FLORIDA

GTM Research Reserve
Education is Change on the Ground

2022

Increasing Accessibility at the Estuary

The estuary is a beautiful place, full of biodiversity. For many, the estuary is part of daily life and one in which all of the senses can enjoy. There are familiar salt marsh smells, background sounds of birds and water splashing, picturesque sunny days, and warm breezes. For those who have grown up around an estuary, its value can be easily seen.

However, how do you explain the importance of an estuary to someone who has not experienced it before? Bring them to the estuary to experience it for themselves!

In 2022, GTM Research Reserve expanded its GTM for All initiative, which seeks to provide access to the estuary for students who may otherwise miss out on such wonderful places. Throughout the year programs were provided for participants from communities that had limited access to estuarine science programs. Events included an Estuary Day at GTM, an overnight summer camp for urban core students, and monthly programs for verbal and non-verbal individuals on the autism spectrum.

These events made a positive impact, introduced the importance of coastal conservation, and expanded the possibilities of community partnerships.

GTM for All Initiative Vision:
Promote and sustain diverse community attendance, increasing the awareness of the importance of natural and cultural diversity, further showing the potential for positive interaction and community contribution to conservation efforts.

Florida's GTM 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

30 Research Reserves

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

Hello to the Connecticut Reserve, designated in 2022!

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

Estuary Science
Local Data
Lab Work
Field Investigation

Skills Built

Observation
Asking research questions
Problem solving
Data driven decision making

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

coast.noaa.gov/estuaries

Volunteer Actions

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

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

*Value of a volunteer hour is calculated at $29.95 based on data from the Independent Sector.