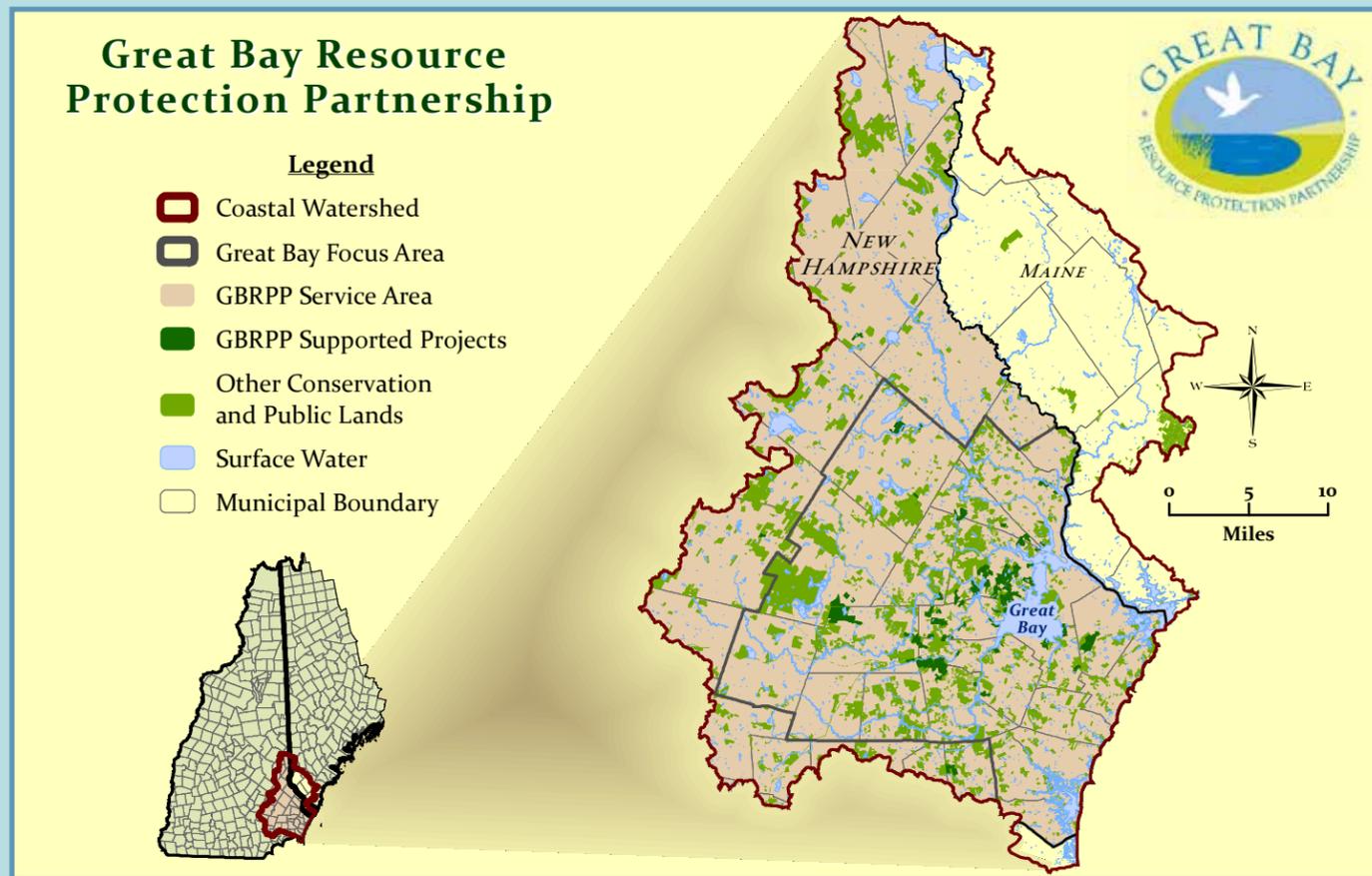


Great Bay - At the Heart of the Watershed

Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership Partners in Coastal Watershed Conservation



The Partnership's comprehensive approach to conservation is guided by land conservation and stewardship goals:

Water Quality: Through land conservation and stewardship, achieve and maintain the water quality and quantity necessary to support the aquatic living resources of the Great Bay and its tributaries within the Coastal Watershed and to protect human health.

Significant Habitats and Wetland Ecosystems: To protect, enhance, restore, and manage an appropriate distribution and diversity of wetland ecosystems and other habitats essential and significant for the protection of water quality of Great Bay and wildlife including migratory birds, fish, shellfish and other wildlife.

Exemplary Natural Communities and Habitats: To protect, enhance, restore, and manage exemplary natural and characteristic natural communities and habitats for rare, threatened, and endangered species of animals, plants, and natural communities.

Migratory Bird Populations: To maintain or improve current distributions of waterfowl and other migratory bird populations, and to help maintain optimum population levels, distributions, and patterns of migration.

Working Landscapes: To protect farm and forest land that provides both important sustainable economic and ecological benefits and help ensure that these lands continue to be managed on a sustainable basis that provides multiple conservation values and supports other Conservation Goals of the Partnership.

