Students Make a Splash with Land, Water, and History

Learning about the estuary is not just about the science, it’s also all about the history! To bring this multidisciplinary idea home, the Delaware Reserve partners with the Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs program to organize and host the annual “Make a Splash Water Festival.”

Fourth grade students from across the state attend to participate in hands-on learning activities about Delaware’s land, water, and history. At each station, they explore a different topic like marine debris and micro-plastics, water pollution and solutions, Delaware’s wetlands, mosquitoes, the uses of water in colonial cooking, historical use of water wheels and groundwater- just to name a few.

The festival has been educating students and encouraging actions to help protect water resources for 18 years, and has become the capstone fieldtrip for many fourth grade teachers reaching over 12,000 students.

Horray for Horseshoe Crabs!

On dark, and often windy nights in May and June, volunteers armed with only a headlamp, quadrat, and data sheets head out to count spawning horseshoe crabs along the Delaware Bay beaches. Why do these volunteers spend their time on dark beaches you may wonder, well for the love of horseshoe crabs of course!

Due to over-harvesting of the crab into the 1990s, their populations and the Red Knot showed a steep decline in the Delaware Bay. To combat the decline, management controls were put in place and to ensure these controls were working- a survey was created. Now almost 20 years later, the survey still continues thanks to the help from dedicated volunteers.

On average, over 120 volunteers assist every year in the counts and over 50% of those volunteers return year after year to help!
National Estuarine Research Reserve Education
Change on the Ground in 2017

Connects
People to Estuaries

1 million+ ACRES
of natural classrooms & living laboratories with
28 INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

29 RESEARCH RESERVES

650,340 VISITORS
learn about estuaries through Research Reserve outreach & education

Aloha to our Hawai‘i Reserve, designated in 2017!

Prepares
the Next Generation

87,899 STUDENTS
take learning out of the abstract & into the outdoors

3,079 TEACHERS
are trained in the estuary & supported in the classroom

ESTUARY SCIENCE
LOCAL DATA
LAB WORK
FIELD INVESTIGATION

SKILLS BUILT
✓ Observation
✓ Asking research questions
✓ Problem solving
✓ Data driven decision making

Improves
the Environment

12,849 CITIZENS
are trained & inspired to protect their coasts & estuaries

28 RESEARCH RESERVE EDUCATORS
lead programs that foster coastal stewardship in communities in 23 states

creating value through education
39,035 volunteer hours = $942,305*

*Value of a volunteer hour is calculated at $24.14 based on data from the Independent Sector.

coast.noaa.gov/estuaries