



ESSEX NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA

## Teachers Implement Place-Based Learning Projects based on Summer Institute

Educators in Essex County who participated in the Coast for Every Classroom Teacher Professional Development Institute last summer have spent the school year implementing Place-Based Learning projects with their students, with great results. The Institute, sponsored by Salem Maritime National Historic Site and Essex Heritage, inspired teachers to partner with community organizations in their curriculum development. Collaborating with these groups, teachers used local cultural, historic, and natural resources to reach curricular goals, foster community engagement, and encourage stewardship of the region's special places.

Example projects included students working with their town's Open Space Committee to understand and publically present findings about the flora, fauna, and history of public lands that abut the Page School in West Newbury; Haverhill third graders exploring and researching bodies of water on their school grounds and in their community; and Salem sixth-graders creating a quest based on navigation techniques inspired by their school's namesake, Nathaniel Bowditch, culminating in a celebratory event at Salem Maritime National Historic Site.

Please view the following links to read press coverage of more projects:

- [School Trails Project](#)
- [School Pond Project](#)
- [School Garden Project](#)

When reflecting on their experiences, educators reported that teaching with community resources was personally and professionally invigorating. Many teachers were excited to see new types of learning emerge in their students. One teacher commented in a written reflection about the Page School project,

"What was most surprising to me was the scope of the project, and how we were able to easily use our work in all major subject areas. From collecting science data, to writing fictional stories about an old cellar hole, everything that the kids were involved with got them excited, which in turn got us equally, if not more excited about the work we were doing. It was made abundantly clear after our first trek out on the trails, that what we were doing was a special kind of teaching. Our students were unsure of what we were asking them to participate in at the start of the school year, and very soon after our first trip out on the trails, they were begging for more."

Essex Heritage and Salem Maritime will again be offering a Place-Based Learning Institute for a new group of local teachers on July 15- 18 and are looking forward to expanding on the great successes of last year's community partnerships in education. [Learn more about A Park For Every Classroom Teacher Workshop.](#)

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### **About Essex Heritage (Essex National Heritage Commission)**

Designated by the US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and its significant heritage sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of Essex County, MA. Essex Heritage is a nonprofit agency that manages the Heritage Area, and works in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public/private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area's unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, visit Essex Heritage at [www.essexheritage.org](http://www.essexheritage.org) or call (978) 740-0444.