Elementary school teachers took peatland science into their classroom after the latest Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KB NERR) teacher training. The vision came during the field training component, as teachers lit up with the possibilities of bringing the importance of peatlands as a school-wide focus. Activities included: drone mapping of the schoolyard peatlands, soil and plant sampling, and communicating science through art (and a lot of blueberry picking!). Students and teachers gained an understanding of peatlands and their connections to climate change, groundwater, and carbon storage. This successful program is now established as a long-term focus for the K-6 grade school.

Kachemak Bay NERR’s partnership with The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) allows the Education team to provide science exploration to rural middle school and high school programs. The focus is hands-on science and field biology skill building through monthly half day Marine Science Academies. The program is designed to build awareness of harmful algal blooms and teach research skills related to plankton monitoring and identification, and food webs. These academies allow rural youth to work on science projects with professional scientists and experience how science is used in careers in Alaska.

In the fall, Kachemak Bay NERR partners with the local Kachemak Bay Campus of University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to provide internship opportunities to Semester By the Bay undergraduate students. These students live at Kachemak Bay NERR facilities and work alongside education and research staff during their semester stay. These students gain not only new skills and experiences, but also have an opportunity to build the bridges needed to move from the classroom to the workplace.
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

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

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.

cost.noaa.gov/estuaries