



In the past, when it came to protecting the environmental health of the entire Great Bay Estuary watershed, some pieces were missing.

*Things Have
Changed*

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project Extension into Maine:

Working across political boundaries to protect, restore, and monitor the Great Bay Estuary.

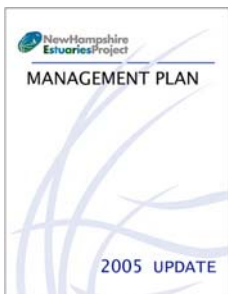


**New Hampshire
Estuaries Project**

Overview of the New Hampshire Estuaries Project

The NHEP was formed in 1995, when New Hampshire's estuaries were designated by the US Environmental Protection Agency as "estuaries of national significance" and included in the agency's National Estuary Program. The NHEP is one of 28 programs across the country with this distinction. The NHEP initially was administered by the NH Office of State Planning and was limited to work within state borders.

The NHEP, through a collaborative process with many partners and stakeholders, developed its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan to protect and restore New Hampshire estuaries. For almost 10 years, the NHEP and its partners implemented actions from the Management Plan, making progress in the areas of water quality, land protection, habitat restoration, shellfish resource management, and environmental monitoring.



From 2001 to 2007, the NHEP spent over \$3.5 million to implement Management Plan actions to improve, protect, or monitor the health of New Hampshire's estuaries. In 2008, the NHEP is awarding nearly \$300,000 to support over a dozen different projects.

In 2005, the program moved from state government to the University of New Hampshire. In December 2007 the NHEP Management Committee voted unanimously to expand the NHEP's area of focus to the entire Great Bay Estuary watershed, including the 24 percent of the watershed in Maine. This shift is a critical step toward achieving the program's watershed-wide goals of improving water quality and protecting and restoring important habitats.

Why did the NHEP expand its focus area into Maine?

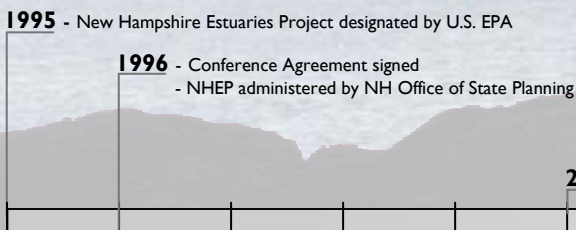
The decision to include the 24 percent of the Great Bay Estuary watershed in Maine was driven by the NHEP's commitment to maintaining ecosystem integrity at a watershed scale. Including Maine in the NHEP focus area allows the program to pursue a true watershed approach to resource protection.

What areas in Maine have been added to the NHEP focus area?

The program's extension involves the entire Great Bay Estuary watershed, including the watershed areas for the Salmon Falls River, Great Works River, Piscataqua River, and Spruce Creek. This includes significant land area in 10 Maine communities: Acton, Berwick, Eliot, Kittery, Lebanon, North Berwick, Sanford, South Berwick, Wells, and York.

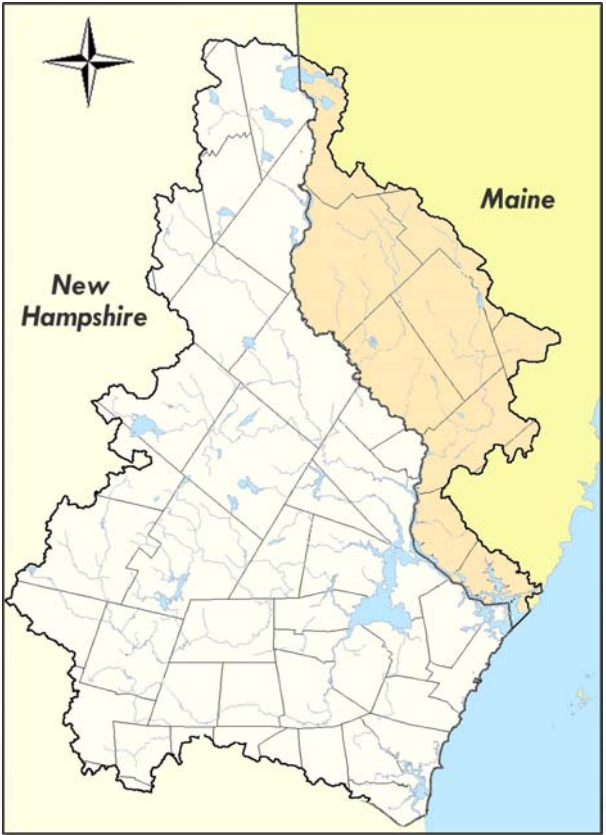
When will Maine priorities be added to the NHEP Management Plan?


