Delaware Research Reserve

Education is Change on the Ground

Bringing Water and History Education to 4th Grade Classes

With some help from the John Dickinson Plantation, National Parks Service, and numerous partners within the state of Delaware, The Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve (DNERR) was able to return to a full day, in person Make a Splash Festival in 2022. The annual Make a Splash festival connects fourth grade classes with hands on science and Delaware history education. In 2021, while many schools were still under field trip restrictions, this educational opportunity was offered virtually with videos and worksheets provided by DNERR and their partners. In 2022, while still adhering to COVID-19 protocols, DNERR was able to host 374 students from five different schools at the St. Jones Reserve, making the return of the in person Make a Splash festival a success.

Blackbird Creek Fall Festival

The Blackbird Creek Fall Festival is hosted by DNERR annually on the third Saturday in October. The Blackbird Creek Fall Festival was originally hosted to build connections between the Reserve and the local community members after a popular, privately owned, campground was acquired into the Blackbird Creek component of the Reserve. Now, the Blackbird Creek Fall Festival acts a day of family fun complete with hay wagon rides, canoe trips, activities for kids, and local artisans, musicians, and food vendors. The connection to the local community has not been lost. The Festival provides opportunities for the community to interact with the Reserve and gain information from several educational vendors in attendance, including many from our state partner, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. After canceling the 2020 festival and having strict COVID-19 guidelines to follow in 2021, the Blackbird Creek Fall Festival was back and better than ever in 2022 with 1,400 participants in attendance.

Connect

3,061 visitors, public program and outreach participants

Prepare

1,323 students engaged
2,913 student contact hours

Improve

609 community scientists activated
1,682 volunteer hours

“I really enjoyed myself, and I know the kids had an amazing time. The bus ride back some of us had brief conversations about the stations!”

Make a Splash Teacher

“The festival was great! There were so many enthusiastic visitors to my table that I got to share my activity with hundreds of adults and children.”

Blackbird Creek Fall Festival Educational Vendor

The Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve is one of 30 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 2022

Connects
People to Estuaries

1 million+ ACRES of natural classrooms & living laboratories with 26 INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

Hello to the Connecticut Reserve, designated in 2022!

296,131 VISITORS learn about estuaries through Research Reserve outreach & education

Prepares
the Next Generation

54,773 STUDENTS take learning out of the abstract & into the outdoors

4,347 TEACHERS are trained in the estuary & supported in the classroom

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

ESTUARY SCIENCE
LOCAL DATA
LAB WORK
FIELD INVESTIGATION

Improves
the Environment

10,570 CITIZENS are trained & inspired to protect their coasts & estuaries

30 RESEARCH RESERVE EDUCATORS lead programs that foster coastal stewardship in communities in 25 states

Creating value through education 37,371 volunteer hours = $1,119,261*

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

*Value of a volunteer hour is calculated at $25.95 based on data from the Independent Sector.

cost.noaa.gov/estuaries