

# Building an Ocean Science Learning Network: Fostering Collaborations with the Informal Science Community

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## Introducing COSEE Florida



As part of the national network of Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (COSEE), whose mission is “to spark and nurture collaborations among research scientists and educators to...make known the vital role of the ocean in our lives”, the COSEE Florida team has created three interwoven initiatives.



The first two initiatives focus on training and professional development for two audiences: ocean scientists and pre-service teachers. The third initiative, the COSEE Florida Ocean Science Learning Network, is the linchpin that brings these audiences, current educators, and the public together to communicate and collaborate.

## COSEE Florida Ocean Science Learning Network



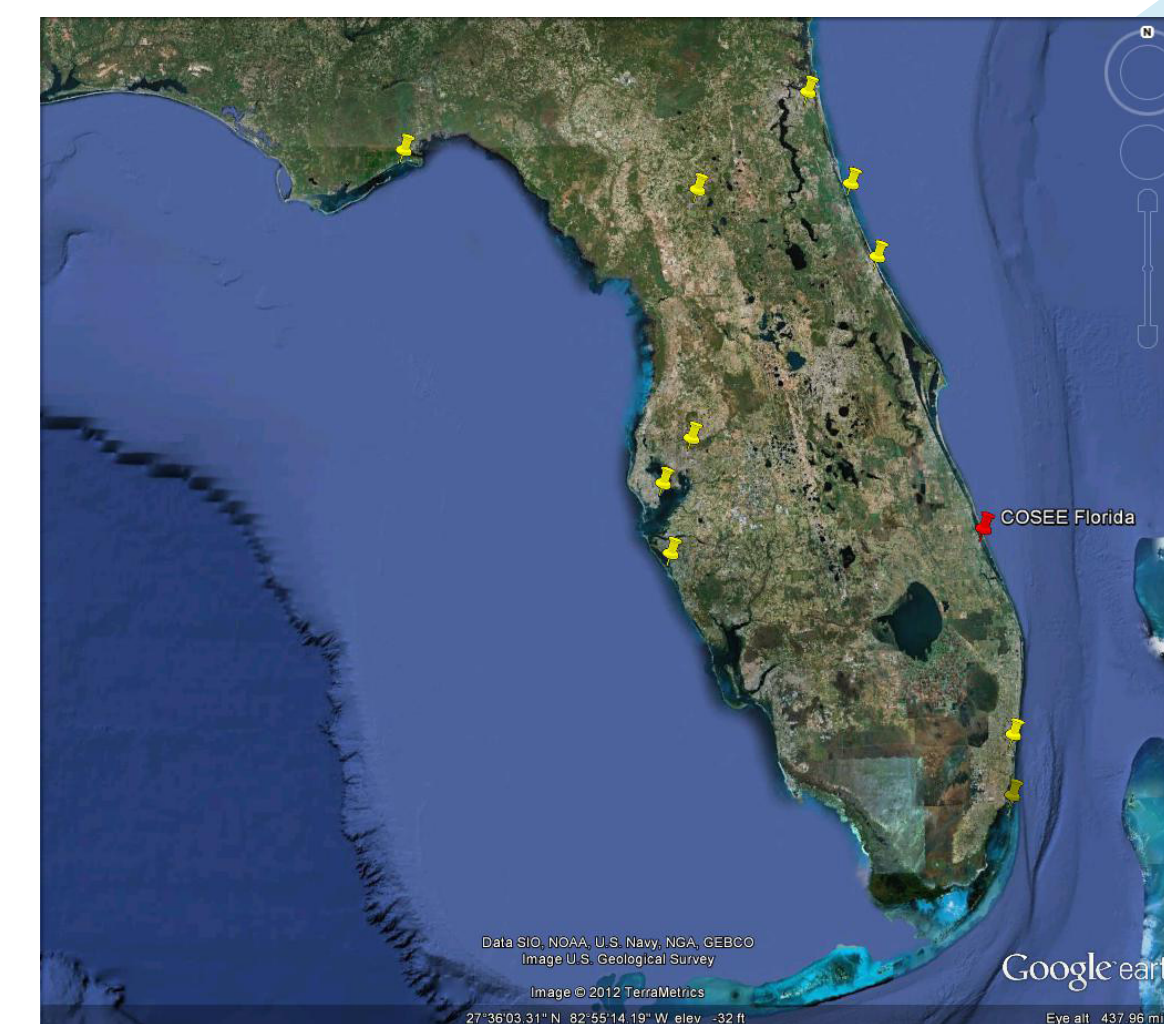
The COSEE Florida Ocean Science Learning Network takes advantage of the abundance of high quality informal education centers across the state.

The community-based centers have proven to be ideal venues for connecting ocean scientists to local audiences, including collaborations with educators, because of their well-established school and public outreach programs.



COSEE Florida has taken a regional approach to implementing a diverse array of activities with partners across the state.

## Building Blocks of a Growing Network



COSEE Florida aims to bridge the gaps between scientists and the community within regions, and among informal science centers across regions, by identifying key partners that can serve as hubs for locally-based ocean science-related activities. While some partners are traditional centers for marine activities (aquariums, for example), others are organizations that have a strong presence in their communities but lack a prominent ocean science theme. By engaging with a variety of organizations, COSEE Florida hopes to maximize the audiences reached.



