National Estuarine Research Reserve Education
Change on the Ground in 2019

Connects
People to Estuaries

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

29 RESEARCH RESERVES
ALASKA  PUERTO RICO  HAWAII

613,152 VISITORS
Aloha to our Hawai’i Reserve, designated in 2017!
learn about estuaries through Research Reserve outreach & education

Prepares
the Next Generation

93,916 STUDENTS
take learning out of the abstract & into the outdoors

4,784 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

13,704 CITIZENS
are trained & inspired to protect their coasts & estuaries

29 RESEARCH RESERVE EDUCATORS
lead programs that foster coastal stewardship in communities in 23 states

coast.noaa.gov/estuaries

Creating value through education
25,934 volunteer hours = $640,310*

*Value of a volunteer hour is calculated at $24.69 based on data from the Independent Sector.
Wells Research Reserve
Education is Change on the Ground

Prepare
2,482 K-12 student learners
8,420 K-12 student contact hours

Improve
4,804 people in community programs
231 community education programs

Connect
54 educators trained
828 training contact hours

Preparation the Next Generation

The Wells Reserve’s school and camp programs provide outdoor opportunities for K-12 learners, who explore and discover forest, field, salt marsh, and beach habitats first-hand. Students analyze water samples from salt pools with specialized equipment. They observe plankton while engineering their own microscopic drifters. They investigate the effects of pollution on watersheds and think holistically about solutions they can implement. Walking along the trails, they are employing all their senses. They learn by doing and have fun!

Improving Community Education

The Wells Reserve offers visitor programs during all seasons. Noontime and evening lectures inform and inspire people on topics such as climate change, current reserve research, and wildlife. Kayaking programs encourage visitors to discover the estuary while paddling through it. Walks in nature connect people to wildflowers, trees, birds, and insects. Visitors extend their learning by reading trailside interpretive signs and exploring interactive exhibits.

Connecting Educators to Training

Throughout the year, Wells Reserve educators facilitate trainings that help teachers, docents, and interpreters to share their knowledge and passion with learners of all ages. Teachers on the Estuary workshops bring teachers from many states together to learn about estuaries, with a focus on environmental change. Docent trainings prepare local volunteers to lead trailside school programs and summer walks. Reserve educators certified by the National Association of Interpretation lead trainings for interpreters from across the country, enabling them to effectively facilitate meaningful visitor experiences.

“I'm definitely making this estuary the basis of my environmental unit. You really inspired me.”

“The guides were so enthusiastic, informative, caring, and it was a great group. Loved the whole experience—even the rain 😊”

Maine’s Wells Reserve is one of 29 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.