



SALTWATER
CLASSROOM.®

2023

Annual Summary



Students explore the intertidal zone at Willard Beach during a workshop in Portland, ME in July. Still from film by Austin Mills.

Introduction



This year, we marked five years since our first ocean education program. More than ever, our commitment to a sustainable future remains steadfast. Through in-person education and the upcoming launch of our tech-integrated platform, we're paving the way for a new era of understanding and connection with the ocean. The growth we've experienced this past year is more than just numbers; it's a testament to the strength of our vision and the belief that education is the foundation for positive change.

As we reflect on our progress of the last twelve months, we are filled with gratitude for the ongoing support of our vision for ocean education from our Saltwater Classroom community. Whether through financial support, thoughtful advice, time and energy, event participation, or simple acts like following along, we're grateful for your role in our mission. Thank you for being a part of this important work.

Undoubtedly, the year ahead holds many exciting possibilities for Saltwater Classroom, and we're eager to continue making strides in ocean education. With your ongoing support and collaboration, we can keep driving progress toward our goals of protecting our oceans and empowering individuals through education.

Ocean Education in Action

We continued to grow our ocean education programming this year through youth workshops, as well as new opportunities for learners of all ages. It was a joy to be back with our friends at **Waynflete School** in Portland, ME for two weeklong summer workshops with young students. We had an especially memorable experience with young learners on **Isle au Haut**, an island community in Penobscot Bay, during a weeklong program in August (*see a dispatch from Lexi reflecting on that program below*). And this fall, 4th graders from **Presumpscot Elementary**, a Portland Public School, joined us at Willard Beach for an ocean education field trip.

In an effort to broaden our reach and provide accessible and enriching educational experiences, we organized two all-ages events. The first was our **Geology Walk** with Malcolm Hill, a professor at Northeastern University and member of Saltwater Classroom's Board of Advisors. Secondly, we gathered for a **Seaweed Walk** with Lareen Smith, a professor of phycology (the study of algae) at Southern Maine Community College. **Stay tuned for more events such as these in 2024!**



SC Participants waded in the shallow water at Higgins Beach, preparing to measure wave dynamics during a summer workshop.

Events in 2023

We had more and more opportunity to connect with our growing community of ocean stewards this year. We're immensely grateful for these events to share our work, grow our reach, and make new connections. Here's the past year's community events:

- [SC Geology Walk](#)
- [Portland GreenDrinks](#)
- [Coffee & Climate, Plastic Panel](#)
- [SC Seaweed Walk](#)
- [Camden Classics Regatta](#)
- [Allagash Charitable Partnership](#)
- [Summer Fundraising Party](#)
- [Crispy Gai Community Partner](#)
- [Coastal Clean-Up with Sea Meadow Marine Foundation](#)
- [Grain Surf ReEvolution](#)
- [Rubbish Project Clean-Ups](#)
- [Story Time with Kit Supply Co.](#)



A cohort of the SC Team at July's Portland GreenDrinks event at Spring Point Lighthouse in South Portland.



Toasting 5 years of Saltwater Classroom at our annual Summer Party. Photography by Marina French.

Our 3rd Annual SUMMER FUNDRAISING PARTY

Each year we look forward to gathering with our community at our yearly celebration. Keep an eye out for our plans for 2024! We hope you'll join us again, or for the first time, for our Summer Party.

Back in August, on a warm Thursday evening, friends, family, and collaborators, joined us at the [New England Ocean Cluster](#) for a celebration of ocean education. We slurped oysters on the deck from our friends, [Ferda Farms](#), enjoyed [Luke's Lobster](#) rolls, and toasted with beverages from a handful of generous local producers. Our silent auction and raffle was complete with handcrafted items, stunning original artwork, thoughtful sustainable products, and one-of-a-kind experiences. All in all, we raised over **\$14,000** to support our goals and had a ball doing it. A huge **thank you** to the incredible generosity of our community for making it all possible — and such a good time!

