MISSION & VISION

Seacoast Science Center’s mission is to spark curiosity, enhance understanding, and inspire conservation of our Blue Planet.

Seacoast Science Center has been dedicated to advancing marine and environmental education and conservation since 1992.

This Impact Report includes data and highlights from November 2020–October 2021.

Seacoast Science Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing educational experiences at Odiorne Point State Park on behalf of New Hampshire State Parks.

Cover photo by Brian Yurasits; back cover photo by Karen Provazza.
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FROM THE BOARD

Dear Friends,

As a young Naval Officer, I learned to appreciate the importance of having a strong, properly placed anchor. The difference between being docked or at anchor is that the anchor allows you to adjust to the changes caused by the shift in tides or winds. Seacoast Science Center has taken the position of serving as New Hampshire’s anchor for coastal and ocean education.

We have stayed on course for the past 29 years by keeping conservation education at the forefront of our mission. We offer nature-based learning opportunities for all ages—from early learners to senior rediscovery—as well as offering an accredited Marine Science Fellowship program for high school students. Our environmental day camp program attracts hundreds of campers each year, while our school field trip programs (both on-site and virtual) reach thousands more.

With the expansion of our tide pool touch tank exhibition this year, visitors can dive deeper into learning about the plants and animals that live between the tides in New England. We’ve also widened our scope beyond our backyard to help people better understand the broader issues of marine species conservation and climate change facing our one world ocean.

As we embark on our 30th year of operation, we are going full steam ahead to inspire more people to take action to help preserve our planet. Plans on deck include the renovation of our Gulf of Maine exhibit hall and to thoughtfully advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our programs and throughout our facility. These enhancements to our museum will keep us headed in the right direction to support our community with knowledge, insight and inspiration to protect the natural resources we all value and depend upon.

SSC’s Board of Directors is comprised of a diverse group of committed community leaders who provide enrichment resources for and oversight of the Center. Together, with an accomplished management team, a talented and passionate staff, and a devoted volunteer corps, our capacity for growth and success has never been greater. We are counting on your ongoing support and trust you will join us on our journey forward.

Respectfully,

Allan Waterfield  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CHAIR
Dear Friends of Seacoast Science Center,

As I reflect on the past year, it is apparent that more and more of our members, donors, and partners are recognizing Seacoast Science Center as a **community anchor** institution in New Hampshire. Lately I have been thinking about how SSC can best honor the trust implicit in being thought of as a cultural mainstay, so that we may continue to be a purposeful, positive force moving forward in the spirit of education and conservation toward a sustainable future for New Hampshire.

A few traits of an anchor institution have come into focus and they are the ones reflected throughout this Impact Report. **We are stronger together.** It is critical that SSC remains a safe space; a place for gathering, a place for honest, open conversation and fact-based education. SSC strives to be a place where everyone is welcome and accepted for their perspectives and life experiences. We work hard to ensure that every program participant and visitor is inspired to wonder, question, and explore the world around them with the hope of an even better future.

As an anchor institution SSC has an obligation to **strengthen its team**, but only after looking at itself through the lens of community need and impact. Covid-19 has given us a strange (and stressful) chance to pause, reassess, and rebuild. We are reinvesting in the organization to realize a future that will deliver a more contemporary museum experience; new programs will better meet the evolving educational requirements of our children and their schools, and seamlessly integrate coastal and marine conservation and education for seacoast New Hampshire.

SSC is committed to advancing **conservation in action**. From our ongoing work with marine mammal rescue, to supporting habitat restoration projects in our precious Odiorne Point State Park, to beach cleanups and volunteer engagement, to now directly supporting national efforts for coral reef restoration through gene banking, SSC is taking new conservation-based actions that are important extensions of our long-standing tradition of experiential learning.

Being considered a **community anchor** is an honor and responsibility that we take very seriously. Seacoast Science Center is in this position because of your trust and the faith you have given us over the years. I am excited to move forward with you. Together, we will ensure that SSC remains a place of action, a safe space within our community, and a place dedicated to creating a sustainable future through education and conservation.