The process to fully integrate the Maine portion of the watershed into the NHEP's programs and activities will take 2-3 years. The NHEP will revise its Management Plan in 2010 with the help of stakeholders from Maine and New Hampshire. The revised plan will identify actions throughout the entire focus area that collectively are expected to improve water quality and protect and restore important habitats. The Management Plan drives the work of the NHEP and other collaborating partners.




New Hampshire Estuaries Project Focus Area

(Great Bay Estuary, Hampton-Seabrook Estuary,
and New Hampshire coastal areas)



 NHEP Focus Area prior to 2007

 NHEP Focus Area extension into Maine

2001 - First NHEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Approved

2005 - NHEP Management Plan Approved
- NHEP moves to the University of New Hampshire

2003 - 2nd State of the Estuaries Report

1st State of the Estuaries Report

2006 - 3rd State of the Estuaries Report

What are some of the current NHEP programs?

Local Grants Program: This annual matching grant program is open to organizations conducting projects in the NHEP focus area that help achieve NHEP Management Plan goals. Eligible applicants include municipalities, community groups, land trusts, watershed associations, and other similar organizations. Projects are selected through a competitive application process.

Community Technical Assistance Program: Established in 2005, this program provides town boards with access to professional consultants that help develop localized regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to natural resources protection. Communities receive customized assistance with topics including stormwater management, land conservation planning, and wetland buffer protections. In the next few years, this program will be expanded to Maine communities, as funding allows.

Environmental Monitoring: The NHEP implements a Monitoring Program that tracks over 30 different indicators of estuarine health related to water quality, shellfish resources, land use, and critical species and habitats. Indicators are included in periodic environmental reports including the triennial State of the Estuaries reports. From 2008 to 2010, the NHEP will expand some of its monitoring programs to the Maine part of the watershed and provide data to Maine stakeholders.



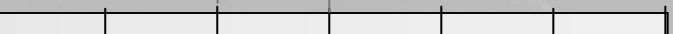
2007 - Management Committee Approves Expansion of NHEP Focus Area

Plan Updated
University of New Hampshire

2009 - 4th State of the Estuaries Report

State of the Estuaries Report

2010 - NHEP Management Plan Revision



What opportunities exist for Maine organizations to participate in the NHEP?

Municipalities, state agencies, conservation groups, businesses, and universities are some of the stakeholders that are critical in implementing the NHEP Management Plan. Here are several ways stakeholder organizations can participate in the NHEP process:

- **Apply for the Local Grants Program**

In the summer of 2008, the NHEP will issue its annual request for project proposals that address actions in the Management Plan. Maine projects that implement actions from watershed protection/restoration plans will be eligible for funding.

- **Sign up for *Estuaries Update***

The NHEP's monthly electronic newsletter, *Estuaries Update*, describes recent NHEP activities, new publications, and upcoming events. Sign up by emailing a request to Contact.NHEP@unh.edu

- **Add the NHEP to Your Mailing Lists**

- **Participate in NHEP Planning Activities**

The NHEP will update its watershed-wide Management Plan by 2010. In 2009 the NHEP will provide opportunities for Maine and New Hampshire stakeholders to identify priorities and actions to protect and restore the region's estuaries.

Contact NHEP Director Jennifer Hunter (Jennifer.Hunter@unh.edu or 603-862-3948) to discuss how your planned activities may be integrated with NHEP efforts.

