SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 1998, THE ECOLOGY SCHOOL (TES) HAS BROUGHT OUTDOOR SCIENCE AND ECOLOGY EDUCATION TO 145,000+ STUDENTS AND TEACHERS USING A HANDS-ON, EXPERIENTIAL FORMAT IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS ACT AS FIELD SCIENTISTS AND BECOME SYSTEMS THINKERS. OUR CURRICULUM IS DELIVERED THROUGH SINGLE-DAY AND RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS; WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS IN SCHOOLS; PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS; COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS; AND PUBLISHING ORIGINAL FIELD GUIDES AND CURRICULUM MANUALS. WE EMPLOY INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN ORDER TO INSPIRE OUR STUDENTS TO BECOME GOOD STEWARDS OF THE EARTH, CONSCIENTIOUS OF THEIR PERSONAL IMPACT ON THE NATURAL WORLD AROUND THEM.

THE ECOLOGY SCHOOL IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE ELLMS PROJECT (ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING AND LEARNING FOR MAINE STUDENTS), A NETWORK OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS (CHEWONKI, THE ECOLOGY SCHOOL, SCHOODIC INSTITUTE, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE 4-H CENTERS.) SINCE 2010, ELLMS HAS SERVED OVER 10,000 MAINE STUDENTS AND PROVIDED OVER $2.6 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO MAINE SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS.

“Throughout my ten year career leading residential Learning Centers in Maine, The Ecology School has been an outstanding partner, an organization that truly understands collaboration and community.”
– Ryder Scott, Director of 4-H Camp and Learning Centers

Executive Review

2015 was a year of amazing growth for The Ecology School— we welcomed new staff, volunteers and Board Members; we found a beautiful new location to transition to at River Bend Farm; overcame business challenges, growing stronger as an organization; but most importantly, we continued reaching thousands of children, our next generation tasked with stewarding the earth. I could not be prouder of the work which The Ecology School accomplishes on a daily basis, inspiring students and adults to use the science of ecology to make important connections. Each program participant we teach has the chance to re-examine the world around them and to reimagine a healthy, sustainable and prosperous future for themselves and their wider community.

– Drew Dumsch, Executive Director

“It’s remarkable that our daughter attends for only one week, but talks about it all year long! That tells us it’s making a positive and lasting impression.”
– James and Char Bouley, Parents

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Note From Board President

The Ecology’s School’s commitment to a sustainable future continues to astound me. The dedication to helping students understand their relationship with the environment and with each other is what attracted my school district to the Ecology School many years ago. The partnership with the Ecology School has grown from a sixth grade residential experience to a multi-year comprehensive ecology program. I joined the Board shortly after retiring as principal and enjoy my dual roles as President of The Ecology School Board and Chair of the RSU 16 School Board (Poland, Minot, and Mechanic Falls, Maine). During a time when school budgets are being decreased and nonprofits are faced with similar challenges, I am grateful for the support which you, our many individual, corporate, and foundation partners provide. We could not continue teaching the science of ecology, love for the natural world and the practice of sustainability without you!

— Mary Martin, Board President

2015 Accomplishments

Total Program Participants: **9,351**
Residential Program Participants: **3,429**
Field Trip and Summer Program Participants: **2,738**
Outreach Programs & Teacher Workshop Participants: **3,184**
Total Schools Worked With: **66**
Total Students Receiving Scholarships: **4,950 (53%)**
Total Dollars in Scholarships: **$222,588**
Financials

The Ecology School ended the fiscal year on 12/31/15 with a Net Income of -$55,428 and Net Assets of $256,450 (audited financial statements by Hobson & Company, CPA, Saco, Maine). The drop in income is seen by the board and staff as a positive outcome as it is the result of substantial real estate costs and investments. 2015 was a year of growth and strategic planning as The Ecology School increased its development staffing and executed its first full audit in anticipation of the River Bend Farm project.

2015 Revenue

- Program Income (81%) $767,836.00
- Fundraising & Grants (18%) $167,192.00
- Sales, Interest & Contracts (1%) $8,046.00

Total Revenues: $943,074.00

2015 Expenses

- Program Expenses (83%) $824,486.00
- Events/Fundraising/Grants (11%) $117,609.00
- Support, Management (6%) $56,407.00

Total Expenses: $998,502.00

“Working with the Ecology School staff over the last several years has truly been a highlight of my teaching career. The caliber of what [TES] offers and what our students have gained cannot be quantified or measured… I feel the partnership we have has made me a better teacher.”

- Mary Hammond, retired Lebanon Elementary School 5th grade teacher and 8-year partner of The Ecology School.
“Hands-on activities and game-style lessons in a natural setting are really important. Most students start off a little nervous and out of their comfort zone— not sure of what they can touch, interact with or how to behave. In a really short time they develop a sense of wonder and confidence that will last forever.”

– Lucy Miner, 3-term Ecology School educator
River Bend Farm

In 2015, we celebrated the discovery of River Bend Farm, a 105 acre farm nestled on the Saco River just 20 minutes up the road from our current site. River Bend Farm includes a 1794 farmhouse, 1840’s era barn, half mile of river front, rolling fields, meadows, and several unique ecosystems including fresh water ponds and an apple orchard. When we found this spectacular property, we knew it was the perfect location for the future of The Ecology School and the expansion of our programs to include permaculture farming, agroecology, and sustainable living practices.

Our vision is to convert the farm into the country’s most sustainable, greenest residential environmental learning center through the pursuit of the Living Building Challenge, “the most advanced measure of sustainability in the built environment possible today.” In its entirety, the center would be net-positive water and energy production, produce at least 50% of our dining hall food as self-grown or local, and overall would result in net positive conservation gain. Over the next year, we look forward to sharing our plans for River Bend Farm and the future of ecology education with you all!
“This could be our place.”
–A first time teacher to The Ecology School