

Teachers on the Estuary

COASTAL ECOLOGY TEACHER WORKSHOP

*“~Estuaries are interconnected with the world ocean and with major systems and cycles on Earth. ~ Estuaries are dynamic ecosystems with tremendous variability within and between them in physical, chemical, and biological components. ~Estuaries support an abundance of life, and a diversity of habitat types. ~Ongoing research and monitoring is needed to increase our understanding of estuaries and to improve our ability to protect and sustain them. ~Humans, even those living far from the coast, rely on goods and services supplied by estuaries. ~Human activities can impact estuaries by degrading water quality or altering habitats; therefore, we are responsible for making decisions to protect and maintain the health of estuaries.”*

These are the 6 Estuarine Principles and Concepts developed by the National Estuarine Research Reserve System to aid teachers in educating their students about the importance of estuaries and what people can do to protect them.

Participants in the Coastal Ecology Teacher Workshop get an in-depth look at Georgia’s coastal systems and discover the abundance and variety of wildlife found along our shores and in our estuary.  Emphasis is placed on estuarine and marine ecology, on-going research projects at the reserve, coastal species identification and adaptations, and activity sessions.

**On-Island Accommodations:**   University of Georgia Marine Institute dorms, 3 beds per room with central A/C and bathroom, community kitchens, extra fridge space for snacks, beverages, etc. All meals are included.

**Physical Activity:** includes beach and marsh activities and (optional) evening turtle walks; participants should be tolerant of heat and sun.

Transportation on the island is by flatbed truck with board seats.  It may be bumpy, but a great way to see Sapelo!

The Coastal Ecology Teacher Workshop runs each year in June for 3-4 days, and is open to current formal and non-formal educators of all grade levels. Participants receive curriculum and resource materials. 2 PLU’s are available.

**For questions please contact Georgia Graves:** **georgiabeachwalk@gmail.com**

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Sample Agenda:

varies year to year based on tides and instructor availability

**Day 1**

8:00: Arrive at GA DNR

8:30-2:00: Board the R/V Anna for a trawling exploration and hands on experience learning about the variety of life in Georgia’s estuarine waters. GADNR fisheries biologists will lead presentations and activities related to commercial and recreational fisheries, including a recreational fisheries management wet lab activity for aging fish through otolith dissection.

Lunch

Introduction to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and the 6 Estuarine Principles and Concepts

2:30 drive to ferry dock for **3:30** ferry departure to Sapelo

 ~Settle in and orientation

Dinner

Sea Turtle Program, “Sea Turtles and Estuaries” followed by night patrol for nesting females

**Day 2**

Breakfast

8:30 depart for Nannygoat beach seining and invertebrate study at the low tide

Lunch

Nature Trail: coastal vegetation, their adaptations and cultural uses

**4ish** Yvonne Grovner, master basket maker will instruct a class on sweet grass baskets

Dinner

Bioluminescence as it lights up the beach sands after dark

**Day 3**

Breakfast

8-11 Forest ecology and Salt marsh habitat study at Cabretta

Lunch

1-5:30 Estuarine Plankton & Dock Community study at Marsh Landing dock and SINERR lab, Introduction to the System Wide Monitoring Program(SWMP) and activity to learn how water quality and conditions impact life in the estuary, overview of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and Estuaries 101(E101) Curriculum along with Estuarine Oyster Reef Activity

Dinner

Research programs of the UGA Marine Institute

**Day 4**

Breakfast

8:30-12:30 Depart for Sapelo’s north end for a closer look into our climax maritime forest habitat and to explore the past, from the ancient Native American Shell Ring to the Chocolate Plantation tabby ruins and how human influence has impacted Sapelo Island.

Lunch at dorms; Wrap up and pack/clean up

**4:30** ferry departs for mainland