

# LIFE-CHANGING LEARNING IN NATURE

FOR HIGH SCHOOL  
JUNIORS AND SENIORS

MAINE  
COAST  
SEMESTER  
at CHEWONKI



# WELCOME HOME

"I found so much joy, clarity, and excitement in education while at Chewonki, and it truly helped me hone my academic skills, appreciation for the natural world, and my ability to empathize and forge unbreakable bonds and friendships. Maine Coast Semester helped me develop in so many multi-faceted ways."

~Sadie, Asheville, NC - Carolina Day School & Bates College



## LOCATION

The rugged coast of Maine is a legendary source of inspiration. Our 400-acre campus provides you with many ecological zones to study and serves as a launchpad for you to explore the forests, rivers, shores, and mountains of this unique and beautiful place.

## CLASSES

The classes at Maine Coast Semester are all taught at the Honors or AP® level and are designed to boost your academic achievements. The curriculum includes weekly science field labs, backcountry expeditions, and entire classes you could never find at home. While books offer windows into new worlds, so do boots and binoculars, journals and journeys. You will learn to read the natural landscape, connect the dots between human and natural systems, and use that learning to engage in the local and global issues that matter most.

## EXPERIENCES

You will be challenged and supported as you master outdoor living skills, learn to live communally in a wood-heated cabin, and hike and paddle the forests and waters of Maine. You will work on a farm, become proficient in taking care of the natural and built environments around you, and channel your discoveries from these experiences into a human ecology capstone project.



FIND  
THE PLACE YOU  
WORLD YOU  
RUNNER



"I learned what a positive and inclusive community really is, and I gained a much deeper appreciation for the natural world. I pushed myself academically through the small class sizes and hands-on learning."

~Katie, Atlanta, GA - The Westminister Schools & Columbia University

## IT MATTERS WHAT WE DO

Maine Coast Semester classes will challenge and inspire you in ways you've never imagined. With every subject taught at an honors level, academic rigor is integral to our program. Your thoughts will leave the page as you engage in meaningful dialogue with a dedicated and passionate faculty. You will become an active participant and player in the world of ideas alongside your peers. You may find yourself modeling tidal changes in math class, grappling with issues of environmental justice, or working with your cabinmates to re-define your impact on climate change.



"I love how students and staff create a loving sense of place and community, which is one of the reasons I continue to stay involved."

~Nicky, Winthrop, ME - Winthrop High School & Dartmouth College

# SUSTAINABLE LIVING ON THE COAST OF MAINE

Sustainability—meeting the needs of the present generation while preserving the ability of future generations to meet their needs—is a core part of our mission. You will learn about sustainability and you will live it every day. You'll split wood to heat your cabin, turn compost, and care for the animals that work for and feed you. You'll join thoughtful dialogues about how each of us impacts the natural environment and how we can work toward meaningful change through advocacy and leadership.



Our 400-acre campus, located on a saltwater peninsula named Chewonki Neck, is also home to our farm, challenge course, and miles of forested trails.



# OUR GOALS FOR GRADUATES

We work to inspire transformative growth, teach appreciation and stewardship of the natural world, and challenge people to build thriving, sustainable communities throughout their lives.

Our Goals for Graduates were crafted using the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, giving students the opportunity to develop empathy and awareness as they grow in the following areas.

## ENGAGED LEARNING

Students learn in a holistic way and address complex issues with humility, critical thinking, and creativity.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As responsible community members, students intentionally engage with a breadth of perspectives to promote social and environmental justice within and across communities.

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Students listen with openness and discernment, and communicate ideas with clarity, creativity, and an awareness of impact.

## SENSE OF PLACE

Students build an understanding of their reciprocal relationship with the natural world through focused observation and reflection.

## SENSE OF SELF

Students explore and affirm their identities, strengths, and areas for growth, and understand how these impact the various communities of which they are a part.



## MEET A FEW TEACHERS

### JONATHAN LARNER-LEWIS

English Teacher

*"I love teaching literature and writing because the work at hand is always creative and technical, personal and relational, cultural and political, serious and fun — all at once, all the time."*



#### Education

BA, Dartmouth College, NH  
MA, University of Colorado Boulder, CO  
PhD, University of California, Berkeley, CA

### LIZ BURROUGHS

Math Teacher and Semester Alumna

*"I love the challenge of convincing my students that math is just as descriptive and poetic as language — loved for its utility but also for its elegance and beauty."*



#### Education

BA in English, Bryn Mawr College, PA  
MF in Forestry and Environmental Management, Duke University, NC  
MS in Teaching, University of Maine, ME

### ANDREW HUNTER

History and Social Sciences Teacher

*"I believe stories are how we make sense of ourselves and the world around us, which is why hearing many perspectives is so important."*



#### Education

BA in Political Science, Tufts University, MA  
MAT in Political Science and Political Philosophy, Tufts University, MA

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR AMAZING FACULTY AND STAFF:



# HUMAN ECOLOGY

## WHAT IS HUMAN ECOLOGY?

Human Ecology is the study of the relationship between humans and the natural world. We believe human ecology is a meaningful framework to understand the ways in which we interact with and change the natural world and vice versa. All aspects of Maine Coast Semester are built around this human ecology-centered framework.

