2026 S.C. Marine Educators Association Annual Conference
Conference Program Overview

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 2026	
6:30 PM - 9 PM	Welcome Event and Marine-themed Trivia* at Cannon Distillery **trivia is open to non-conference registrants!*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7th, 2026	
8 AM - 9 AM	Registration Opens, Light Breakfast
9 AM - 9:10 AM	**Welcome and Overview**
9:10 AM - 10 AM	Keynote Speaker: **Katie Luciano, SCGS Coastal Geologist** (MRRI Auditorium)
10 AM - 10:15 AM	BREAK
10:15 AM - 11 AM	**Session 1: Community-driven Science in Action** (MRRI Auditorium)
	10:15 - 10:30 AM: ***25 Years of Community Science: The Transformative Journey of the NOAA Phytoplankton Monitoring Network*** Dr.Steve Morton, NOAA/NOS
	10:30 - 11 AM: ***Partnering for Protecting Our Natural Resources*** Mike Walker & Amber MacLeod, Huntington Beach State Park
11 AM - 11:15 AM	BREAK
11:15 AM - 12 PM	**Session 2: Measuring Educational Impacts** (MRRI Auditorium)
	11:15 - 11:30 AM: ***When Math Meets The Ocean: Understanding Math Anxiety In Undergraduate Marine Science Students*** Emily Baumann, University of South Carolina
	11:30 AM - 12 PM: ***From Idea to Impact: Developing and Evaluating SCDNR's Marine Career Field Days*** Morgan Smith & Rebecca Cottingham, SC Department of Natural Resources

SCMEA
The South Carolina Marine Educators Association

12 PM - 12:45 PM	Lunch (provided, SCDNR Outdoor Classroom)
12:45 PM - 1:30 PM	**SCMEA Board Meeting and Awards Presentation** (MRRI Auditorium)
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	**Concurrent Session: Professional Development for Educators** (choose one)
	Plastic Breakdown: A Marine Debris Challenge Elle Pestorius, SC Sea Grant Consortium **Location:** Outdoor Classroom
	Green Step Schools: Stewardship in Action E.V. Bell, Environmental Education Association of South Carolina **Location:** MRRI Auditorium
2:30 PM - 2:45 PM	BREAK
2:45 PM - 3:45 PM	**Concurrent Session: Barrier Island Science** (choose one)
	Ocean Impacts Rebecca Allen & (TBD), Barrier Island Environmental Education Program at St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center **Location:** Outdoor Classroom
	Shark Teeth Forensics Charles Shelton Jr, Myrtle Beach Shark Teeth **Location:** MRRI Auditorium
	Charleston-Area Water Samples Shed Light on the Scope of the Global Microplastics Problem Dr. Lacy Fabian, Following Seas Marine Impact Research, Inc. **Location:** MRRI Classroom
3:45 PM - 4 PM	BREAK / TRANSITION TO MRRI AUDITORIUM
4 PM - 4:30 PM	**Closing remarks and Reminders (MRRI Auditorium)**
4:30 PM - 6 PM	BREAK

6 PM - 8:30 PM	Dinner & Silent Auction - SCDNR Outdoor Classroom* **please note while dinner and non-alcoholic options will be provided, all other (alcoholic) beverages are BYOB*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH, 2026	
9 am - 12 pm	**Field Trips - Select from one of the following:** 1. **Guided Cultural History Tour at McLeod Plantation Historic Site**:. This guided tour will highlight the impact of the Freedmen's Bureau, the development of Gullah culture, and the evolving relationships among residents over time. 2. **Guided Bird Walk at Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve**: Located at the northeastern tip of Folly Island, Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve offers a unique blend of coastal beauty, rich history, and diverse wildlife. Join a naturalist for a guided bird walk through the forest and onto the beach. Binoculars will be available to borrow.