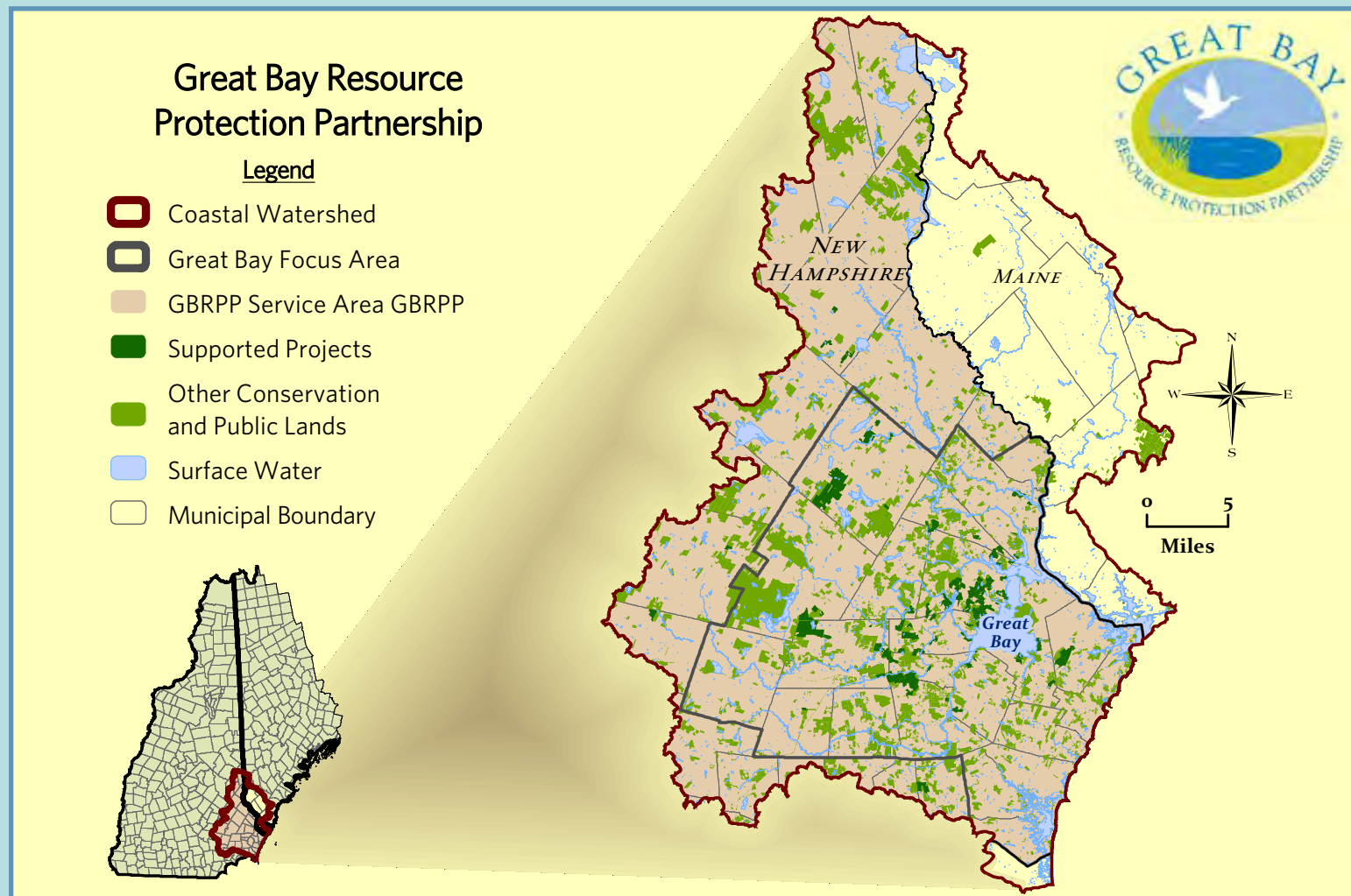


Great Bay - At the Heart of the Watershed

Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership Partners in Coastal Watershed Conservation



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 Community 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

The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership's activities are guided by the **Land Conservation and Stewardship Goals** for *Water Quality, Wetland Ecosystems and Significant Habitats, Migratory & Resident Birds, Exemplary Natural Communities and Habitats, Agricultural and Forest Working Landscapes, Conservation Land Connectivity, Climate Resiliency, Stewardship, and Recreational and Educational Opportunities.*



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 priority lands and advising management decisions.

This science-based process provides critical information that furthers our understanding of the factors affecting the health of land and water resources and builds a consensus process for decision-making for land conservation and stewardship projects.

New Hampshire's Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan guides conservation action. The 2021 Plan identifies high value natural resources and conservation lands essential to the resilience of watershed communities. Prioritized lands are identified in Conservation Focus Areas and Agricultural Resources and set conservation targets and values.

Additional research projects have studied climate resiliency, invasive species, aquatic species in-stream habitats, migratory fish passage, nutrient control, and siting trails for people and wildlife.

Land Conservation Action: Conserving the Best of the Coastal Watershed

The Partnership supports the conservation work of Partner organizations. The steady progress of this collaborative effort has contributed to over 125,000 acres of conservation land in the coastal watershed. The NH Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan's 15-year goal (2020-2037) is to permanently protect an additional 60,000 acres of priority lands.

In support of land conservation projects, the Partnership's **Land Protection Transaction Grant Program** assists land trusts and municipalities with the transaction costs of land conserved through the acquisition or donation of land and conservation easements.

The Partnership has **permanently protected** 109 properties totaling 6,105 acres, protecting over 24 miles of shoreline, 59 miles of stream frontage and 1,897 acres of wetlands. The land acquisition funds from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and North American Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants were leveraged with \$16.4 million in other funds from state, federal, municipal, non-profit and private sources.



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

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 convenes conservation landowners to share ideas and resources for effective resource management. Resource sharing includes everything from tractors, tools, signs, volunteer crews and technical expertise.

The Partnership's **Stewardship Grant Program** provides small grants to land trusts, municipalities and units of government for stewardship projects on protected priority lands in the Great Bay watershed. Grant funded projects implement Best Management Practices for habitat management and existing trail maintenance, and support property management planning and natural resource inventory projects.



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 provides 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 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's four-mile **Sweet Trail** connects over 2,500 acres of conserved lands along Great Bay. The trail integrates handicap accessibility, promotes appropriate public access and protects the integrity of the ecosystem.