Students

The Rachel Carson site and Masonboro Island site of the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve serve as perfect spots for students to learn all about estuaries and their importance. Each year, hundreds of students from around North Carolina visit these sites for a hands-on experience they will never forget. Each trip is tailored to the grade level’s science curriculum standards and allows the students to see, smell, and touch all the components that make North Carolina’s estuaries so unique.

Teachers

The goal of the teacher professional development workshops is to provide K-12 teachers and environmental educators with a dynamic learning experience based on estuarine and marine science to help foster coastal environmental stewardship and informed decision-making. Workshops are aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, Ocean Literacy Concepts, and National Education Standards. Participants learn information and concepts about estuaries, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, the North Carolina coast, and current estuarine research. Participants experience field-based explorations and activities to integrate into their learning environment.

Seeds to Shoreline

Seeds to Shoreline is a hands-on restoration project designed for teachers and students to grow Spartina alterniflora (smooth cordgrass) plants in their classrooms. Through obtaining seeds, cultivating them at their school, and then planting them on Reserve property, students learn how this plant serves a crucial role in North Carolina’s estuaries. Spartina is critical to North Carolina’s habitats for shoreline stabilization and nursery habitat.
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

RESEARCH RESERVES

30

ALASKA
PUERTO RICO
HAWAII

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 $20.85 based on data from the Independent Sector.

dc.noaa.gov/estuaries