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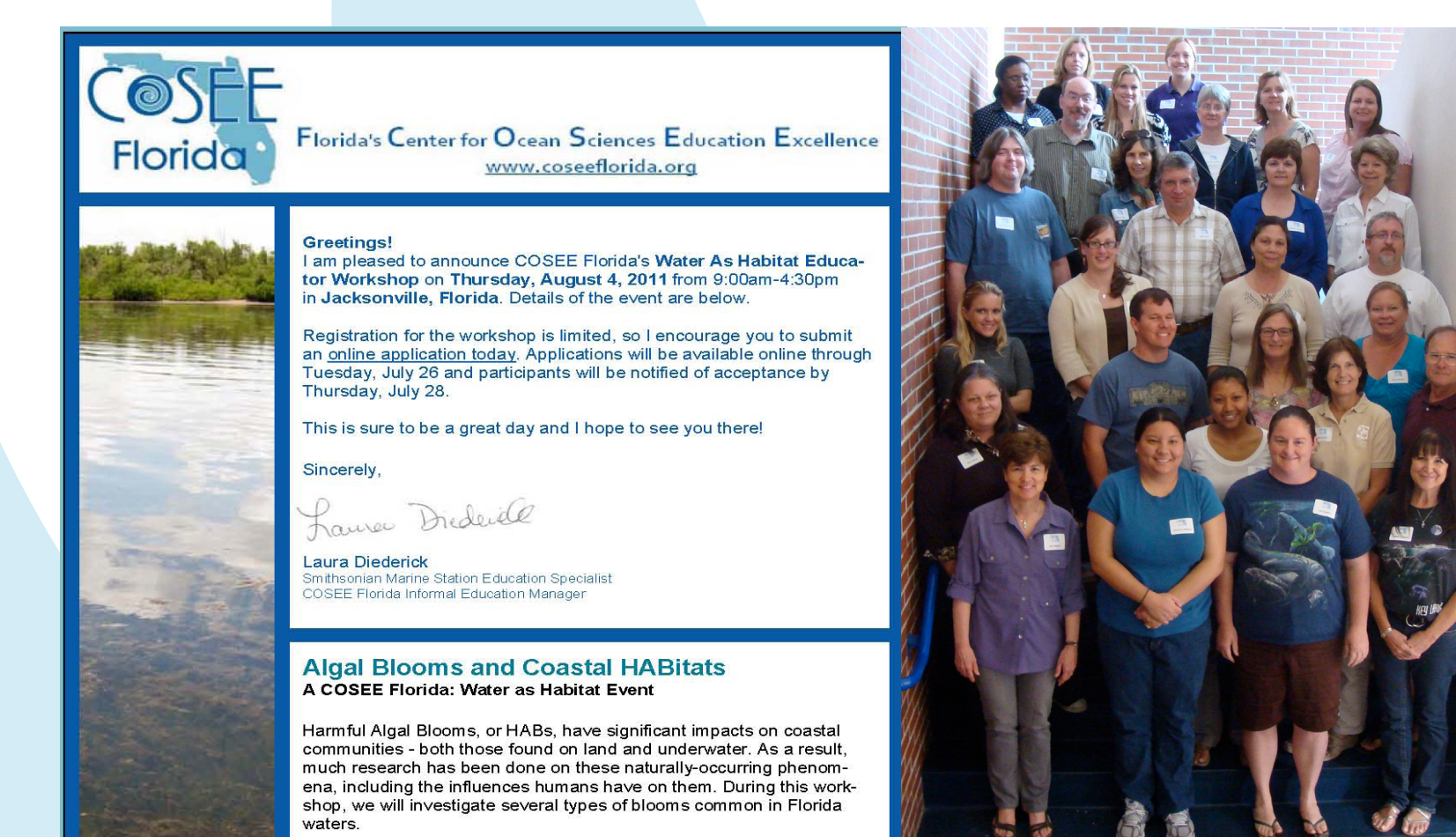
## Give the People What They Want

The underlying framework of building the Ocean Science Learning Network has been to design and conduct “catalytic” events that enhance the mission of regional partners. By first assessing both the needs and strengths of each partner organization, COSEE Florida can provide customized programming that is relevant to the regional audiences. Ideally, a successful program can be replicated once the foundation has been laid. Many types of events lend themselves to this flexible format and some of COSEE Florida’s recent successes are highlighted below.



## Science Cafes

The Cafe format is laid-back and makes science approachable to most any audience. The conversational tone of these events gives ocean scientists the opportunity to engage directly with a large audience.



## Educator Workshops

COSEE Florida is developing workshops for formal and informal educators around common themes that are relevant to each region around the state. Ocean scientists are involved in the development of materials and leading workshop activities.



## Public Lectures

Many audiences in Florida enjoy the traditional lecture format, but most science centers lack the affiliations that supply a steady stream of speakers. COSEE Florida provides a link between ocean scientists and venues looking to host lectures.

## Partners on Past Events:

University of North Florida, University of Florida Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, Museum of Arts and Sciences, Museum of Discovery and Science, University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of South Florida, University of Florida Museum of Natural History

## Partners on Upcoming Events

Mote Marine Laboratory, Florida Marine Science Educators Association, Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory

