MarineLab
Marine Resources Development Foundation

Six-Month Impact Report | October 2026

MarineLab is grateful for the $30,000 grant received from The Rickel Foundation in May 2026 to support our Art Mitchell Scholarship Fund (AMSF). Through this scholarship program, MarineLab works to expand access to meaningful environmental education experiences for students facing financial barriers. These experiences help foster environmental literacy, scientific confidence, and a greater understanding of the role individuals can play in protecting our oceans. MarineLab sincerely appreciates this investment in accessible environmental education and the opportunity to continue serving Florida based Title I students through the Art Mitchell Scholarship Fund.

Impact of Rickel Foundation Support

Since May 2026, MarineLab has provided scholarship assistance to 164 Title I students from five different Title I schools, utilizing $39,780.30 in scholarship funds to support their participation. $30,000 was from the Rickel Foundation and the remaining $9,780.30 from multiple private donors.

Year-to-Date Impact of AMSF

From January through October 2026, MarineLab has supported 602 Title I students from 17 different Title I schools, utilizing a total of $87,177.20 in scholarship funds.

Educational Impact of MarineLab Programs in 2026

While the scholarship program expands access to MarineLab's educational experiences, the impact of those experiences extends beyond participation alone. Our ongoing program evaluations demonstrate measurable improvements in our impact on components of environmental literacy, specifically environmental attitudes, content knowledge, and scientific identity.

Teacher evaluations provide valuable insight into the impact of MarineLab's programs. Between January and October 2026, 118 teachers evaluated the impact of their students' MarineLab experiences using a scale of 1 (low impact) to 5 (high impact).

- Environmental Attitude: 100% reported that MarineLab positively influenced their students' attitudes toward the environment. Of those, 87% rated the impact a 5 and 13% rated it a 4.
- Content Knowledge: 100% reported that MarineLab increased their students' content knowledge. Of those, 83% rated the impact a 5 and 17% rated it a 4.
- Scientific Identity: 97% reported that MarineLab helped students see themselves as scientists. Of those, 75% rated the impact a 5, 22% rated it a 4, and 3% rated it a 3.

We also collect impact data directly from students. While much of our evaluation focuses on long-term outcomes by surveying students two or more years after their participation, we are particularly proud of

the immediate impact MarineLab has on students' scientific identity. For all groups participating in programs of three or more days, students are presented with a series of statements and asked to select the one that best reflects how they see themselves as scientists. Students complete this exercise twice: once on the day of arrival and again on the day of departure, allowing us to measure changes in their scientific identity over the course of their MarineLab experience. Comparing responses from 1,325 students who participated thus far in 2026, we found a 6% increase in students who identified with the statement "I am a scientist!" and a 7.43% decrease in students who identified with the statement "I definitely wouldn't call myself a scientist." Both changes were found to be statistically significant. These results demonstrate MarineLab's ability to help students recognize their own potential as scientists and build confidence in their place within the scientific community.

Impact Statements/Videos/Pictures from Teachers and Students

Vanessa Rice, a 5th grade teacher from Hancock Creek Elementary in Lee County wrote us this letter (that also has a link to a video) after their scholarship funded MarineLab program: https://drive.google.com/file/d/19hSrNBhe7QPCuljGVeuUJ27WR7psnVzc/view?usp=sharing

Alexa Simeone, Executive Director of The Sea Lab/Deerfield Beach Teen Center in Broward County, an after-school intervention program, sent us this video after their 2026 scholarship funded MarineLab program: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8lixtpKUXg&t=3s

See pictures from two of our 2026 scholarship funded schools, Beachland Elementary (5th grade, Indian River County) and Somerset Academy South Homestead (11th grade, Miami-Dade).

Kate Caffee, a teacher at The Academy in Charlotte County has brought us scholarship funded students in 2025 and 2026. She has recently applied for funding for a 2027 program. She wrote: “Each year students return to school sharing their experiences with their classmates, friends and families. Their experience with MarineLab has far reaching effects. They come back with a confidence that I didn’t see before. Many conquer fears during the trip. All of them come back with a renewed sense of fascination and curiosity of the natural world. David Sobel wrote, ‘If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it.’ This trip allows our students to fall in love with the ecosystems that are unique to our home state. I hope it will empower them to become advocates to protect those ecosystems of which we are very much a part of.”

Looking Ahead to 2027

MarineLab's scholarship program is already helping schools plan future educational experiences. As of Oct 31, eight Title I schools have received scholarship funding totaling $53,094 to support 245 students expected to participate in MarineLab programs in 2027. By expanding access to the MarineLab experience, the AMSF is helping cultivate a generation of scientifically engaged, environmentally aware young people who understand their ability to make a difference. We are seeing an increase in applications for funding and will be seeking continued support for this program.