

### *Partners for Great Bay*

I WAS FOUR OR FIVE years old when my dad first took me out to Great Bay — a smelt-fishing trip that left me with lasting impressions about this peaceful place. Later I discovered that Great Bay is a hot spot for waterfowl and other birds. During one hunting trip with my son and his friend, a bald eagle treated us to a fantastic view by flying right over us.

As it turned out, I was on or near that bay for more than 20 years. It was a place where I lived, worked, played and came to appreciate more as every season came and went.

But during those years, something began changing Great Bay's character. This secret place suddenly got discovered. Houses started appearing here and there; then condominiums; then more houses. It reached a point where, by late fall, I'd wonder whether those ducks were going to return to the bay next spring.

Anyone who understands waterfowl and other birds knows that development — if left unchecked — can greatly hurt Great Bay's potential as an important habitat. Ed Robinson, Fish and Game's waterfowl biologist, understands this. And so do the dozen or so partners involved in protecting Great Bay's resources.

Since 1994, the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership has been working diligently for these resources by arranging the purchase of conservation easements and land around the bay. We can't protect all the undeveloped land along this huge bay and its tributaries — we can only save what limited dollars will buy for this high-priced land.

That's why the partnership is a crucial force for conservation. Different groups using one voice are making a strong case before funding agencies to protect key parcels. They're convincing such sources as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Thanks to their diligence, and to U.S. Senator Judd Gregg's foresight in pursuing funds, there's clear hope for Great Bay.

Seasons will come and go. Parents will take their kids to this awesome place. And, if we succeed, those ducks will keep coming back.



*Wayne E. Vetter  
Executive Director*

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