

Maine Field Studies Capstone Projects

- Poland Regional High School -



Background: in 2025 Poland Regional High School received funding from the Maine DOE to support climate education in our school. We wanted to take our current senior capstone project and infuse it with real-world research to build skills for high school students and support them forming strong connections with the community. In 2026 we continued this work with a new course offering called Maine Field Studies.

Expectations of the project: All students completing a Maine Field Studies capstone project must meet three separate criteria: 1. engage with a community partner to provide direction and meaning to their research projects 2. collect novel data and/or complete novel data analysis and 3. present their findings back to the community.

Example past projects:

- Assessing microplastics at boat launches along the Androscoggin River.
- Measuring snow pack at various elevations
- Determining the abundance of invasive crayfish in local streams
- Analyzing food waste from school cafeterias

What we need: We are always looking for community partners to act as guides for these high school researchers. The main job of the community partner is to provide direction and meaning to the research. Instead of solely researching a topic of interest, the students would be researching with the end goal of providing data to an organization or scientist that would make use of the information. Community-engaged projects could be:

- A continuation of your ongoing research project to increase your data set.
- Investigation of a research question that you have just not had time to get to.
- Research using methods you are familiar with
- Collection of data that could help organizations to educate the public.

The commitment is usually a set of three zoom meetings, one to set up the plan, one to check in on progress and then one to see the final data/product. The community partner will also be invited to the final presentation of the project.

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