



## NEWS RELEASE

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### NAWCA Small Grant Awarded to Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation

**Addison, Maine:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that it has awarded a \$75,000 grant to Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act Small Grants program for conservation efforts in Mason Bay in Jonesport.

This grant is to assist in the purchase of a property on Southwest Creek on the Jonesport side of Mason Bay, thereby permanently protecting more than 95 acres, including 28.7 acres of coastal wetlands and 66.4 acres of upland buffer by preventing the threat of conversion of this pristine and exceptional quality habitat to commercial and/or residential development.

Additional funding for this purchase comes from a National Coastal Wetlands Grant which was awarded to PRWF late last year to help purchase this property plus three others in Mason Bay. One of these other properties is also in Jonesport, the other two are in Jonesboro. All are in upper Mason Bay.

Mason Bay is just to the east of Addison and straddles the Jonesport/Jonesboro town lines. The bay is about 1½ miles long and ½ mile wide. Nearly the entire bay drains at low tide exposing roughly 500 acres of mudflats. Four substantial streams feed into the upper bay. Southwest Creek, Mansfield Creek and White Creek's two branches all have extensive saltmarsh systems that are superbly productive despite being diked and farmed for salt hay in the 18th and 19th centuries.



*Black-bellied Plover and Red Knot*



*Salt Marsh at the Head of Mason Bay*

Mason Bay remains almost entirely undeveloped and is recognized by both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for its exceptionally important estuarine habitat. The bay is documented as providing rare and high quality habitat for a remarkable 56 of the 91 endangered, threatened or declining Priority Trust Species of the entire Gulf of Maine watershed.

The Mason Bay area provides particularly important habitat for American black duck. It also has shorebird feeding habitat in close proximity to roosting sites, critical for migratory shorebirds such as black-bellied plover, greater and lesser yellowlegs, short-billed dowitcher, and semipalmated sandpiper. These birds have only 10 - 14 days each autumn on traditional staging areas like Mason Bay to feed intensively and build fat reserves to fuel long over-ocean flights to South America.

Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation's mission is to protect wildlife habitat in the estuaries in Downeast Maine with a particular emphasis on habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds. PRWF is one of the partners in the Heads of the Estuaries Partnership, a collaboration of local land trusts and governmental agencies working together to protect in perpetuity the important intertidal and adjacent fresh water habitats of southwestern Washington County, Maine with a particular emphasis on the needs of waterfowl, notably the American black duck, and of shorebirds, wading birds and woodcock. PRWF is focusing its conservation efforts in Addison and in Mason Bay.

The purchase of this property will not only protect its wildlife habitat but will also preserve it for traditional low-impact public uses such as hiking, nature observation and hunting.

**Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation**  
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