Your Friend in Conservation and Education,
A COMMUNITY ANCHOR

Staying responsive to our community’s needs and the changing landscape of the Covid-19 pandemic, we introduced new nature-based engagement opportunities with safety being top priority. In addition, we strengthened our commitment to ensuring that SSC is a welcoming and accessible resource for all, investing in all-staff diversity, equity and inclusion training.

Wildlife Kayaking Tours

New Wildlife Kayak Tours provided a fun and adventurous way for participants to learn about coastal ecosystems and view wildlife above and below the water.

Big Fish Little Fish Play Day

We reintroduced opportunities for early learners after an 18-month pause due to the pandemic. BFLF Play Day features open-house style activities that engage little ones through science play and discovery.

Day Camps & After School Programs

Our Environmental Day Camp and Nature Detectives After School Programs provided safe child care for Seacoast families throughout the year.

Family Tide Pooling Programs

Family Tide Pooling programs provided the opportunity for all ages to learn and discover together, while allowing for safe social distancing from others.

Committing to Advance Diversity, Equity, Accessibility & Inclusion

Seacoast Science Center is committed to building a more welcoming and accessible institution for all visitors and members of our community. In 2021, our staff engaged in a comprehensive diversity, equity and inclusion workshop series which consisted of personal reflection, an evaluation of our facility and programs, and individual action plans to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. This foundational work will better position our management team to formalize strategies to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in all areas of Center operations.

We recognize that there is work to be done to reach our goal to be an institution where ALL PEOPLE view themselves as belonging. We acknowledge that there is power in diversity and are resolute in our desire to expand access and create new learning opportunities, building a pipeline to diversity in the marine sciences.

Seacoast Science Center is now a Museums for All participant, offering EBT and SNAP Card Holders a reduced admission fee of just $2 per person; valid for up to two adults (the EBT cardholder, his/her spouse/partner or co-parent) and their dependent children.
INSPIRING CONSERVATION

At Seacoast Science Center, we believe that science-based education holds the key to inspiring conservation and bringing restorative, positive change to our environment. By experiencing the natural world and understanding our impacts on its delicate systems, everyone can learn to think critically and act pragmatically in ways that will improve the long-term health of our planet. Our exhibits, programs, and interactions share one common goal: to connect you to our natural world in ways that are meaningful, memorable, and motivational.

the EDGE OF THE SEA

Our touch tank experiences have always been a highlight for our visitors and one of our favorite ways to facilitate learning indoors. This past year, we expanded on our iconic Tide Pool Touch Tank exhibit by adding two tanks that hold over 500 gallons of cold saltwater teeming with intertidal animals and seaweeds. Here, at the Edge of Sea, visitors can enjoy a beautiful and immersive window to the dynamic zone between the tides. SSC naturalists and volunteers are stationed at the exhibit to guide hands-on learning and spark conversations that we hope deepen appreciation of our coastal environment and inspire conservation of our Blue Planet.

In addition to many new animals, including unique and hard-to-find species like nudibranchs, sea cucumbers and brittle stars, naturalists have new powerful teaching tools to better engage and connect. A high-powered microscope sits right over a wet table, simulating a marine laboratory workspace. Visitors may select animals or organisms to investigate and the scope will project stunning magnified views onto a giant screen, providing viewing access to all.

Getting your hands wet is only one part of the experience. The organisms that live in the intertidal have developed behaviors and structures that enable them to survive in stressful conditions. Also on display are stunning images that highlight animals’ unique and often strange adaptations, taken by accomplished lecturer and undersea journalist Andrew Martinez. Visitors can also poke around Martinez’s mobile application, Marine Life of the North Atlantic, to deepen their understanding of this unique environment.
By mid-2021, we were able to bring back some of our community and citizen science offerings, reuniting with individuals and families from Seacoast New Hampshire and beyond to celebrate our common goal of advancing marine and environmental education that inspires conservation.