Dispatch from Isle au Haut August 4, 2023

No question, every program we do is special and memorable in its own ways. However, this week has been remarkably unique, one I'm sure that will stay with us for some time to come. Twelve kids in the program, ranging from five to twelve years old. Only two were 'islanders'; everyone else was there for the summer w/ grandparents or families. One notable exception: an independent 6-yr. who came each day from the mainland; arriving via the mail boat from Stonington, picked up each afternoon by her father aboard their lobstering vessel. If you've been to IAH, you've likely seen the green and white schoolhouse that we called 'home base' for the week. It's over 100 years old and entirely imbued w/ the passion and love of Marcella Carroll, the sole teacher and woman who helped organize our prog. Island communities are perhaps one of the strongest examples of community and we felt that spirit firsthand. Whether it was the shopkeeper scrounging up fishing line for our found object mobiles or our hosts offering their cozy yurt to us, we felt truly welcome. And speaking of the yurt, it was eerily magical to fall asleep to two great horned owls calling in a duet after a long day. A special week for sure!



ON THE HORIZON:

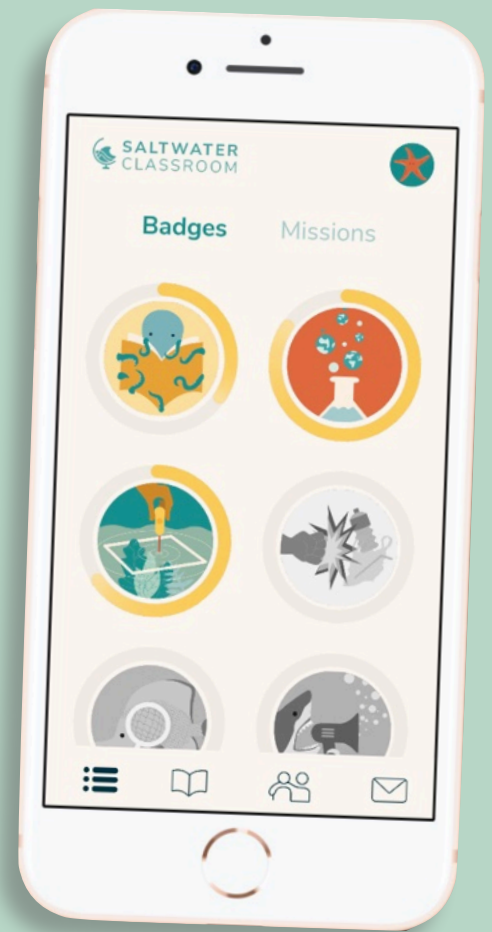
Tech-Integrated Platform for Ocean Education

In 2023, we garnered significant funding and enthusiasm for our innovative Phase II — a online platform with the goal of **increasing nature-based ocean education in an accessible, engaging way**. Such support includes the Maine Technology Institute, Frances R. Dewing Foundation, and Davis Conservation Foundation.

At this point, we've begun development with [Adapt Agency](#) and are hoping to begin implementation in March. We'll keep you updated as things progress, and please reach out to lend support!

This is a big step, you can help us get there!

- [Join our Ocean Educator Team.](#)
- [Make a contribution.](#)
- [Suggest funding opportunities.](#)
- [Brainstorm ideas together.](#)
- [Share your experience.](#)



PHASE II OBJECTIVES & GOALS:

Equitable Access to Ocean Education

A major goal of Phase II is to increase and diversify the reach of our curriculum by partnering with schools to offer transformative learning experiences with reduced financial and geographic barriers. The accessible nature of our platform will help create a more diverse network of ocean-focused learners and problem solvers.

Hands-on Nature Learning

Through our tech-integrated approach, we aim to provide engaging and interactive activities that allow students to explore and connect with the marine environment, even if they are unable to physically visit the coast. Through virtual activities, real-life experiments, and interactive modules, we seek to create a dynamic and inclusive experience that fosters a deep connection to the ocean.

Blue Economy Workforce Development

We hope to increase interest among young learners in marine careers through heightened exposure to marine and STEM trades, as well as Blue Economy career pathways. The Saltwater Classroom Platform has the power to motivate a diverse generation of tenacious leaders in the ocean-driven workforce.

