8-7-2008

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NH Sea Grant

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Recommended Citation
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August 7, 2008

DURHAM, N.H. - Are you interested in learning more about the marine environment? Looking for a way to give back to the community? Do both by becoming a University of New Hampshire Marine Docent!

The Marine Docent program, now in its 31st year, is a network of more than 170 volunteers who educate the community about our coastal resources. Docents work with thousands of community members each year, leading Sea Trek educational programs for schools and the public, teaching about marine exploration at sea aboard the university's research vessel, and volunteering at the Seacoast Science Center and the Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve's Great Bay Discovery Center.

Those interested in learning more about becoming a Marine Docent should attend an informational meeting at 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 21, 2008 at the NH Sea Grant office at Kingman Farm on Route 155 in Madbury.

To prepare for their roles as educators, Marine Docents get hands-on training in local history and science by UNH faculty, extension educators and other experts in the marine field. Training takes place both inside the classroom and out, with a variety of fun field trips to sites around the Seacoast. The five-month training program begins in September, with courses held Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

"The Marine Docent program has provided training that is an important asset to marine literacy," says Mark Wiley, NH Sea Grant marine educator. "There are people out there right now using what they have learned from us to teach others about ocean science."

No prior experience is required to become a Marine Docent. Ideal candidates possess a love of learning, a keen interest in the marine environment, a sense of stewardship for the marine world, and a desire to share their knowledge with children and adults in the community.

"I have learned so much about the area I live in that I can pass on to my children and grandchildren," says Ibby Lourie, who has been a Docent for 19 years. "It's been fun."

The Marine Docent Program is sponsored by NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension. For more information or directions to Kingman Farm, please contact Mark Wiley or Dari Ward (phone: 603-749-1565; mark.wiley@unh.edu or dari.ward@unh.edu).
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