



Continued Professional Learning for Environmental and Outdoor Learning

A list of high-quality opportunities for Maine educators

“Out of the Classroom, Out in Community, Outside the Box”

There are a multitude of Professional Learning opportunities available to educators from organizations across Maine and nationally to support environmental and outdoor learning for Maine youth. While by no means an exhaustive list, here are some of our favorites from the Teach ME Outside Professional Learning Advisory Group. Other opportunities can be found in the [Maine EE Resource Directory](#), the Maine Environmental Education Association social media page, and from individual organizations. If you offer professional learning for educators and would like to be included in the resource directory, please submit your information at [this link](#).

General Environmental Learning Opportunities

Maine Environmental Education Association

Who They Are: MEEA is the Maine state affiliate and networking group for environmental education and works towards building an environmentally literate Maine where powerful learning experiences connect individuals to the state’s landscapes.

What They Offer:

- Annual conference and research symposium connecting environmental educators from across Maine
- Workshops and training opportunities

Why we like it: “Awesome networking opportunity, lots of informal and formal science and environmental education partners committed to partnering with teachers and schools.” - Meg Edstrom Jones, The Ecology School



[North American Association for Environmental Education](#)

Who They Are: National association promoting excellence in environmental education throughout North America and the world, strengthening the field of environmental education, and increasing the visibility and efficacy of the profession.



What They Offer:

- Online, self-paced resources (courses and modules) on program development and EE research.
- The Guidelines for Excellence in EE manuals and training
- Annual conference

Why We Like It: *“NAAEE offers lots of resources for advocating for programs including research briefs on impacts of EE on youth as well as professional learning materials you can access on your own time. They are incredibly responsive in putting out content based on current themes and issues affecting EE.”* - Alex Brasili, Maine Math and Science Alliance

[FOSS/ Lawrence Hall of Science](#)

Who They Are: FOSS (Full Option Science System) is a research-based science curriculum for grades K-8 developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley.



What They Offer:

- Workshops on module implementation, teacher leadership, and assessment
- A Taking FOSS Outdoors chapter with guidance including choosing a study site; managing time, space, students, and materials; and general teaching strategies.
- Erica Beck Spencer is a Maine-Based FOSS Curriculum Developer and Professional Development Specialist with extensive expertise in outdoor learning

Why We Like It: *“FOSS science kits applied to outdoor connections, utilizing existing schoolyard spaces. Brilliant resource, and facilitator!”* - Meg Edstrom Jones, The Ecology School

Content-Specific Professional Learning Opportunities

[Aquaculture me!](#)

Who They Are: Aquaculture me! was an initiative started by Morgan Cuthbert, an educator at Yarmouth Schools (morgan_cuthbert@yarmouthschools.org), to get classroom teachers connected to the science and industry of aquaculture. The hope is to create learning that is place based and focused on local organisms and ecology.



What They Offer:

- Virtual and in-person educator convenings
- Connections to educators, institutions, and industry members supporting aquaculture in Maine

Why We Like It: *“Amazing aquaculture group to become involved with. All about making connections from educators to industry and educational institutions to current research. Connect, get inspired, teach the kids!”* - Morgan Cuthbert, Yarmouth Schools

Bigelow Lab

Who They Are: An independent, nonprofit research institute located in East Boothbay, Maine that focuses on innovative approaches to study the foundation of global ocean health and unlock its potential to improve the future for all life on our planet. Bigelow Labs is committed to inspiring the next generation of ocean leaders through immersive science education.



What They Offer:

- Professional development workshops that bring Maine teachers and scientists together to improve ocean science education
- Keller BLOOM program that allows Maine high-school juniors to work and learn alongside world-class researchers

Why We Like It: *“Incredible training for educators. Very willing to work with my group to craft an in-depth field trip (with hands-on activities) and a tour.”* - Kara McCrimmon, Cobscook Institute

Schoodic Institute

Who They Are: Schoodic Institute is Acadia National Park’s primary partner in science and education. They support scientific research of importance to the Park, provide professional development for teachers, and help train a new generation of stewards who will help conserve our natural and cultural treasures.