Rubbish Project Recap

By the numbers, Rubbish Project held 11 clean-up events, engaged 545 community volunteers, and removed **1,381 pounds of trash** from our environment this year. Quite the impact, we'd say! These efforts are a collaboration between Saltwater Classroom and GoGo Refill and are designed to spark engagement and conversation around issues of trash and the power of individual impact. Join us in 2024 for a clean-up or reach out to collaborate!

Thank you to our 2023 Rubbish Partners:

- Austin Street Brewery
- Oxbow Brewing Company
- Bissell Brothers Brewing
- Tandem Coffee Roasters
- Coveside Coffee
- Allagash Brewing Company
- Flatbread Company Portland
- Sacred Profane Brewing
- Solo Cucina Market
- Aprés



Interested in collaborating?

The Rubbish Crew would be happy to chat about expanding our efforts to your community or business. Send us a note to connect, we would love to talk trash with you.

Our Valued Supporters in 2023



It is with deep gratitude that we share and acknowledge the support we have received throughout this past year. Through the generosity of our community, we have made significant progress towards our goals and have wind in our sails to continue to do so. Thank you to the following businesses, foundations and institutes, and individuals for your kind support of our mission. It means the world.

BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

CEDARWORKS



NEW YORK PUZZLE COMPANY



Treadwood LLC



Martelle Properties



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Crispy Gai

GRANT & FOUNDATION



Frances R. Dewing Foundation



INDIVIDUAL DONORS



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- Victoria Doudera
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- Phil Coupe
- Geoff & Margaret Dawson

\$1,000+

- Tessa Anable
- Lee Scheuer
- David Buchanan
- Anonymous

JOIN AS A SUPPORTER:

- Make an [online contribution](#)
- **Mail a check** to Saltwater Classroom, 18 Trim St., Camden, ME 04843
- Become a [Business Supporter](#)
- [Discuss other opportunities](#)

To Listen & Watch!

INTERVIEW: RADIO MAINE

Founder and Executive Director, Lexi Doudera, sat down with Dr. Lisa Belisle and shared about Saltwater Classroom's approach and plans for the future. Listen to hear about our exciting plans for Phase II as well as areas where art and the inspiration drawn from the ocean manifests in our programming. Radio Maine is supported by Portland Art Gallery.

FILM: A NEW WAVE OF OCEAN EDUCATION

Explore the mission of Saltwater Classroom's work in this compelling short film by Austin Mills. The project offers a firsthand look into our innovative approach, emphasizing our commitment to ocean literacy. Watch to understand how we blend in-person education with technology for a lasting impact in pursuit of a sustainable future.

*As always, please reach out with **comments, questions, and ideas**. We would love to hear from you.*