On a typical day, a student might discuss ecosystem services provided by salt marshes in natural history class or consider the ethics and environmental impacts surrounding food supply chains, while harvesting produce.



## MAINE COAST SEMESTER CAPSTONE COURSE IN HUMAN ECOLOGY

This course challenges students to synthesize their learning and provides a structure to transfer it back home to solve real-world problems. Designed to develop the skills and dispositions outlined in our Goals for Graduates, students draw content and inspiration from: seminars in Farm & Food and Energy Systems; explorations of natural and human landscapes and stories in classes; and guest speakers at the forefront of human ecology issues. Led by dedicated faculty, students complete community profiles using digital sources and interviews, reflect on their passions and learnings, and present a portfolio and plan for action at the end of the semester.



**Please note:** the format for this course is being updated for Fall 2026 & Spring 2027. Please contact the admissions office for more details about the Human Ecology curriculum.



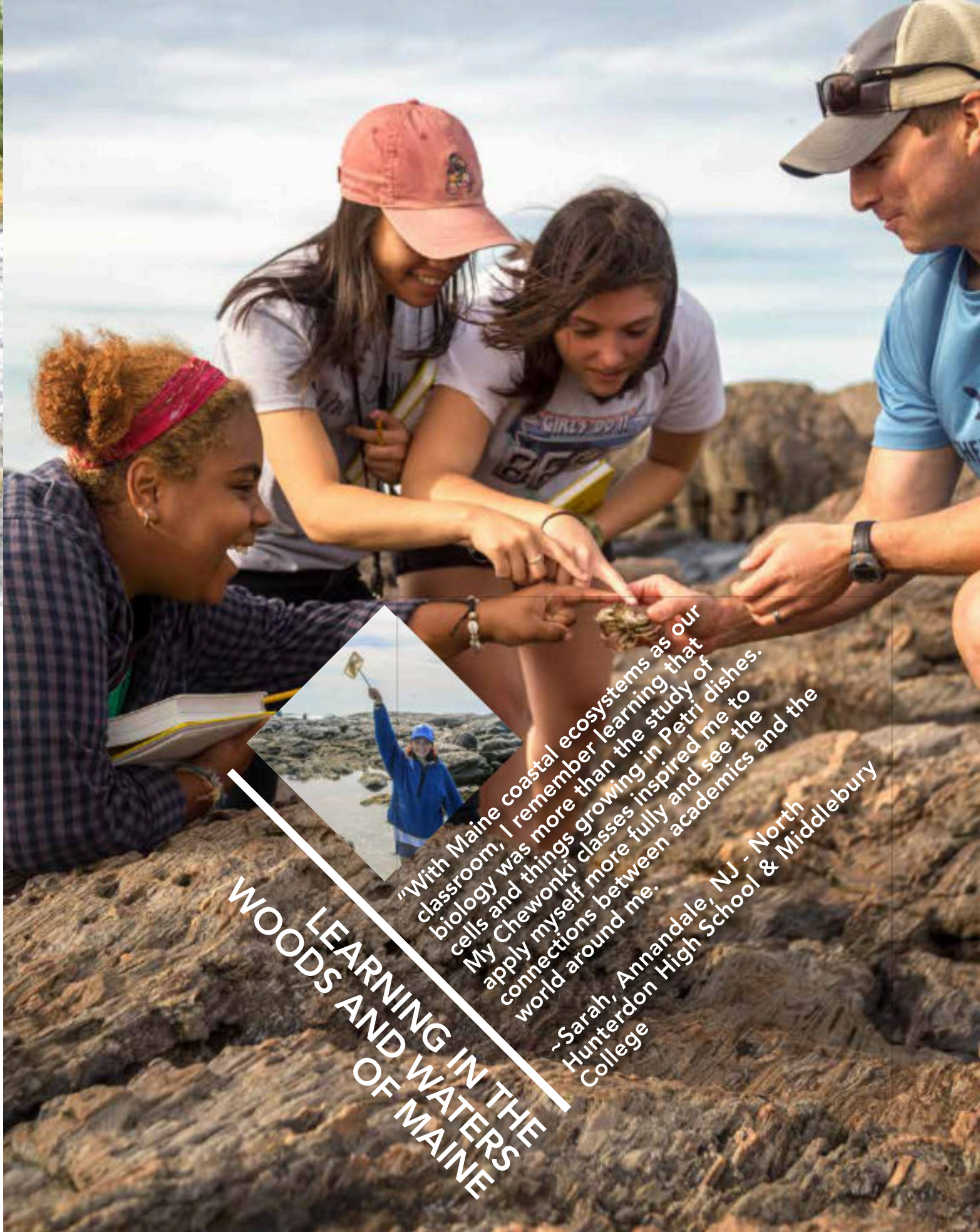
# SCIENCE FIELD LABS



Students and teachers alike cultivate a scientific mindset of asking questions and posing hypotheses, collecting relevant information, analyzing the data and then forming conclusions and actions - which then lead to new questions!



Going to school in one of the world's most beautiful and diverse natural landscapes cultivates the habit of paying attention. Our signature honors-level science course, Natural History and Ecology of the Maine Coast, gets you out in the field at least four hours each week to directly observe habitats from rocky and sandy shores, to zones where rivers meet the sea, to upland forests. You'll learn to identify species by touch, smell, sight, and sound—not just from reading about them in a textbook. You will start to understand how species are distributed across ecological zones and how they interact with each other. You will develop powers of observation and a sense of wonder that will serve you well for life, no matter your eventual career path or college choice.



## LEARNING IN THE WOODS AND WATERS OF MAINE

"With Maine coastal ecosystems as our classroom, I remember learning that biology was more than the study of cells and things growing in Petri dishes. My Chewonki classes inspired me to apply myself more fully and see the connections between academics and the world around me."

~Sarah, Annandale, NJ - North Hunterdon High School & Middlebury College



# THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

**"I've never been with a group of kids more enthusiastic about going on a spontaneous walk. Together we went mud sliding in the salt marsh, cave hunting on Blueberry Hill, polar-bearing in February waters, and night walking along the Neck without flashlights. The fervor of Maine Coast Semester students is simply astounding."**

**~Elisabeth, Winnetka, IL - The Hotchkiss School & Brown University**

We celebrate the uniqueness of all individuals and we cherish communities as a powerful force for growth and change. Both on campus and out in the world, Maine Coast Semester students learn to function as part of something bigger than themselves, contributing their efforts toward a shared goal.

## **Community on Campus**

Many Maine Coast Semester graduates will tell you they developed the deepest friendships of their lives here. Living in a small cabin with other students, working together to chop the wood that warms you and gather the food that sustains you—these experiences create strong bonds of respect and caring.

# OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

## BACKCOUNTRY EXPEDITIONS

Guided by experts and faculty, students are immersed in outdoor learning landscapes that include Maine's wildest rivers, northern forests and trails, and rocky coast. Expeditions are 4-5 days, tied to seasons, and appropriate for all skill levels.



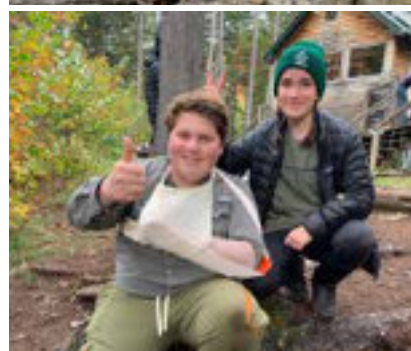
## OUTDOOR LIVING SKILLS

Weekend programming is designed to develop habits of leadership (communication, reading landscapes and weather, respecting place and people) and concrete skills that include wood processing, tying knots, baking over a fire, setting up shelter, sleeping outdoors, and navigating with map and compass.



## WILDERNESS FIRST AID

Health and safety are a prerequisite for venturing off the beaten path. Every Maine Coast Semester student is trained and officially certified in an accredited Wilderness First Aid course, preparing you for backcountry living and travel.



## SOLOS

One of the most profound experiences we offer is a Solo, the opportunity to spend 48 hours alone on Chewonki Neck. After extensive preparation, Solos are a chance for deep self-reflection and to experience the tranquil peace of the natural world.



## CHALLENGE COURSE TRAINING

We use our 18-element high-and-low Challenge Course to teach a mix of technical climbing and leadership development skills. You can learn to climb a mountain, but do you have what it takes to lead a team to the other side?