**Atlantic Grill Music by the Sea**

We held two Atlantic Grill Music by the Sea concerts this summer, and though we limited capacity to 500 per event, there was no shortage of enthusiasm and support for SSC.

**Ocean Trivia Outreach**

Ocean Trivia, held both virtually and in person at local brew pubs, allowed us to reach new audiences, raise funds for our Marine Mammal Rescue program, and have a whole lot of fun!

**BioBlitz**

Over 300 participants joined staff and guest experts for our annual biological survey of Odiorne Point State Park, identifying more than 1,008 species, 143 of which are new to our list.

**Volunteers in Action**

While indoor volunteer opportunities were curtailed for a portion of the year, outdoor projects around the Center and in Odiorne provided safe, socially-distant friendly opportunities for individuals and groups.

**Ashley Ginnetty**

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT INTERN

Before my internship at SSC, my career goals were pointed in a different direction. Being at SSC made me realize my love for the ocean and desire to do my part to help conserve our blue planet. I learned about the plants and animals in the touch tanks and how to best spark visitors’ curiosity by asking questions that promote investigation and imagination. One of my goals was to make a lasting impact on each visitor I engaged with. If I made a child lose their fear of touching an animal, like a sea star, I knew I was successful. When visitors expressed their joy over discovering something new it was so rewarding! I gained so much knowledge and skill interning at SSC. The experience has opened me to many opportunities and provided insight for my career path.
Our work to inspire generations of ocean stewards is made possible by generous support from individuals, foundations and corporations. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, our contributors made certain Seacoast Science Center would not only be able to build back after the necessary cutbacks of 2020, but have the means to build back stronger. Your confidence in us lifted our spirits and helped us create innovative new programs that engaged local, national, and global communities. As we set our course to deliver science-based education that is compelling and motivational in 2021, our goal was to rebuild our team for growth and success.

One of our top priorities was to strengthen our advancement team to ensure that we are meeting our community’s evolving needs and growing conservation ideals. In July, Natalee Martin was selected as the Center’s first Chief Advancement Officer and in October, Kathryn Jerome was hired as Advancement Coordinator to support our team’s work to elevate our fundraising efforts.

Of equal importance, we established a new position dedicated to the visitor experience. Danielle Bastian joined as Director of Visitor Experience to maintain a high standard of excellence in customer service. Hollie Dutton, our new Events Coordinator, ensures our site rentals and special events go smoothly.

A new Aquarist I/Naturalist position was created to serve as the interface between behind-the-scenes animal husbandry and front-of-house engagement. Thomas Cook brings top-notch skills and depth to the aquaria and education teams.

Yvonne Zinicola, Office Manager, administers our human resources and financial affairs needs. Dave Black signed on as Facility Maintenance Coordinator to ensure that our building and exhibits are properly looked after.

In addition to bringing on several new staff members, we also formalized an Assistant Camp Director position and a preschool program management role to advance these important programs.

STRENGTHENING OUR TEAM

Laurie Cesati
VOLUNTEER

I’ve always had a love for the ocean and marine life, and have fond memories of visiting zoos and aquariums as a child. My favorite exhibits were those that facilitated interaction with marine life, such as the touch tank. I started volunteering at Seacoast Science Center because I wanted to help provide some of those same experiences for other children. What I didn’t realize was just how much I would learn from the incredibly dedicated staff. Prior to joining SSC, I prided myself on being environmentally aware. However, every time I am at the Center—whether it’s a morning volunteering at the touch tank or photographing an event—I learn something new about our life-giving ocean and the threats facing it today. I always leave feeling motivated to up my conservation game. My husband and I take lot of small steps to be ‘green,’ and we now are planning to make our next car purchases to be hybrid or fully electric vehicles.
CONSERVATION IN ACTION

SSC MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE

On February 24, 2021, Seacoast Science Center Marine Mammal Rescue (MMR) released its first satellite tagged seal; #087, named for being the MMR’s 87th response case of 2020. Rescued by our MMR team off Jenness Beach in Rye in December 2020, the then approximately 7-month old male harbor seal was in distress and exhibiting wounds that required intervention. Our colleagues at Marine Mammals of Maine (MMoME) provided specialized veterinary care and rehabilitation, and once #087 regained full health and significant weight, he was ready to be released back into the wild.

