

December 11, 2008

For Immediate Release:

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Grants Awarded for Projects in New Hampshire and Maine that Enhance and Protect the Region's Estuaries

DURHAM – The New Hampshire Estuaries Project (NHEP) has awarded funding for seven projects, totaling \$46,964.00, through its Local Grants program. The projects will be implemented in 2009 and all address some aspect of the NHEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan.

This was the first year that ten communities in Maine that are part of the Great Bay Estuary were eligible for funding. Three Maine projects were awarded grants: an optical brightener study of Spruce Creek to identify bacteria that was proposed by the Town of Kittery/Spruce Creek Association, a Maine shoreland mapping project proposed by Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, and a variety of activities designed to reduce pollution in the Great Works River proposed by the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve.

The New Hampshire based projects that were awarded funding include the creation of a *State of the River* newsletter by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee, land protection around Stonehouse Pond in Barrington proposed by the Trust for Public Land, conservation outreach activities of Bear-Paw Regional Greenways and conservation of land around Pawtuckaway River and Kennard Hill in Epping, Raymond, and Nottingham by the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire.

NHEP's annual Local Grants Program is open to organizations conducting projects in New Hampshire and Maine's coastal watershed that implement the NHEP's Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan goals. Eligible activity areas include water quality, land use and habitat protection, shellfish resources, habitat restoration, and public outreach.

The NHEP supports environmental stewardship and community land use planning activities in the Great Bay and Hampton-Seabrook estuaries, which encompass 52 communities in Maine and New Hampshire.

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project is a program based at the University of New Hampshire. The collaborative program is primarily funded by a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency and involves governmental agencies, university researchers, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the public. The NHEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, project reports, and other resources are available at www.nhep.unh.edu.

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