

# Science on the Coast of Maine: Sophomore Girls Becoming Stewards of the Earth

By Pam Erickson

**C**oastal Studies for Girls (CSG) is a soon-to-be-launched innovative semester-long educational program on the coast of Maine—the first of its kind in the nation!

We are honored to be partnering with the National Coalition of Girls Schools (NCGS), whose work focuses on the education of young women.

CSG is for high school sophomore girls who demonstrate academic talent in the sciences and an interest in environmental issues.

Why sophomores? Our experience tells us that the sophomore year is an optimal time to build high school girls' aspirations in the fields of science and technology. Our single gender setting is unique and encourages these young women to explore science and technology more freely than they typically do in a co-ed setting.

In keeping with our mission to engage girls in "scientific inquiry, leadership development, critical thinking and stewardship," CSG adds two key



curricular "strands" to the core strand of history, math, English and foreign languages—the scientific research strand and the leadership strand.

The scientific research strand embodies the rigorous, science-based exploration that is the foundation of the school. Two courses, Coastal Marine Ecosystems and an Environmental Science Seminar, are based on the premise that authentic research-based inquiry offers students the best opportunities for nurturing their interest in science and technology. Each student conducts marine-based research

and presents the findings to an audience of stakeholders.

The leadership strand encourages personal growth through experiential learning. Some options include a week aboard a schooner, sea kayaking, high ropes courses, building snow caves, team challenges and rock climbing. The girls learn about themselves and about others, as well as about the natural world and their personal stewardship of the Earth.

We are passionate about our mission of exposing sophomore girls to an entire spectrum of marine-based science and technology and returning them to their homes, schools and communities more prepared to make a difference.

Pam Erickson, along with JB Kavaliauskas, is a co-founder of Coastal Studies for Girls. For many years, they have dreamed of starting a school, wishing an opportunity like this had been available to them when they were 15. For more information on their mission and program, visit [www.coastalstudiesforgirls.org](http://www.coastalstudiesforgirls.org) or email [info@coastalstudiesforgirls.org](mailto:info@coastalstudiesforgirls.org).