With funding already set aside for a satellite tag, our team reached out to Robert DiGiovanni Jr. from Atlantic Marine Conservation Society to let him know we had the perfect candidate to help contribute to his harbor seal research and #087 was outfitted with a satellite tag device before his release. The device allowed data to be captured each time #087 came to the surface. A signal which is sent to a satellite captured his movement at sea, haul-out locations, and water temperature while the tag was adhered (it is designed to detach after a period of time). The information gained from this and other tagged seals is helping to provide new insight on the species.

The blue dots on the map shown here plot #087’s journey while the red dots show the track of #108, a seal tagged by MMoME. As you can see, #087 favored the edge of the continental shelf, where waters reach depths of 100-300+ feet while #108 spent significantly more time in Maine before heading south, all the way to Long Island Sound!

We are grateful for the ongoing support from our community that not only allows us to conduct our wildlife conservation work, but also enables us to contribute to scientific research that helps us gain a deeper understanding of our Blue Planet.


24-HOUR MARINE MAMMAL REPORTING HOTLINE:
603-997-9448
A young harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*) takes refuge on a sandy beach.

**1,153 total response cases since MMR was established in 2014; data through 10/31/21**

- **814 harbor seals**
- **108 gray seals**
- **150 harp seals**
- **4 hooded seals**
- **27 harbor porpoises**
- **6 common dolphins**
- **5 Atlantic white-sided dolphins**
- **2 bottlenose dolphins**
- **2 humpback whales**
- **8 minke whales**
- **1 pygmy sperm whale**
- **22 unknown pinniped species**
- **4 unknown cetacean species**
CONSERVATION IN ACTION, CONTINUED

Our Aquarist team ensures that our exhibit inhabitants are cared for with highest possible standards of animal husbandry which includes maintaining water quality, technical operation, safety standards, and exhibit presentation. To uphold excellence, we cultivate relationships with leaders in the field and partner on projects that help conserve species represented in our aquaria. To that end, SSC is collaborating on the following two exciting new projects to protect and cultivate threatened species, and are working on a plan to showcase them in our public exhibitions in the coming months.

PROTECTING THREATENED CORALS

Since 2014, the Florida Reef Tract has been experiencing an historic outbreak of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease—over 90% of the Tract has been affected, impacting 22 of Florida’s 45 species of reef-building stony corals, including five corals on the Endangered Species List. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Park Service are leading the response and have asked SSC to participate in the nationwide “reef-banking” effort.

SSC is one of 30 holding facilities in the United States accommodating these disease-free rescue corals. Healthy corals collected from the Lower Florida Keys region are being cultivated at SSC for the purpose of gene banking and restoration stock for recolonization activities. This is a long-term project and we expect to care for these living corals for many years. Scientists are working to learn more about the disease and restoration efforts that need to occur for these very important habitats to start to recover.

GULF STREAM ORPHANS PROJECT

The Gulf Stream is a swift water current that runs from the Caribbean Sea, turning eastward along the North Atlantic seaboard. Like a continuously-moving conveyor belt, the Gulf Stream brings warm water—and warm water species—northward. Gulf Stream warm water spinoffs occasionally form and move warmer water toward the New England and New Hampshire coast. Tropical fish larvae and juvenile tropical fish ride this current and are often unable to swim against the powerful current, leaving them “trapped” in the Gulf of Maine. These wayward juvenile fish are referred to as Gulf Stream Orphans.

