

Case study: Engaging students in collaborative projects

Involving younger stakeholders in collaborative projects can provide information about how they perceive, value, and understand the environment and help connect them with environmental stewardship and their community. Teams at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas and Chesapeake Bay Maryland reserves used different approaches to engage youth audiences in their projects.

PLANNING FOR FLORIDA'S RISING TIDES

At the suggestion of the project's steering committee, the *Planning for Florida's Rising Tides* project engaged middle and elementary school students to understand what they knew about sea level rise and community planning, as well as what they valued in their community. They gave presentations to the students and engaged them in interactive activities, including a visioning exercise and role-play game that helped students see themselves as invested in planning for the future of their community.

INCREASING COMMUNITY AND MARSH RESILIENCE IN MARYLAND

The *Increasing Community and Marsh Resilience in Maryland* project also involved local students in project activities. Using National Public Radio's StoryCorps for inspiration, the team partnered with a church youth group and trained them to conduct interviews with local community members. Under adult supervision, members of the youth group interviewed community members about their experiences growing up and living in the area, with an emphasis on heritage and changes in the local socio-ecological system over time. Youth who participated in interview activities found the experience interesting and community members were happy to see younger people taking an interest in the area's history.

Key advice

Consider reaching out to youth organizations or local schools to engage a youth audience in your project. Collaborate with reserve education staff to develop activities and informational materials that are appropriate for your audience's age group.

To learn more about these projects, visit their Project Pages:

[Planning for Florida's Rising Tides](#) | [Increasing Community and Marsh Resilience in Maryland](#)

To access other case studies and resources for conducting collaborative science projects, visit: [A Guide to Collaborative Science](#).

These case studies were developed in 2015 by the NERRS Science Collaborative team when the program was hosted by the University of New Hampshire. These case studies were originally featured as part of the Collaborative Project Toolkit.

