



## Partnership Set to Transfer 12 Great Bay Parcels to N.H. Fish and Game

Dec. 21, 2005

**CONCORD, N.H.** - In a sign of successful conservation around New Hampshire's Great Bay, a dozen tracts of land - totaling 806 acres - will be transferred next month from The Nature Conservancy to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

The N.H. Executive Council today approved the transfer of 12 parcels in eight towns from The Nature Conservancy to the Fish and Game Department, all parcels the Conservancy purchased on behalf of the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership. The Conservancy will also transfer conservation easements from an additional two tracts, totaling 220.5 acres, to Fish and Game. The actual transfer of the properties and easements will take place in January.

The tracts and easements range in size from 10 acres to 359 acres and were purchased by The Nature Conservancy from willing sellers between 1999 and June of this year. The tracts were identified and purchased for their excellent habitat for waterfowl and other species and for their value in protecting Great Bay's water quality.

"These coastal properties include critical habitat for many wildlife species, particularly for waterfowl and marine resources in the state," said Lee E. Perry, executive director of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. "With the lands protected, the people of New Hampshire will benefit from the enhancement of water quality in the region, and from the opportunity to explore and enjoy them for generations to come. We thank our many partners who have worked hard to create this legacy."

Daryl Burtnett, state director of the Conservancy in New Hampshire, offered his thanks to Gov. Lynch and the Executive Council, "who are taking an important step in the protection and stewardship of the natural character of the Great Bay region. By approving the transfer of these key parcels, our leaders are following through on a promise to future generations to keep Great Bay as one of New Hampshire's natural gems. This effort is fueled by funding brought to New Hampshire by Senator Judd Gregg and monies provided as part of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and accomplished through the collective work of the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership. This combination of public and private effort at the local, state and federal level creates a force for nature of which we can all be proud."

The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership uses a comprehensive approach to identify Great Bay's most critical habitats and to protect them. The Nature Conservancy is lead acquisition agent, and partners include Ducks Unlimited, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Hampshire Audubon, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Since 1994 the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership has protected some 4,000 acres of critical habitat in the Great Bay area. Local communities and other organizations have protected an additional 3,020 acres that the partnership has been able to use as match to leverage federal funding. The leading sources of funds include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North American Wetland Conservation Act and private donations.

Like many of the tracts previously protected on behalf of the Partnership, the latest round of tracts is being transferred to the Fish and Game Department because the Partnership deemed that the agency was the best entity to hold and manage these parcels. Other Partnership-protected tracts have been retained by The Nature Conservancy or have been transferred to other principal or community partners.

Before any tracts can be transferred to the state, the N.H. Executive Council has to approve the measure. Previous Partnership transfers from The Nature Conservancy to the state have batched five to seven parcels in each request to the Executive Council. Today's batch of 12 parcels and two conservation easements is the largest Partnership transfer to date. Next spring, the Partnership expects to request transfer of another batch of parcels to the state.

The latest parcels to be transferred include clusters around Crommet and Lubberland creeks in Durham, Tuttle Swamp and Shackford Point in Newmarket, the Piscassic River in Exeter and Epping, and along the bay's eastern shore near the Newington-Greenland town line.

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The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is the guardian of the state's fish, wildlife and marine resources and their habitats.

The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 14 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 83 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Since 1961 The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire has protected nearly 118,000 acres of ecologically significant land and has worked with partners to protect an additional 148,000 acres in the state. The Conservancy owns and manages 30 preserves across the state. For more information, visit [www.nature.org/newhampshire](http://www.nature.org/newhampshire).

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