February 26, 2019

For Immediate Release

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**Coonamessett Farm Foundation Receives Award to Engage Falmouth High School Students in Loggerhead Sea Turtle Study**

East Falmouth, MA—Students at the high school level have few opportunities to engage in science outside their classrooms. But with the help of a generous grant from the Falmouth Fund of The Cape Cod Foundation, the non-profit research organization Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF) will soon bring active research on the threatened loggerhead sea turtle to classrooms at Falmouth High School.

The “Turtle Tagging Project: Tracking Loggerheads in the Atlantic Ocean with Falmouth High School Students” will give FHS’s Fall 2019 Marine Ecology, Environmental Science, and STEM9 students the opportunity to participate in an ongoing research project over the entire semester.

The project centers around the study of a single loggerhead turtle to which CFF has affixed (or “tagged” with) an underwater, GPS monitoring device. CFF researchers will share select data from the tagging device with FHS students at regular intervals, providing a window into the methods scientists use to conduct marine research, as well as the tools for understanding of ocean ecology and marine life. Students will have the opportunity to assimilate the real-world concepts into their current classroom curriculum.

Samir Patel, Ph.D., CFF’s turtle expert and a former high school teacher, will lead the project in collaboration with Falmouth High School teacher Cheryl Milliken. Dr. Patel explains, “It will be great to bring some of my own research back into the classroom. The project will give students a deeper understanding of ocean ecology, marine life, and specifically, the forces that impact the location, distribution and health of the loggerhead sea turtle.”

Science teacher Cheryl Milliken adds, “It is exciting to be able to collaborate with local scientists to bring authentic technology into our classrooms at Falmouth High School. Students will be able to understand the impact of ocean currents and turtle behavior on the distribution of loggerheads in the Atlantic Ocean. Our classes represent students with a wide range of abilities and interests, and you never know how connections between what we teach and learn in science class will inspire students to engage in STEM-related issues beyond our classroom walls. As a citizen, I appreciate how the science behind this turtle tagging information can improve fishing activities by informing fishers while adhering to conservation rules.”

CFF has tagged more than 100 turtles in the last 10 years with funding from the local sea scallop industry. The $5,000 satellite tags transmit position, water temperature, and dive depth providing a wealth of oceanographic date that can be used to monitor climate change.

In addition to the direct benefits to FHS students, the project will benefit the Falmouth community in multiple ways: the fishing community will gain data and insights to help inform management decisions, which contributes to a healthy and sustainable food system and a vibrant blue economy.

Coonamessett Farm Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit conducting scientific research in support of sustainable fishing, farming, agriculture and renewable energy.

For more information about CFF visit: [www.coonamessettfarmfoundation.org](http://www.coonamessettfarmfoundation.org).

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