

Why is Eelgrass Important?

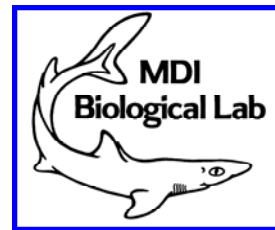
- Eelgrass beds provide protection from predation for juvenile and small-bodied fish. Juveniles of larger fish, such as flounder and cod, use some eelgrass beds as nurseries.
- Juvenile mussels and scallops attach to the surface of eelgrass leaves. This elevates them from the sea floor where feeding conditions are optimal.



- Healthy eelgrass creates, stabilizes, and maintains critical habitat that supports productivity in bays.
- Eelgrass improves water quality by removing toxins and excess nutrients from runoff in coastal areas and stabilizing fine sediments.

Why Restore Eelgrass?

- Eelgrass covered 60-80% of the subtidal area in upper Frenchman Bay back in 1996. By 2007, eelgrass coverage was down to <1%. Recent community efforts to restore eelgrass have been successful. Eelgrass coverage is up to 30% in our restoration area at Hadley Point.
- Expanding the restoration area will help to stabilize bottom sediments and help to prevent declines in water quality. By participating in eelgrass restoration, citizens play a significant role in preserving water quality in Frenchman Bay. Eelgrass is important habitat to numerous species. Restoring eelgrass will help to restore species diversity as well.



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Young Environmental Leaders Program at MDIBL



April 18th-22nd,
2011



"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."
-Mohandas Gandhi

MDI Bio Lab

MDI Bio Lab has a 10 year history of engaging young people and teachers in citizen science initiatives through the Community Environmental Health Laboratory. Middle school, high school, and college student interns, apprentices, and volunteers have helped to solve pollution issues on MDI through water quality monitoring and watershed surveys. Local middle school students have participated in red tide monitoring through their schools, acting as a first alert system for the Maine Department of Marine Resources. Recently, community members of all ages have participated in restoring eelgrass habitat in Upper Frenchman Bay. For more information see www.mdibl.org.

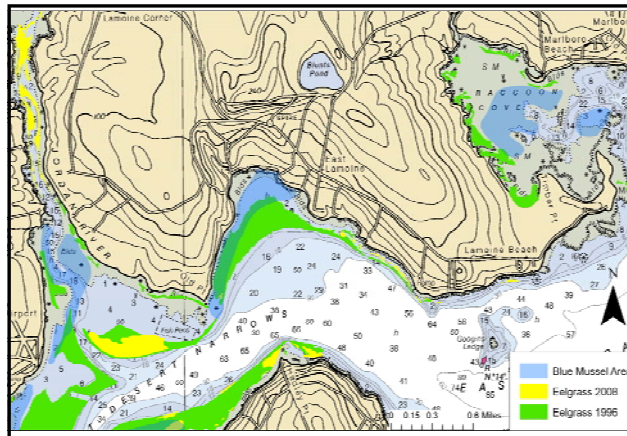


Maine Youth Action Network

Maine Youth Action Network's mission is to empower youth, adults and organizations by offering training, networking and leadership opportunities that help people transform themselves and create positive change in their communities. For more information see www.myan.org.

Island Institute

The **Island Institute** is a nonprofit organization that serves as a voice for the balanced future of the islands and waters of the Gulf of Maine. An education program of the Island Institute is the Community for Rural Education Stewardship and Technology (**CREST**) program. CREST provides the tools for students and teachers to create place-based learning experiences that use technology to answer community resource stewardship questions. For more information see www.islandinstitute.org/crest.php.



Young Environmental Leaders Program Schedule

Day 1. April 18th: Students learn environmental leadership skills with two facilitators from the Maine Youth Action Network & learn about eelgrass ecology and restoration efforts in upper Frenchman Bay.

Day 2. April 19th: Students visit the bar in Bar Harbor to learn how to run a full suite of water quality tests. They use GPS units to collect sample site coordinates for GIS mapping

Day 3. April 20th: Students work with Hope Rowan, of Island Institute, to learn how to make maps with open source GIS software.

Day 4. April 21st: Students visit the bar in Bar Harbor to study eelgrass beds at low tide and collect organisms for identification.

Day 5. April 22nd: Students summarize their data and their experiences and give a 2 PM presentation to the MDI Bio Lab community and friends .

Invitation to Parents

On April 22nd at 2 pm parents and other school community members are invited to a presentation by the Young Environmental Leaders at the MDI Bio Lab. These students will be presenting the data they've gathered and their experiences from the week.