What They Offer:

- Teacher Fellowship Program
- Multi-day residential SEA program for middle school students
- In-person and virtual field trips

Why We Like It: *“Great resources for teaching data literacy. My students regularly asked for and used the graph choice table when working with data.”* - Genevieve Trafelet, Sanford High School

Gulf of Maine Research Institute

Who They Are: A nonprofit organization in Portland, Maine that focuses on pioneering solutions to global ocean challenges by prioritizing science, education, and the community.



What They Offer:

- Regional Teacher Communities to connect rural teachers
- Producing curriculum resources and creating authentic science experiences for teachers to lead their classrooms
- Hosting professional development workshops for educators to learn, grow, and connect

Why We Like It: *“GMRI have really ramped up their educational resources. Both in person, hybrid, and remote options. All are aligned with NGSS and ask more phenomenon-based questions. Further they use the C-E-R model. Hands on and citizen science!”* - Morgan Cuthbert, Yarmouth Schools

Maine Ag in the Classroom

Who They Are: A program housed at the Maine Department of Agriculture with the goal of helping students gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society so that they will become citizens who support wise agricultural policies and local agriculture endeavors.



What They Offer:

- Annual Summer Teachers Institute
- Workshops in which teachers receive lessons, resources and training to integrate agriculture into core curriculum subjects using lessons from Project Food, Land and People, The Wild Blueberry Curriculum, etc.
- Annual School Garden Day featuring workshops and networking opportunities

Why We Like It: *“MAITC provides a plethora of resources, from lesson plants to a read-along program in the spring. The staff were great at modeling activities of different levels and incorporating different learning modalities into each lesson.”* - Maisie Campbell, FoodCorps

Project WET

Who They Are: National initiative focuses on advancing water education to understand global challenges and inspire local solutions.



What They Offer:

- Comprehensive collection of award-winning water education books, guides, maps, posters and downloadable resources
- Training workshops to educators at all levels, formal and non-formal, on diverse water topics



Why We Like It: *"I took the workshop and in going through the activities as a student, I was able to get an idea of how I could apply and modify them for different students. The activities did not require many materials so they are very accessible to all."* - Andrea Mercado, Lewiston Public Schools

[Maine Project Learning Tree](#)

Who They Are: Project Learning Tree uses trees and forests as windows on the world to increase students' understanding of the environment and actions they can take to conserve it. A national initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, PLT in Maine is sponsored by the Maine TREE Foundation.



What They Offer:

- Award-winning curriculum/professional development offering experiential, field based, interdisciplinary tools for outdoor lessons (virtual and in-person)
- Annual "Forests of Maine" Teachers Tour

Why We Like it: *"The Maine PLT website has great videos to guide activities. The activities can be used in many different subject areas and from K-12."* - Genevieve Trafelet, Sanford High School

[Other Professional Learning Opportunities](#)

[You for Youth - Department of Education](#)

Who They Are: Organization focusing on afterschool programs and providing online professional learning and technical assistance for 21st Century Community Learning Centers.



What They Offer:

- A wide range of online courses
- Tools and best practices kits
- STEM initiatives, including NOAA watershed education and National Park Service place-based citizen science education

Why we like it: *"The courses are online and self-paced so you can choose when you want to move through the modules. Very clear instruction with resources needed for those working in the afterschool space."* - Erica Papkee, St. Brigid School/Long Island Recreation Department Educator

Maine Local Living School- A Center For Place-Based Education

Who They Are: A working homestead and education center whose programs emphasize building regenerative relationships with the earth and each other, learning practical skills for wise living, and cultivating capacities for observation, stillness and gratitude.



What They Offer:

- Programs for schools making connections to American History, wilderness skills and survival study, and sustainability/environmental stewardship

Why We Like It: *“Our public school has worked with Chris Knapp and Koviashuvik Local Living School for more than a decade - via field trips or Chris's visits to our school. Foraging, planting, making herbal teas, bowls, twine, utensils and bread from acorns - are just a few of the projects and experiences Chris has led.”* - Tracey Williams, Mt Blue RSU

Teach ME Outside builds on the collaborative work of many different organizations and individuals over the past decade and is led today by a partnership between the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, Maine Environmental Education Association, and Nature Based Education Consortium. This project is made possible with support from the Pisces Foundation and the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation.

