

Group's effort marks conservation of 5,800 acres around Great Bay

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MADBURY — The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership on Wednesday celebrated the completion of its 100th project resulting in the conservation of 5,800 acres around Great Bay to date.

The diverse coalition of conservation organizations, federal and state agencies helped protect a 53-acre property in Madbury along Route 108.

Nick Brett led the conservation effort to fulfill his father Wesley's wishes to conserve the property. The elder Brett is a former professor of design and art at the University of New Hampshire. The family trust will continue to own the land, and the conservation easement will be held by the N.H. Fish and Game Department. The conservation easement ensures the protection of approximately 1,300 feet along Gerrish Brook, a tributary to Johnson Creek connecting to the tidal portion of the Oyster River. This section of Gerrish Brook has been documented to include a state species of concern, the red fin pickerel.

Preserving land like the Brett property has an impact on the health of the natural systems that wildlife and people enjoy, according to the partnership. The Great Bay region provides a variety of wildlife habitats that support more than 150 rare species and 55 exemplary natural communities and ecosystems. Encompassing the outflow of five rivers to the Atlantic Ocean, the area is known for providing North American waterfowl breeding, migration and wintering habitat for more than 20 species of migratory waterfowl species.

For 17 years, the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership's commitment to the Seacoast and its collaborative approach to conservation have secured a diversity of habitats including open fields, shrub lands and forests and protected 24 miles of tidal shoreline, 55 miles of stream frontage and 1,655 acres of wetlands. Efforts have also ensured thousands of acres of land remain available for uses such as hiking, snowshoeing, wildlife observation, hunting, and fishing.

Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership principal partners include Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, New Hampshire Audubon, N.H. Fish & Game Department, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. For more information, visit www.greatbaypartnership.org.

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