

Land purchase will protect 120 shoreland acres on Great Bay

By MICHAEL GOOT

Portsmouth Bureau Chief

Saturday, May 7, 2005

GREENLAND — More than 120 acres of shoreland will be protected along Great Bay following the acquisition of a key Smith Farm parcel.

Officials from The Nature Conservancy, Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg attended a brief ceremony Friday to celebrate the protection of the Smith Farm parcel on Newington Road.

The Nature Conservancy purchased the final 38.7-acre parcel on behalf of the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership. The parcel will ultimately be transferred to the state Fish and Game Department.

This tract of land abuts three parcels protected by the partnership, all along Great Bay and combined create a 123-acre block of protected habitat. The Smith parcel protects 1,121 feet of shoreline on Great Bay and there is a total of 4,540 feet with the other three parcels. The Smith Family has been farming the land in some way since 1895. Gregg has been able to secure more than \$50 million for projects for the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership since 1994 and obtained \$8 million in fiscal year 2005.

Daryl Burnett, state director of The Nature Conservancy, said this parcel is important and Gregg's contribution was essential. "We just could not have made the kind of progress we've made the last 10 years," he said.

Lee Perry, director of the state Fish and Game Department, said the conservation land is an important part of the natural resource puzzle. "This is a great way of making sure the quality of life that's been there in the past is going to be there in the future," he said. Cynthia Smith, one of the land owners, said it has been a "long struggle" to conserve the land, which can still be used for farming and avoid the threat of houses and more development occurring at the property. "Our cows don't have to go to school," she said. In his remarks, Gregg thanked the Smith family for offering the land for conservation and said Great Bay was identified as one of the state's key resources in his Governor's Commission for the 21st Century.

"This makes this project the single largest in the state's history in land protection and conservation," he said.

Gregg also thanked the project partners including The Nature Conservancy and the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership. Other partners are Ducks Unlimited, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Hampshire Audubon, state Fish and Game Department, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire

Forests, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Peter Wellenberger, manager of the Great Bay Resource Reserve, presented Gregg with a bird sculpture designed by Walter Liff as a token of appreciation.

About 20 protesters stood at the edge of the property by Newington Road, hoping to get noticed by Gregg on issues unrelated to this purchase.

Judy Gardner of Durham said she is worried that a proposal for a national ID card slipped in unnoticed in a bill for more funding for the Iraq war. She said she believes such a system could be used to control people. Mayme Trumble of Madbury said she opposes drilling the refuge. The budget passed by the House and Senate included revenue to be gained from drilling leases in ANWR.

“We just wanted him to know we’re not happy with a lot of things going on,” she said.