Connecting Educators to Training

The Wells Reserve’s two certified Interpretive Guide Trainers (National Association of Interpretation) facilitated two workshops in 2022. An in-person workshop drew participants from centers across New England, while a virtual workshop reached Maine State Park rangers from eighteen locations. Both workshops covered interpretive concepts and guided participants in fostering stronger and more heartfelt connections between their visitors and the natural and cultural resources of their sites.

Preparing the Next Generation

Twelve students from Portland High School, recent immigrants from Africa and Central America, spent four days at the Wells Reserve learning about endangered piping plovers on Laudholm Beach, observing an ornithologist measuring and banding birds, walking trails with a bird-language expert, kayaking on the salt marsh, and meeting "animal ambassador" owls up close. The female-identifying students experienced many "firsts" at the Wells Reserve.

Improving Community Education

Kayaking programs attracted 123 visitors in 2022. Each program featured a paddling lesson, a half mile trail walk, and more than two hours on calm tidal waters with a seasoned naturalist. Paddlers learned about the System-wide Monitoring Program, about invasive species, and about themselves while truly engaging with their surroundings.

"It will help us in our upcoming science classes and inspire some of us to be part of the many woman in fields of science."

"I learned so much and also refreshed/dusted off knowledge from long ago. I will be a better interpreter because of this course."

Maine’s Wells 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!

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

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

ALASKA PUERTO RICO HAWAII

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

coast.noaa.gov/estuaries