

February 5, 2007

For Immediate Release:

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Buffer Primer in Exeter Shows How Preserving Vegetation Next to Streams Protects Water Quality

At 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, the Exeter Conservation Commission will learn about the water quality protecting power of healthy vegetation along streams and ponds, called buffers, and their long-term benefits to the community's natural resources.

Jodi Castallo, Project Manager for the New Hampshire Estuaries Project, will give a 30 minute presentation to the commission that will also be televised live on Community Access Channel 22. It is a brief educational overview of buffers; their composition, recommended widths, and the pollution-filtering function they perform. She will also include specific data and maps that show the current condition of buffers in the Town of Exeter.

Conservation Commission Chair, Don Clement, is looking forward to the presentation. "I saw this presentation about a week ago at a meeting of the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee and it was great. I think this customized version on Tuesday will show people how important it is to maintain vegetation along stream banks in Exeter. It is such an easy way to prevent and treat run-off before it reaches the river."

Maintaining healthy streamside buffers are an effective solution to one of the growing problems facing the Great Bay. Recently, the NHEP published a *State of the Estuaries Report* that summarizes the health and environmental quality of New Hampshire's estuaries. The report's findings indicated that nitrogen concentrations in Great Bay have increased 59% in the last 25 years. High nitrogen levels will degrade the water quality of Great Bay and its tributaries. Actions, such as maintaining adequate vegetative buffers, promoting effective stormwater management and maintaining septic systems, will greatly reduce the amount of nitrogen entering the bay.

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project is a cooperative environmental program involving governmental agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the public to protect, monitor, and enhance the ecological health of the state's coastal bays and rivers. It is funded in part by a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency. For more information, go to www.nhep.unh.edu.

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