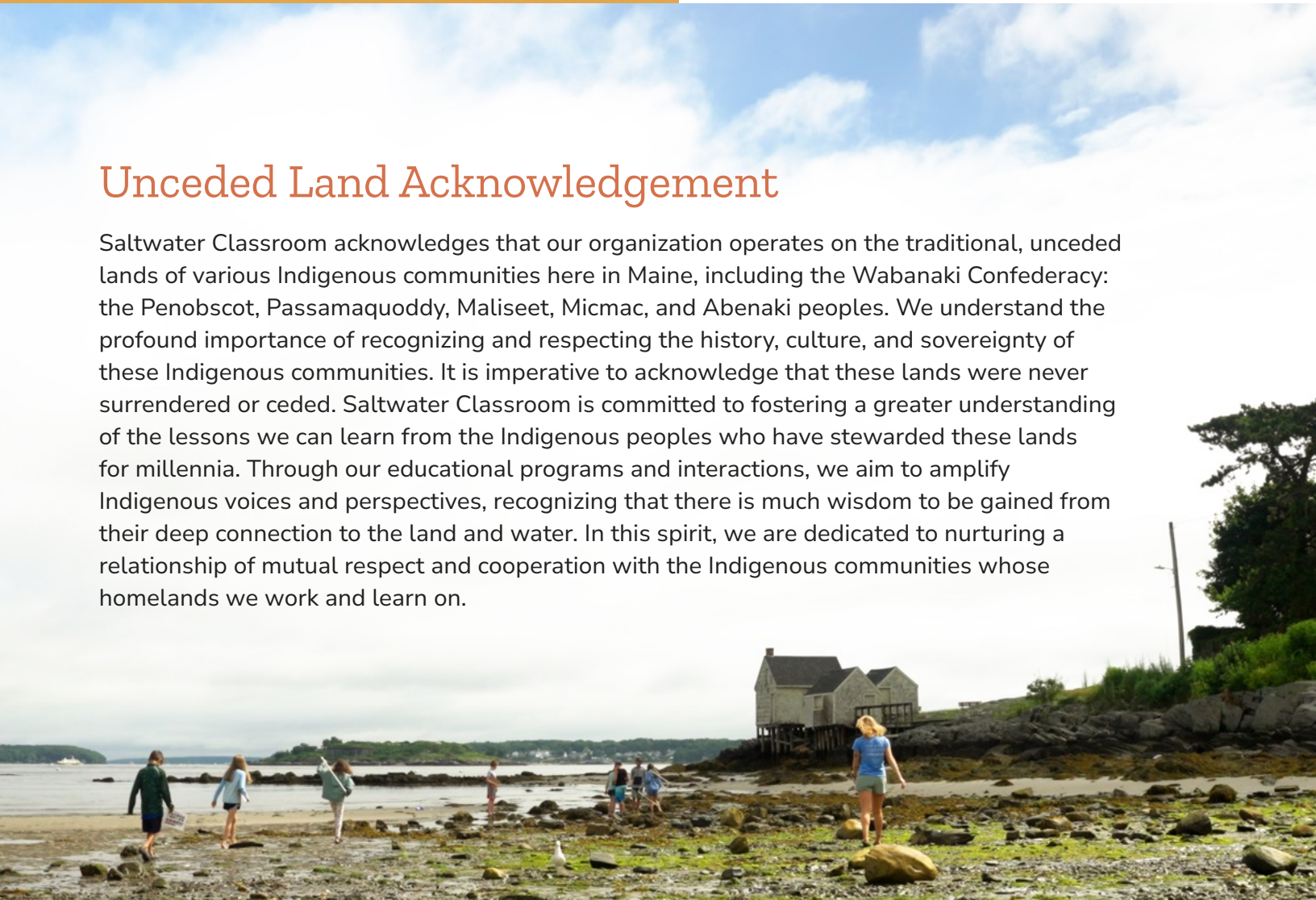
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Unceded Land Acknowledgement

Saltwater Classroom acknowledges that our organization operates on the traditional, unceded lands of various Indigenous communities here in Maine, including the Wabanaki Confederacy: the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Micmac, and Abenaki peoples. We understand the profound importance of recognizing and respecting the history, culture, and sovereignty of these Indigenous communities. It is imperative to acknowledge that these lands were never surrendered or ceded. Saltwater Classroom is committed to fostering a greater understanding of the lessons we can learn from the Indigenous peoples who have stewarded these lands for millennia. Through our educational programs and interactions, we aim to amplify Indigenous voices and perspectives, recognizing that there is much wisdom to be gained from their deep connection to the land and water. In this spirit, we are dedicated to nurturing a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation with the Indigenous communities whose homelands we work and learn on.



Board of Directors



Katie Weiler
PORTLAND, ME
Viable Gear Co., Founder



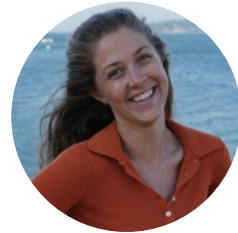
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Lee Scheuer
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Eben Kopp
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FreeWheel, Trust, Standards, & Risk



Tessa Anable
PORTLAND, ME
Innovative Program Design & Business Consultant

 Welcomed aboard in 2023!

Interested in serving on SC's Board?

We are always eager to hear from people who may be interested in joining Saltwater Classroom as a Board Director or Advisor. Please reach out to Lexi to discuss!

Board of Advisors



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SC Team



Alexandra Doudera
PORTLAND, ME
Founder & Executive Director



Parker Richardson
PORTLAND, ME
Grant Writer & Strategist



Rachael Suhie
PORTLAND, ME
Ocean Educator



By the way, you can always send us a postcard too! Snail mail is our favorite.