To help better understand this phenomenon, marine science institutions on the east coast have partnered to monitor expatriated tropical and subtropical fish. Together, we launched a community science program where divers and ocean recreators can help contribute to the effort: The Gulf Stream Orphans Project. The data will help us better understand changes in the Gulf of Maine ecosystem—one of the fastest warming bodies of water in our ocean.
Even though the Covid-19 pandemic response profoundly influenced normal operations in 2020, SSC finished in a strong financial position thanks to CARES Act federal funds, a bequest disbursement, increased fundraising and strategic expense cuts. 2020 concluded with a small operating surplus of $77,000 (5%) and total assets of $2,512,000. Covid also dominated Center operations in 2021, limiting many of SSC’s traditional revenue streams. In 2021, CARES Act federal funds, a significant bequest disbursement, increased fundraising, and judicious expense management will ensure that SSC will remain in a sound financial position at year’s end.
Gulf of Maine Exhibit Hall Renovation

The Gulf of Maine is one of the fastest-warming bodies of water on the planet, with temperatures rising faster than 99% of the global ocean. Why are our waters warming so rapidly and what effects will these changes have on our ocean ecosystems, its wildlife, and on us? These are some of the questions we will address in the Gulf of Maine Exhibit Hall renovation set to take place during the winter of 2021-2022.

Plans are underway to add new energy-efficient tanks, richer interpretation, and more live animals to better tell the story of our local environment. A new station will feature research projects being conducted by the University of New Hampshire School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering, and UNH Sea Grant. We will also add a hands-on investigation station, opportunities to dive deeper into learning, and information on actions we can all take to help create a more sustainable future for the Gulf of Maine and our one world ocean.

SEACOAST SCIENCE CENTER & ODIORNE POINT STATE PARK

Seacoast Science Center is proud to provide educational programs and interpretive services in Odiorne Point State Park as part of its long-standing partnership with New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation. Odiorne's significant natural habitats and rich social history provide a multitude of exceptional opportunities for us to advance understanding of the interconnectedness between land and sea.
We are grateful for the generosity of the following individuals and families who supported our work.*

Ocean Ambassadors
$10,000 & up
Anonymous (2)
Mary Avery
Estate of Barbara Caswell
Dr. Geoffrey Clark & Sen. Martha Fuller Clark
Thomas Haas
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Barbara Newall
Schleyer Foundation
Barbara Sweet

Ocean Ambassadors
$5,000–$9,999
Michael & Anne Ambrogi
John & Diana Appleton
Bruce & Kipp Freeman
Carolyn Burt & Stephen Murphy
Paula Merritt
in memory of Barbara Newall
Valerie & Lawrence Santilli
Lucinda Spayne
Nancy & Timothy Targett

Ocean Ambassadors
$2,500–$4,999
Mark Adamy and Holly Lowe-Adamy
Trevor & Kelly Arp
John & Renee Chioi
Claire Colby-Hielscher & Raimund Hielscher
Jim & Karen D’Ambriese
Kathy & Mitch Draw
Brian Fitzgerald & Kathy Maxwell Fitzgerald
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David White & Jacqueline Jones

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Mark & Marla Baldassare
Todd & Julie Black
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Mitchell & Anne Kalter
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in memory of Barbara Newall
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in memory of Ru Morrison
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Paul Rothman
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Linda Sanborn
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Valerie Sobel
Michael Steinberg
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Matthew Wallengren
Scott & Dee Whall
Stephen & Danette Wineberg
Gary & Michelle Wright
Alyssa Yurasits

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$100–$299
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in honor of Trevor Arp
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Jan Baumgardner
Jason & Kathleen Beaulieu
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Ellen & Richard Grayson
in memory of Catherine Riley
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in memory of Barbara Newall
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Amy Kelley
Cynthia E. Knapp
Judith Lange

*Gifts through October 2021
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in memory of Barbara Newall
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Wendy Lull
in memory of Barbara Newall
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John & Carolyn Payzant
Angela Piemonte
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Paula Velluto
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Kathleen Riley
in memory of Catherine Riley
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Anne Weidman
Jeff & Michele Wensman
in memory of Barbara Newall
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Beverly Winn
Sheila & John Woeifel
Jacqueline & Jeffrey Zajac

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Andrew Sidford
Cheri Bach
Beverly Barrett
Matthew Bateman
Debbie Boh
in memory of Catherine Riley
Doug & Laura Bonner
Lauren Bottomley
Kathleen Brady
Bill Brown
Alice & Ervin Burleigh
in memory of Burt Matheny
Cindy Caros
Lauren Caselli-Yurasits
John Castracane
Gregory & Pamela Ciampa
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in memory of Catherine Riley
TOGETHER, FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

Thank you to the following businesses and community members who invested in SSC.

