Teachers on the Estuary comes full circle with student field trips

Vermont high school science teacher Dawn Adams first brought her students to the Reserve following her participation in our multi-day Teachers on the Estuary professional development workshop in 2014. Every year since, Dawn and her students have made the 6-hour trek to spend four days immersed in estuary science, staying overnight at the Reserve on Prudence Island. Students learn field sampling and identification techniques of everything from marsh vegetation to pesky invasive crabs. They get decked out in gloves and safety goggles before eagerly grabbing clippers and saws to help us remove thorny invasive shrubs. Connections are discovered between their landlocked state and the estuary in front of them. By the end of their visit, the students have a greater understanding and appreciation of the value of estuaries and the role each of them play as stewards of their environment.

Making a difference, one tree at a time

Every month the Reserve is fortunate to host several groups of homeschooled students ranging in age from elementary to high school. Among those students are a group of teens that have been attending Reserve programs for several years. The thing they ask to do the most, sometimes for hours a day? Battle the invasive European larch trees with clippers, loppers, and hand saws! These young adults have single-handedly removed hundreds of larch trees from our rare (and native) pitch pine forest. Despite the ever-present threat of thorns, ticks, and blisters, these kids never fail to show incredible enthusiasm and dedication to the project, one they truly have made their own.

"Helping with the European larch tree project (invasive removal) is a great experience because I get to help save the native species on Prudence Island."

Libby, age 13
Homeschool student

Narragansett Bay Reserve is one of 29 sites in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Each site is a state federal partnership that combines research, monitoring, and education to advance the understanding and management of estuarine environments.
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

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

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

Improves
the Environment

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

Protect wildlife
Monitor water quality
Plant native species
Clean up the coasts

SKILLS BUILT

Observation
Asking research questions
Problem solving
Data driven decision making

VOLUNTEER ACTIONS

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

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

cost.noaa.gov/estuaries