

What are Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers?

In 1996 the Coastal America Partnership* established a network of Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers.

The network creates a partnership between certain federal agencies and marine education centers. Most Learning Centers are aquariums, but marine science centers and even a fishing museum are part of this network!

The goal of each Learning Center is to educate and involve the public in protecting our nation's coastal ecosystems.



Sharing the wonder of our coasts.

Unique Resources

Millions of people are interested in coastal ecosystems and visit the Learning Centers each year. Thanks to the partnership with the federal agencies, each center has unique access to expert speakers, exhibit information, educational publications, teaching materials, field trip sites, and scientific data from around the country.

For example, some Learning Centers:

- ★ Borrow unique exhibit items from the federal partners
- ★ Use satellite images and other scientific data collected by the federal partners
- ★ Work with federal partners on community projects and educational programs
- ★ Have access to federal research vessels for public "open house" days

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*Coastal America, a partnership to protect, preserve, and restore the nation's coastal ecosystems, collaborates with 12 federal partners. They are the departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy, Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Executive Office of the President. In addition, Coastal America works with over 500 state, local, and corporate partners around the country.

Our Coasts

America is blessed with a coastline of astounding beauty and natural wealth. Coastal areas are among nature's most productive ecosystems. They provide food, shelter, and nursing grounds for fish, birds, and other wildlife. As humans, we rely on our coasts for food, recreation, and jobs – in fact, one out of every six jobs in this country is related to our coastal resources!



Our coasts provide us with resources and enjoyment.

Our Impact

Unfortunately, many human activities harm and threaten the coastal environment. No matter where we live our actions impact the coast – the food we eat, water we drink, waste we discard, fields we harvest, products we buy, fish we eat, vacations we enjoy – all have the potential to injure our coasts.



Protecting marine life through education and rehabilitation.



Learning Centers are fun and full of surprises!

Our Answer

Coastal America's Learning Centers are teaching kids and adults about the importance of our coastal environment and how each of us can get involved.

An informed,
concerned,
and
involved public
makes a
difference!



Helping communities protect their coasts.

Learning Center Projects

Each Learning Center decides how they want to collaborate with Coastal America's federal partners. Federal agency staff have worked with learning centers on a variety of projects:

- ★ Helping a Girl Scout group develop a badge program about marine conservation
- ★ Providing technical expertise, equipment, and resources for a community-based wetland restoration and monitoring program
- ★ Providing lectures, field trips and a day aboard a federal research vessel as part of a one-week teacher training program
- ★ Participating in Student Ocean Conferences, where students discuss, debate, and interact with federal partners involved in marine conservation and management
- ★ Providing speakers and information about careers in marine science, conservation, and management at Learning Centers' Career and Ocean Exploration days



Involving students in marine resource management.