

EDUCATION

Recipe for Student Ocean Stewards: Add Water, Sand, Wildlife, & Action. Mix Well.

Over 1,000 middle school students and teachers from 35 schools in northern and central New Jersey were scientists for a day in an outside classroom at COA's **18th Annual Spring Student Summit** on May 10 and 11. Students experienced hands-on marine environmental education at Gateway National Recreation Area - Sandy Hook.

"From holding a horseshoe crab to water sampling, students get an up-close look at their coastal world," said Cindy Zipf, COA's Executive Director. "There is something extraordinary about the experience of holding a living creature that's basically unchanged since the dinosaurs roamed the earth and it gives students a sense of awe about their natural world. The goal is to inspire them to protect the marine environment."

Students participated in six hands-on roundtable activities, which included learning about horseshoe crabs, identifying seashells, studying invertebrates, observing a model of nonpoint source pollution, and learning the lethal effects of litter on the marine environment. Students from the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST), a high school located on Sandy Hook, served as peer teachers at these activity workstations. In addition, naturalists and volunteer education professionals led students in twelve field activities. Some students got their

feet wet in Sandy Hook Bay and used seine nets to collect and identify common marine species of the bay. Other participants learned about key bird species, participated in a beach cleanup, tested water quality, learned saltwater fly-fishing techniques, searched for clams, explored the historic sites in the park, and traversed trails with Gateway National Recreation Area naturalists.

Special thanks to the MAST students, field trip leaders, staff at Sandy Hook, Scott Segal of the Sea Gulls' Nest, Barbara Bennett, Joe Martin, and Brett Thompson for helping to make the Summit a success.

COA's 2007 Spring Student Summit was sponsored by **Comcast**, and was made possible by the generous support of the **Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation** and **The Fund for New Jersey**.

"Comcast recognizes the importance of expanding education beyond the classroom and is proud to help make this unique learning experience possible for New Jersey students," said **Bill Kettleon**, regional vice president of Government & Community Affairs for Comcast Cable's NJ Region. "As a company that remains deeply rooted in local communities, we strive to improve the quality of life where our customers and employees live and work."

Special thanks to **Panera Bread Bakery Cafe** in Shrewsbury, NJ, for providing a delicious breakfast for the MAST peer teachers, apples for snacks to Summit participants, and for coordinating a wonderful lunch for Summit field trip leaders, volunteers, staff, and peer teachers.

Applications for the Fall Student Summit, to be held on September 27 at Island Beach State Park for southern New Jersey public and private schools, are being accepted. After applying, schools are accepted based on the application and availability. For information and an application, visit www.cleanoceanaction.org (click "Education Programs") or call COA.



A student stands in awe holding a horseshoe crab



A student has a critter encounter with a crab



Peter Lyden, Regional Director of Government Relations for Comcast Cable TV, and COA's Cindy Zipf



Kathleen Gasienica teaches students about the wonders of the horseshoe crab



Students don waders to seine Sandy Hook Bay



Summit participants examine seashells on the beach and learn about the animals to which they belong