

# Sapelo Island Research Reserve Education is Change on the Ground



2022

## Connect



7,500 acres of habitat protected  
10,728 visitors to the Sapelo Island  
Visitor Center



1,097 public tour participants

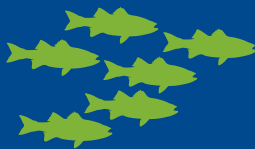
## Prepare

71 teachers trained  
557 students engaged  
1,529 student contact hours  
564 adult learners educated

## Improve



42 citizen scientists activated  
713 volunteer hours  
28 volunteer projects



*"In our standardized test-driven culture, there are few opportunities for students to participate in real-world scientific activities that are meaningful and provide tangible benefits for our community. Most students don't develop a passion for environmental stewardship through reading or media. They develop it through doing."*

*"What a power packed day of activities! The students enjoyed every minute of the day, and according to parents are still raving about their experiences."*

Maria Williams

Independent Learning  
Network

Bob Hogdon

Richmond Hill Schools  
Field Study Program

## New Year, New Partnership

Sapelo Island has always posed certain challenges for school groups since the island can only be accessed via a state ferry system. Groups are limited to just 36 participants due to the number of seats available to the education program on the ferry and on-island bus. A new partnership with Glynn County school system is seeking to address these problems. The Reserve has partnered with Cannon's Point Preserve (a local non-profit on the mainland) to host Glynn County students with environmental instruction by the Reserve, Glynn County teachers, and volunteers from the Preserve. This will allow the Reserve to reach a greater number of students and lower the costs per student down as well simplifying transportation needs. A parallel program will be offered to upper-level k-12 classes and clubs such as Honor, AP classes and Biology clubs on Sapelo Island. This will allow for a much deeper dive into the ecology of the Georgia Coast.

## Reaching Out

In order to introduce more people to the SINERR, the NERR, and important research on the Georgia Coast, the Education Department expanded the Reserve's social media outreach in multiple ways. In particular, the Assistant Education Coordinator collaborated with the Coastal Training Program Coordinator to produce a coastal science podcast called Sapelo NERRd's. The podcast premiere episode was an introduction to the Reserve followed by eight other episodes in 2022 with topics including hurricanes, the importance of wetlands, brumation, and flood literacy. Guest speakers included Georgia DNR biologist, a student at College of Coastal Georgia, and a Coastal Resources Division Wetlands Biologist. Other outreach efforts include producing videos to share on social media and the new SINERR YouTube page. With only 4 so far, the videos have highlighted the Reserve's Margaret A. Davidson Fellow, our Picture Post citizen science project, and a connection with the non-profit organization Educational Passages. The Education team also worked with the Reserve's Communication and Public Outreach Coordinator to post on the pre-existing Facebook page and develop our new Instagram.

## Emerging From The Dark

2022 proved to be yet another challenging year for the Reserve's Education Program. Covid restrictions and a public-school bus driver shortage continued to limit the size and number of programs through much of the year. The Reserve took advantage of this lull to greatly improve the Island's main nature by renovating the boardwalks along the Reserves one mile nature trail, which is a major component of the Reserve's Barrier Island Education Program.

Sapelo Island NERR 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!*



**296,131  
VISITORS**

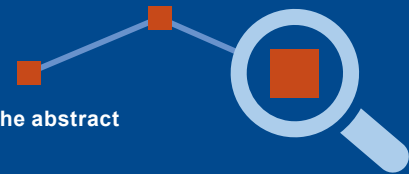
learn about estuaries through Research Reserve outreach & education

## Prepares

the Next Generation

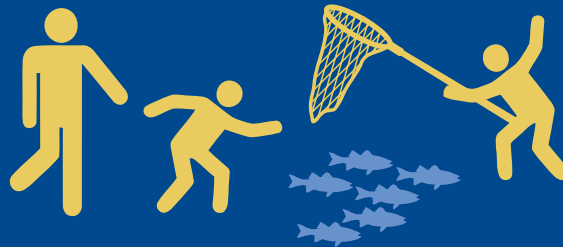
**54,773  
STUDENTS**

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



### VOLUNTEER ACTIONS

- ✓ Protect wildlife
- ✓ Monitor water quality
- ✓ Plant native species
- ✓ Clean up the coasts

**30 RESEARCH RESERVE  
EDUCATORS**

lead programs that foster coastal stewardship in communities in 25 states



Creating value through education  
37,371 volunteer hours = \$1,119,261\*