

Lower Hudson PRISM Assistant

The 2017 LHPRISM Assistant was funded by the LHPRISM budget under a Ramapo College contract. The LHPRISM Assistant, Lindsay Yoder, was successful in assisting in invasive species efforts including, but not limited to, directing the BlockBuster Survey program volunteers while accepting and organizing incoming survey data, advertising events throughout the region, and coordinating the southern pine beetle monitoring program.

The LHPRISM Assistant was responsible for organizing the 103 BlockBuster Surveyors and ensuring that surveyors had everything they needed to complete and submit their survey assignments. Management efforts included constant email and newsletter communications, attending trainings to instruct surveyors on how to operate the smart phone application, assigning block maps, aiding surveyors in plant identification and GPS operation, and accepting submitted survey data components. Lindsay monitored the incoming survey data from the new smart phone application daily and was responsible for quality checking instances of species found on the Emerging Species list. Lindsay would thank volunteers for their efforts and offer tips to a successfully survey, and distributed volunteer T-shirts to those who completed blocks.

In June and July, the LHPRISM participated in an effort to monitor for Southern Pine Beetle (SPB), an invasive insect emerging in our area. Coordination of this monitoring project involved working with Jessica Cancelliere and Tom Schmeelk at the NYSDEC to prepare assignments, supplies and maps, and train volunteers. 8 volunteers who were assigned to check 14 SPB traps located throughout the region. Overall, the SPB monitoring project struggled to draw volunteers this season. The monitoring effort was a total of 67 volunteer hours that contributed to the detection of SPB at Bear Mountain, Schunnemunk, Roosa Gap, Shawangunk Ridge, and Minnewaska State Forests.

Assistant responsibilities also included posting any LHPRISM partner-hosted events or invasives-related events to the LHPRISM website calendar as well as advertising LHPRISM projects and accomplishments on the Facebook page.