

Jake Van Deursen Member Spotlight



Most recently a graduate from St. Lawrence University and a New Hampshire native, Jake is currently serving with the Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative (FEMC) in Burlington, Vermont as their Monitoring and Outreach Specialist. The FEMC is a collaborative project focused on the monitoring and management of northeastern temperate forests. Within the program, Jake focuses primarily on the collection and analysis tree monitoring data utilized by FEMC. During the cold winter months, Jake has been diligently analyzing the data collected in the field season while trying to develop a plan to minimize human error and ensure data quality. Much of this data is used to measure long term trends of the trees within their 49 plots; and is essential for measuring tree and forest health. In the coming warmer months, Jake will be heading out with a crew of interns to take his own measurements of the tree plots, focusing on continuous metrics such as specific tree measurements (i.e. growth of tree, height) and health assessments (i.e. defoliation, general health). In between his field service and data analysis planning, Jake has also been elbow-deep in the planning and organization of the annual FEMC Conference. This year the conference is specifically focused on the impacts of climate change on our surrounding temperate forests; and is gathering climate experts, forest ecological professionals, students, and community members together to discuss the future of northeastern temperate forests. Despite his busy schedule with FEMC, Jake has also found time to focus on developing his skills and being more involved in his community. He is now a certified *Project Learning Tree* Environmental Education Facilitator which employs environmental place-based learning to engage students K-12th grade. Looking forward, he will also be volunteering with Cold Hollow to Canada reviewing and validating their citizen science data. Despite this full plate, Jake never fails to find the closest mountain and go for quick ski. We are so lucky to have Jake on board with ECO this year; and we cannot wait to see the directions he continues to grow and ways he impacts Vermont's ecological communities.