

# THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH & EDUCATION NETWORK

## WHAT IS SCIREN?

The Scientific Research and Education Network, SciREN, is a graduate student led program connecting scientists with educators. The goal of SciREN is to foster the translation and dissemination of current scientific work to educators and to help enhance the science literacy of today's youth. At SciREN events, scientists provide educators with K-12 classroom ready lesson plans, which are based on their current work and adhere to state and national educational standards. These events are held at informal science education institutions, such as a museum or an aquarium. Additionally, SciREN gives scientists and educators opportunities to arrange classroom visits and to collaborate on curriculum development.



The SciREN Coast team. From left: Ethan Theuerkauf, Heather Heenehan, Avery Paxton, Alyse Larkin-Swartout, and Justin Ridge.

## WHO IS SCIREN?

SciREN was founded by two graduate students, Justin Ridge and Ethan Theuerkauf at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Institute of Marine Sciences (UNC-IMS). In the second year, the leadership team expanded to include students at the Duke University Marine Lab (DURL). The SciREN team now includes members from the main campuses of UNC, Duke University, and North Carolina State University (NCSU). The network includes more than 60 scientists from 15 institutions and over 100 educators.

## BENEFITS TO SCIENTISTS

SciREN offers scientists the opportunity to create and share classroom-ready exercises with educators and to inspire students by bringing their science to life in local classrooms. Through both the annual SciREN event and a lesson plan writing workshop, SciREN supports scientists in their efforts to develop broader impacts, enhance outreach and communication skills, and network with local teachers and scientists. Networking can also lead to future collaborations, classroom visits, and a stronger background in outreach for grant applications.



Scientists share lesson materials with teachers at the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores.

## CONTACT:

Email: [sciren.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:sciren.outreach@gmail.com)

Website: <http://sciren.web.unc.edu>

Facebook: <http://goo.gl/OVvgyz>

Twitter: [SciREN.Outreach](https://twitter.com/SciREN.Outreach)



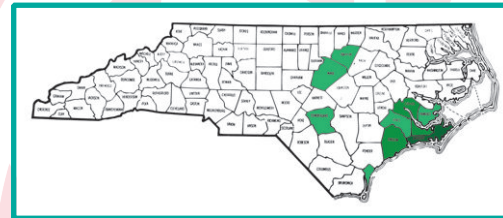
Teachers help shape classroom activities by advising scientists during a lesson plan workshop.

## BENEFITS TO TEACHERS

Annual SciREN networking events allow educators to obtain classroom-ready exercises that explore the cutting-edge research of local scientists while meeting North Carolina Essential Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. At SciREN events teachers also learn about and connect with local scientists who are willing to visit their classrooms. In addition, there is an opportunity to network with other local teachers and earn continuing education credits.

## PREVIOUS EVENTS

The 1st and 2nd annual SciREN Coast events were held in April 2013 and February 2014 at the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores. The 2nd annual event hosted approximately 100 teachers from North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina. Teachers from nine counties in Eastern and Central North Carolina attended the event. Scientists from UNC, Duke University, NCSU, East Carolina University, UNC-Wilmington, NC Sea Grant, NC Maritime Museums, NC Coastal Reserves, The Science House, and Surfrider shared lesson plans at the workshop.



North Carolina counties with educator participants at the 2014 SciREN Coast event. Darker greens represent higher densities of participants.



Over **95% of scientist participants** in SciREN would recommend being a part of the network to fellow scientists.

## REACTION

Exit surveys from the 2014 event from scientist and teacher participants showed overwhelming, positive response for the 2nd annual SciREN Coast event and for the future of SciREN. There is strong support for SciREN's goals of making connections between teachers and scientists, building relationships for future classroom visits, and sharing classroom-ready materials for teachers to use.

- During the event, each scientist received contact information from an average of **22 educators** interested in classroom visits
- Approximately **98% of educators** indicated that they would be using these lesson plans in the classroom
- Teachers and scientists agreed they had made strong connections during the event, and that they would be interested in attending future events (**96% and 100% respectively for both**).

## PREVIOUS FUNDING



UNC  
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