Teachers on the Estuary Training Leads to Student Success

Most of Marci Sponsler’s seventh-grade students had never heard of an estuary. Then Sponsler attended her first Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE) training at the Tijuana River Reserve. She returned to Roosevelt Middle on fire to use the estuary as a living classroom, using concepts from TOTE and NERRS Estuaries 101. With her fellow teachers, she created a curriculum that allows students to study estuaries, in the field and classroom, and make evidence-based conclusions about how they are impacted by development, pollution, and climate. Nearly 50% of students tested on their estuary knowledge got a B or better, and their school has a new curriculum that aligns nicely with California’s Next Generation Science Standards.

Eight Years of Binational Watershed Clean Ups

2017 marked the 8th Annual Tijuana River Action Month. Tijuana River Action Month (TRAM) is a month-long series of events coordinated with 7 agencies and non-profits from both sides of the border within the Tijuana River Watershed. During the five weeks between September 16th and October 14th, there were a total of ten TRAM events in the United States and Mexico. These events included cleanups, habitat restoration, and environmental workshops. Since 2010, volunteers have removed 261 tons of trash. Volunteers cross-trained in stewardship and interpretation help to educate TRAM participants.

California’s Tijuana River 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

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

coast.noaa.gov/estuaries

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.