Landscape Stewardship and Management: To manage conservation properties within a landscape perspective that respects the integrity and diversity of the entire ecosystem, promotes shared management guidelines and fosters management collaboration among conservation landowners.

Recreational and Educational Opportunities: To protect natural areas that are important for aesthetic purposes and provide for quality public recreational and educational opportunities that are compatible with the protection of the other Conservation Goals of the Partnership.

The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership is a collaboration of conservation organizations in the coastal region that promotes landscape-scale land conservation and stewardship.

Since 1994, the Partnership has operated as a collaborative to promote shared conservation goals and implement conservation programs. The Partnership includes *Principal and Associate Partners* representing regional, state and federal agencies, municipalities, and land trusts serving the region. The Partnership's *Principal Partners* include:

- * Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- * New Hampshire Audubon
- * New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
- * Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- * Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
- * The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire
- * U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- * U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge
- * U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service

Blue Sky and Water. © Dea Brickner-Wood

www.greatbaypartnership.org



Land Conservation: Steady Progress, Long Term Accomplishments



Marsh land along the Bellamy River. © Dea Brickner-Wood

Conservation Planning: Foundation for Decision Making

The Partnership's land conservation work begins with conservation planning which provides the foundation for selecting land conservation priorities and advising management decisions. This science-based process provides critical information about the ecosystem, wildlife habitats, and water quality resources. Collaboration among local, regional, state and federal Partners builds a consensus process for decision-making on land conservation projects and stewardship programs.

Partner organizations also collaborate on research projects that further our understanding of the factors affecting the health of land and water resources. Research projects have included studying climate change impacts, invasive species early detection and control, protecting in-stream habitat conditions for aquatic species, identifying migratory fish passage opportunities and addressing control of excessive nutrients.



Little Bay Buffalo Farm, Durham, NH. © Eric Aldrich

Land Conservation Action: Conserving the Best of the Coastal Watershed

- The Partnership, with support from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, offers the **Land Protection Transaction Grant Program**. This matching grants program is aimed at assisting qualified nonprofit conservation organizations and units of government within the coastal watershed with the transaction costs of land conservation projects such as the acquisition and donation of conservation easements and land. Since 2014, the Partnership has provided **36 transaction grants** to land trusts and municipalities working to conserve **7,000 acres** of significant conservation land in **17 communities**, leveraging over **\$620,000** in other funds.

- * The Partnership has permanently protected **109 properties** totaling **6,105 acres**, protecting **24.5 miles** of shoreline, **59.5 miles** of stream frontage, and **1,897 acres** of wetlands.

- * Additionally, the Partnership supports the conservation work of Partner organizations. The steady progress of this collaborative effort has contributed to a total of over **81,920 acres** of conservation land in the NH coastal watershed.

- * Conserved properties have protected some of the largest unfragmented blocks of natural lands in the watershed that includes agricultural lands, extensive upland forests, grasslands, diverse freshwater and estuarine habitats, and early successional habitat critical to the viability of many wildlife species of concern.

- * Working collaboratively, the Partnership has been able to leverage funds for conservation projects. For example, land acquisition funds from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and North American Waterfowl Conservation Act grants have been leveraged with an additional **\$16.4 million** in other funds from state, federal, municipal, non-profit and private sources, and landowner contributions.

Stewardship: Protecting Natural Resources, Promoting Public Access

Stewardship – Collaborative Resource Management

The Partnership's continued conservation responsibilities include the collaborative management of conserved properties from a landscape scale perspective that respects the integrity of the entire ecosystem.

- * The Partnership assists private, public and nonprofit landowners manage large blocks of conserved lands on a sub-watershed level through the development of landscape-scale stewardship plans which identify common goals and guidelines for management priorities.

- * Conservation landowners meet routinely to share ideas and resources for effective long-term resource management. Resource sharing includes everything from tractors, tools, signs, volunteer crews and technical expertise.

- * The implementation of the cooperative stewardship model has been demonstrated in the 752-acre Tuttle Swamp Conservation Area and the 2,514-acre Crommet Creek Conservation Area.



Partners at Great Bay. © Eric Aldrich

Recreation and Education – Connecting People to the Land & Water



Hiking the board walk on the Sweet Trail. © Joel Harrington

The coastal region has become an increasingly popular recreation destination area. To meet the needs of both people and nature, the Partnership seeks to provide quality public recreational and educational opportunities that are compatible with natural resource protection and management.

- * Partnership conserved lands typically allow for traditional uses such as fishing, wildlife and waterfowl hunting, and non-motorized recreational activities including hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, wildlife and bird watching, and canoeing and kayaking. Snowmobiling is permitted on designated state trails.

- * The Partnership's website provides easy to use maps detailing allowable pedestrian non-motorized uses, conservation lands open for hunting, lands requiring landowner permission, and designated parking areas.

- * The Partnership developed the four-mile Sweet Trail connecting 2,514 conserved acres along Great Bay. The trail integrates handicap accessibility, promotes appropriate public access and protects the integrity of the ecosystem.

- * Working closely with communities and local volunteers, the Partner organizations promote and manage recreational activities.

- * Educational programs for citizens of all ages are sponsored by Partner organizations.