"My Maine Coast Semester experience was formative in my college decision, and my professional and personal path. It was one of the single most impactful experiences in my life, and has inspired me to create and build community, wherever I have found myself. I was deeply inspired by the faculty and staff and they have been some of the most important role models and mentors in my life."

~Annabelle, Manhattan Beach, CA -  
Milton Academy & Stanford University



## Important numbers

**3:1** Student to faculty ratio

**6** Required courses

**8** Average number of students per class

**19** Academic classes offered

**17** Average number of years' teaching experience per faculty member

**99** Percent of Maine Coast Semester students who go on to 4-year colleges

**45** Maximum students per semester

**15** Faculty plus 35 additional Chewonki support staff

**100** Percent of faculty holding an advanced degree, or pursuing a graduate degree



Expectations for academic work in and out of the classroom are high. On average, our students have three to four hours of engaging "homework" each day, with significant reading, problem sets, or writing, depending on the class.

"I saw my advisor all the time—in weekly meetings, at meals, during work program, on wilderness trips, around campus—and they gave me tons of helpful advice about how to balance my schoolwork with everything else Chewonki has to offer."

~Adriane, Wiscasset, ME - Wiscasset High School & Bowdoin College

## Class options

All classes are taught at the Honors or AP level  
\* Required course

**Science** Natural History and Ecology of the Maine Coast\*

**English** Literature and the Land\*

**History/Social Science** U.S. History  
AP® U.S. History

**Mathematics** Algebra II  
Precalculus  
Intro to Calculus  
AP® Calculus AB  
AP® Calculus BC

**World Languages** French: Intermediate  
Advanced  
Spanish: Intermediate  
Advanced

**Studio Arts** Art and the Natural World

**Co-Curricular** Maine Coast Semester Capstone in Human Ecology\*  
Environmental Issues  
World Religions and the Wilderness  
Community Service and Work Program

**Physical Education** Backcountry Expeditions and Outdoor Education\*

## BEGIN THE ADVENTURE: APPLY TODAY!

To request more information, visit: [mainecoastsemester.org](http://mainecoastsemester.org)

Email: [admissions@chewonki.org](mailto:admissions@chewonki.org)  
Phone: (207) 882-7323 ext. 8015



### ADMISSIONS PROCESS

We seek students who are looking for an exciting and challenging experience and who are ready to seek new ways of learning for themselves and new ways to support others. Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki is not for everyone. Students who enroll here—high school juniors and seniors from a diverse array of communities across the country and world—are self-directed, motivated, enthusiastic, and joyful. In selecting students, we review personal essays, academic records, a parent questionnaire, and two teacher recommendations.

### ADMISSIONS TIMELINE

#### Fall and Winter

Learn about Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki online, visit for a campus tour, or meet us at one of the many school presentations we make all across the country.

#### Mid-February

Admissions application and financial aid application due for both semesters.

#### Mid-March

Admissions decisions and financial aid awards mailed.

#### Late August

Fall semester begins.

#### Late January

Spring semester begins.

### ACCREDITATION

We are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and approved by the State of Maine Department of Education.

### COLLEGE PREPARATION

An important part of any junior or senior year, college prep is woven into the fabric of Maine Coast Semester, with the vast majority of our alumni matriculating at top-tier colleges. Students often use essays focused on their experience at Maine Coast Semester and recommendations from our faculty as part of their college application. Students can take standardized tests as well as AP® exams while enrolled.

### FINANCIAL AID

We are committed to enrolling a talented and diverse student body and to providing access to a Maine Coast Semester experience to as many students as possible. To that end, we are eager to share in the cost of education for families with demonstrated financial need. Every financial aid request is carefully considered, with priority given to families who apply by the February application deadline. In an average year, 40% of students receive financial aid. Please contact the admissions office for more information.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki welcomes students of any race, color, gender, gender-expression, sexual orientation, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, or disability, to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to our students.

### LOCATION

Chewonki is located in Wiscasset, Maine.

"If I had to sum up the appeal of students who have gone through the Chewonki semester program, it sends the signal to an Admissions Committee, both a spirit of adventure and a commitment to self-reliance. Adventure because it is typically a radical change from what the young person has been used to in their own school environment, and self-reliance because of the outings component and the emphasis on sustainability. Away from the trappings of urban and suburban life, Chewonki provides a space and location for students to explore their values and character, experience genuine community, and take stock of their lives."

- Seth Allen, VP and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Pomona College



MAINE  
COAST  
SEMESTER  
at CHEWONKI