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We Fill Good
York Hospital

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National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Museums
National Marine Fisheries Service Law Enforcement
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Science Foundation
Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
US Fish & Wildlife Service

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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
MA Department of Conservation & Recreation
MA Environmental Police
Maine State Aquarium
Maine Department of Marine Resources
NH Department of Education
NH Department of Environmental Services
NH Fish and Game
NH Parks and Recreation
Rockingham Planning Commission

Partnerships play an important role in our ability to advance our ocean education mission. The following are agencies, institutions and organizations with which we work on a regular basis.

INSTITUTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

Allied Whale
Association of Nature Center Administrators
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
Atlantic White Shark Conservancy
Biomes Marine Biology Center
Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation
Buttonwood Zoo
Center for Wildlife
Children's Museum of New Hampshire
College of the Atlantic
CommuteSMART Seacoast
Conservation Law Foundation
Educational Passages
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Friends of Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouse
Global Aquaculture Alliance
Gloucester Maritime

Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Gulf of Maine Marine Education Association
Gulf of Maine Research Institute
The Gundalow Company
Healthy Ocean Coalition
International Fund for Animal Welfare
Maine Maritime Museum
Marine Mammals of Maine
Maritime Aquarium
Massachusetts Audubon Society
New England Marine Association
New Hampshire Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (at UNH)
Mcaliliffe-Shepard Discover Center
Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch®
Museum of Science, Boston
Mystic Aquarium
National Marine Educators Association

National Marine Life Center
New England Aquarium
New England Climate Change Education Collaborative
New England Ocean Action Network
New England Ocean Science Education Collaborative
New Hampshire Environmental Educators
New Hampshire PBS
NH EPSCOR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research)
Northeast Climate Change Education Collaborative
Northeast Regional Association of Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems
One Fish Foundation
Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
Real World Real Science Community of Practice

PCGIT
Sam Reid
Rici Lumber
Elisabeth Robinson
George Rokel
Rye Family Dental
William & Pamela Schooppmeyer
Stephanie Schrader
Mary St. Pierre
Timberland
Trapp Family Lodge
Treehouse Toys
Ron & Cheryl Watson
We Fill Good
Winter Holben Architecture + Design

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute
LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Seacoast Science Center is located on N’dakinna, which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook and Wabanaki Peoples past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the land and waterways and the alnobak (people) who have stewarded N’dakinna throughout the generations.
In 2021, Seacoast Science Center’s Marine Science Fellowship course was approved by the New Hampshire State Board of Education to participate in the Learn Everywhere program. The Learn Everywhere program allows NH high school students to earn credit through learning that takes place outside of the traditional classroom at approved programs across the state.

The Marine Science Fellowship semester-long course counts as a half credit science elective course and provides students with an introduction to marine biology and marine science, engages them in hands-on field investigations, fosters scientific inquiry skills and practices, builds self-efficacy around nature of science, and introduces students to local scientists, conservationists, and other career professionals in the marine sciences fields. The program is open to students grades 10-12.

We have always been proud to help spark students’ curiosity through science education that is interactive, individualized, and fun and are now happy to be able to offer certificates of credit for all of the learning and work that takes place in our Marine Science Fellowship course.

NOTEWORTHY NEWS

SSC Marine Science Fellowship Program gains New Hampshire State Board of Education “Learn Everywhere” Approval

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To learn more about giving opportunities, please contact Natalee Martin at 603-436-8043, ext. 10 or n.martin@sscnh.org.