

# FRESHMAN MINIMESTER

## GETTING OUR FEET WET

The Freshman Minimester offers students an opportunity to dive deep into experiential learning! A significant portion of our studies will center on the marine and freshwater ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

## REMINDERS

By this point, everyone should have REGISTERED and SUBMITTED 2 of 4 PAYMENTS (\$200.) The 3rd payment of \$100 is due by Jan 31. PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO CATCH UP ON ANY OVERDUE PAYMENTS – we are in the process of scheduling our activities and require these funds in our RCHS account to cover expenses such as buses, campsites, and our canoe trip!

## PADDLING THE POCOMOKE RIVER



The Pocomoke River flows alongside Pocomoke River State Park, our camping base. Stretching 73 miles, the Pocomoke is the easternmost river that empties into the Chesapeake Bay, collecting waters from Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia on the Delmarva Peninsula. This tidal river begins in freshwater cypress swamps and transitions into a brackish tributary before reaching the Chesapeake Bay. Campers will navigate a twisting loop of the upper Pocomoke River, where we'll encounter a delightful array of trees, plants, birds, turtles, insects, and fish species!

MINIMESTER IS APRIL 20 - APRIL 24, 2026

## SEINING AND SAMPLING: SALT MARSHES AT THE EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge is located at the tip of the Delmarva Peninsula. This coastal marsh habitat offers refuge and nourishment for more than 300 bird species. Additionally, it serves as a crucial nursery for endangered loggerhead sea turtles and threatened diamondback terrapin turtles, while crabs, shrimp, oysters, and countless fish species thrive in this ecosystem. Campers will have the chance to explore the marsh environment as we seine to examine aquatic organisms, and we'll conduct various water chemistry tests in this vibrant habitat.



To genuinely grasp the Bay ecosystem, we must immerse ourselves in it! Campers will have the opportunity to splash around, wade, sunbathe, and construct sandcastles on both the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean sides of the Delmarva Peninsula. Kiptopeke State Park offers a fantastic swimming beach with gentle waves on the Bay side, while Assateague Island National Seashore allows us to enjoy the serene waters of Tom's Cove and the powerful Atlantic Ocean.



## DOLPHINS AND PONIES AND OYSTERS AND EAGLES

Campers will have the opportunity to see the Chincoteague Island ponies, both natural and man-made oyster reefs, bottlenose dolphins, as well as a variety of fish and bird species while we glide along the back bay coastline of the Assateague Island National Wildlife Refuge on a pontoon boat.



## SPLASHING AND SWIMMING: CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ATLANTIC OCEAN

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