

July 17, 2008

For Immediate Release:  
Contact: Dave Kellam  
Phone: 603-862-3403  
Email: Dave.Kellam@unh.edu

### **New Hampshire Estuaries Project Receives \$20,000 to Improve Environmental Protection in New Hampshire and Southern Maine Communities.**

Durham, N.H. - The New Hampshire Estuaries Project was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Barbara K. & Cyrus B. Sweet III Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation – Piscataqua Region to complete a Piscataqua Region environmental planning assessment that will improve stewardship of vital estuary resources in New Hampshire and southern Maine. The project will be implemented in partnership with four regional planning commissions in the two states.

This unique multi-state assessment involves a comprehensive analysis of regulatory and non-regulatory conservation strategies in the 52 communities within the Hampton/Seabrook and Great Bay watersheds. Once current conservation strategies are identified, gaps in environmental protection in the region will become clearer, and a coordinated plan of action can be devised to improve environmental stewardship at a watershed scale.

New Hampshire Estuaries Project Director Jennifer Hunter stresses the importance of addressing environmental issues across an entire watershed to achieve local goals. "Every community in the region wants their part of the watershed to be clean and healthy. The problem is that the health of our estuaries is linked to land use practices occurring far upstream in many New Hampshire and Maine communities. Typically, communities make land use and conservation decisions based on very local conditions without knowing how their efforts contribute to the environmental health of the estuary. This project will help coordinate the hard work happening at the local level to best achieve environmental goals for the estuary so that all communities benefit."

A similar assessment was performed in the mid-1990s as a first step in developing the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for New Hampshire's estuaries. The updated assessment will provide key information that will be used in revising the program's Management Plan in 2010.

The NHEP is a collaborative program involving governmental agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, businesses and the public to protect, enhance and monitor the environmental quality of the region's coastal bays and rivers. The NHEP is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through an agreement with the University of New Hampshire. Learn more at [www.nhep.unh.edu](http://www.nhep.unh.edu).

---