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For Immediate Release:

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Southeastern NH Communities Get Help in 2008 with Natural Resource Protection

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project (NHEP) is accepting applications from municipal planning boards and conservation commissions from the 42-community coastal watershed for its Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP), which provides consulting assistance to communities on a wide range of regulatory and nonregulatory approaches to natural resources protection.

The NHEP hires qualified Technical Assistance Providers to work with communities directly on eligible natural resource protection projects, such as development of land conservation or stewardship plans, buffer protection ordinances, and outreach programs to minimize stormwater runoff impacts. There are a wide range of funded activities in the areas of land conservation planning, natural resource protection, buffer and wetlands protections, and stormwater management.

The program is intended to be simple for communities to participate; the NHEP pays for the assistance, develops work scopes to meet communities' needs, and manages the contract agreements with the Technical Assistance Providers. Fifteen community projects have been implemented through the program to date.

"Local land use decisions have a major impact on the water quality and health of our estuaries," notes Jennifer Hunter, Director of the New Hampshire Estuaries Project. "The projects supported through CTAP enable towns to better protect their natural resources to the benefit of the community and the larger Seacoast region."

Communities that have already participated in the program tout its effectiveness. Allison Watts, Conservation Commission Chair for the Town of Newfields, says, "The program was very easy to work with and the application was straightforward. Overall I think it's a great program, and (it) has helped us get the Newfields easement monitoring program up and running."

Community applications can be submitted to the NHEP throughout the year, beginning January 15, 2008. Applications will be evaluated as they are received; and projects will be developed with available funding. Communities are encouraged to submit applications early in the year and should confirm that funds remain prior to submitting an application. It is anticipated that available funding will support 10-15 community projects in 2008.

Funding for this round of CTAP is from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation – Piscataqua Region and from the US Environmental Protection Agency National Estuary Program, through an agreement with the University of New Hampshire.

The CTAP application is available on-line at www.nhep.unh.edu.
