.

To obtain a Certificate, contact the Volunteer Manager for an Employers Request for Child Labor form and instructions. Even though volunteers are not "employed" or paid, state law requires this form. Youth volunteers meet with the Volunteer Manager (accompanied by a chaperone if under 16 years old) for a Volunteer Orientation prior to their first day of service.

Is training provided?

Volunteers must receive training for all services. Some assignments require completion of a formal training program provided onsite and other services offer individual training sessions.

What is the commitment?

The amount of time volunteers give to the Science Center is up to each person. Some volunteer services, such as the First Guides program, do have an annual time requirement, but other positions do not. After formal training sessions are over, volunteers may schedule time to match their own availability to opportunities.

For more information, visit us at nhnature.org or scan the QR Code.

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center
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60 YEARS

NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER
SQUAM LAKES

Youth Volunteers

NEARER TO NATURE
nhnature.org

Youth Volunteer Opportunities

Counselors-in-Training (14+)

Counselors-in-Training (CIT) is a new position in 2026. CITs assist Guided Discoveries Camp Instructors. They are between 14 and 17 years old, have a mature demeanor, and enjoy interacting with children. They attend a scheduled formal training session and commit to an additional 12 hours between July 1 and mid-August during camp season.

First Guides (14+)

First Guides are teen volunteers who are trained to be an educational presence on the Exhibit Trail. First Guides may not handle live animals in their first year, but may be with adult volunteer docents who demonstrate live animals to visitors. A commitment of 32 hours, including classroom training, is required in the first year. A chaperone is not required. There is a one-time fee of $50. Scholarships are available.

Invasive Species Removal (14+)

Youth volunteers may assist with removing invasive species, such as Oriental Bittersweet and Honeysuckle. They may be part of a group or schedule time individually. If under 16 years old, they will be with a chaperone. Groups of youth under 18 require adult chaperones.

Kirkwood Gardeners (14+)

Garden volunteers create and maintain beautiful Kirkwood Gardens (located on Route 3). Novice gardeners are welcome and work alongside experienced gardeners and staff. Service sessions are Thursday mornings between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m., May through October. Youths 14 through 15 years old must be accompanied by a chaperone.

Special Events (14+)

Volunteer opportunities may be available at special events held throughout the year, including New Hampshire Days, Birthday Bash for the Animals, and Howl-O-Ween. In August of 2026, Bioblitz Greeter positions are available for youth 14 and older. They will introduce visitors to the month-long BioBlitz activities and to the iNaturalist app so visitors may participate.

Trailhead Greeters (14+)

Volunteers welcome visitors at the beginning of the Exhibit Trail, answering questions and providing information. Youths 14 through 15 years old must be accompanied by a chaperone.

Window Washers (14+)

Ground-level exhibit windows are cleaned seven days a week. Volunteers are scheduled according to their availability from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Youths 14 through 15 years old must be accompanied by a chaperone.