

Six New Properties Conserved at Great Bay

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GREENLAND, N.H. - Hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds can now enjoy having more land to roam in, as six new properties have been added to the existing 10,235 acres of open space and estuarine waters already protected within the Great Bay National Estuarine Reserve.

A total of 424 acres of land were protected in this most recent round of conservation land transfers. These lands include a variety of habitats that support rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals, as well as open space for recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, boating access and wildlife watching. They include parcels in the towns of Durham and Newmarket.

The Reserve is part of a national network of protected areas established for long-term research, education and stewardship. This partnership program between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department has protected critical estuarine and upland habitat essential for wildlife and recreation for over fifteen years.

Since 1994, the Great Bay National Estuarine Reserve has participated in a local partnership that has undertaken a comprehensive, landscape-scale approach to conserve and protect important habitat within 24 towns around Great Bay. The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership was formed with nine principal partners whose mission is to promote creative solutions for habitat protection, build upon the conservation efforts of existing protected and restored lands, coordinate resources to identify and pursue a variety of funding opportunities and promote communication and cooperation between partnering entities.

To learn more about Reserve lands, visit the new website, www.greatbaypartnership.org, which includes information about the partnership and maps of conserved properties. The recently acquired properties have not yet been officially named; once this process is complete, they will appear on the website map.

Each year the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership conserves additional open space and unique lands for the public to enjoy. Reserve staff are currently working on projects to increase access to the Bay and surrounding land for a wide variety of outdoor activities. The new properties that have been acquired have been purchased through funds received from NOAA and through North American Wetland Conservation Act grants. Acting as the principal land acquisition agent, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Nature Conservancy purchases the land using this funding, and then transfers the majority of properties to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, which oversees the management and stewardship in perpetuity.

"Today it is easier than ever to find out where these properties are, and to become involved in their stewardship," says Rachel Stevens, Stewardship Coordinator for the

Reserve. "We recently produced a free publication called 'Passport to Great Bay,' which features ten properties around the estuary, perfect for public exploration. Many are great locations to hunt deer and waterfowl, or to simply enjoy a peaceful walk in the woods."

Passports are available at the Great Bay Discovery Center in Greenland. During the off-season, when the center is closed, call (603) 778-0015 to arrange a time to pick one up. [Click here for a sampling of the passport properties](#), as presented in an article in the July-August 2009 *New Hampshire Wildlife Journal* magazine.

For more information about the Reserve and Great Bay Discovery Center, visit www.greatbay.org. The Discovery Center is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday from May through September, and on weekends in October. The grounds are open from dawn to dusk year-round.

For more information about Reserve lands or to learn how to become involved in their stewardship, contact Rachel Stevens at (603) 778-0015 or email Rachel.Stevens@wildlife.nh.gov.

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