

NEWS RELEASE

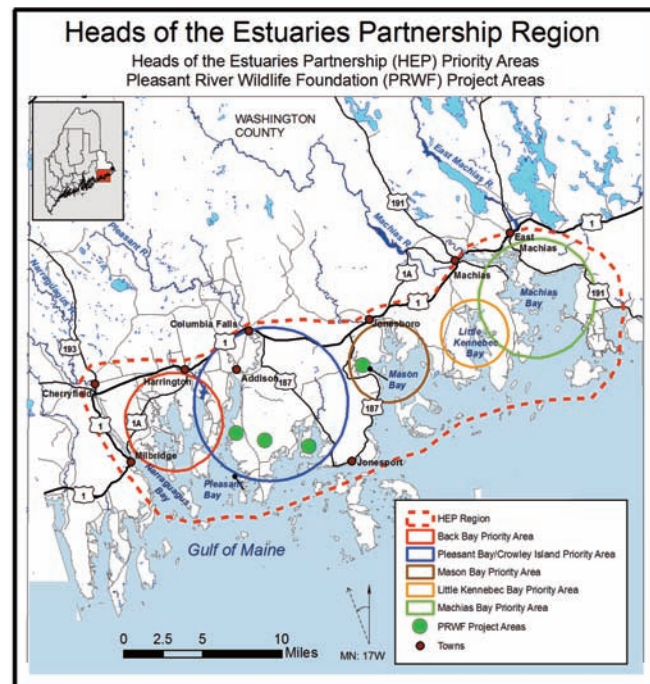
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Head of the Estuaries Partnership Sets Plans for 2009

Addison, Maine: Members of the Heads of the Estuaries Partnership (HEP) met in Milbridge at the Great Auk Land Trust office to put in place plans for Partnership projects in late 2008 and 2009.

The Heads of the Estuaries Partnership is a consortium of land trusts and governmental agencies originally convened by Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation and working together to protect in perpetuity the important intertidal and adjacent fresh water habitats of southwestern Washington County, Maine. The Partnership puts particular emphasis on the needs of waterfowl, notably the American black duck, and of shorebirds, wading birds and woodcock.



The participants at this planning meeting represented the Maine State Planning Office, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Downeast Lakes Land Trust, Downeast Rivers Land Trust, Great Auk Land Trust, Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation and Quoddy Regional Land Trust.

The meeting started with the group reaffirming that conservation is not a competitive sport. When one organization protects valuable lands, that success helps achieve everyone's mission. Ultimately it doesn't matter who owns a particular property as long as it is protected.

However, conservation can be competitive on a national scale, when searching for funding. By working together through the Heads of the Estuaries Partnership, Downeast Maine's local and regional land trusts can compete successfully for scarce governmental funds to support conservation in Maine's coastal estuaries.

The success of the HEP Land for Maine's Future Program grant, announced by the LMF Board in July of 2008, made clear some of the strengths of the Partnership concept.

- HEP has a regional vision that is bold and ambitious and successfully integrates smaller projects into a bigger whole
- HEP has a tight focus on biologically coherent projects which is particularly appealing to agencies whose mission is the protection of wildlife
- Within HEP there is a high level of genuine and effective partnership cooperation

It was also agreed at this meeting that the Partnership would apply for a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to help fund acquisitions in 2009 and 2010. GALT, MCHT and PRWF agreed to work together to develop this proposal, starting by identifying properties that could be used for the "match" that is required for all federal grants. At the same time the partners agreed to identify and prioritize potential properties for acquisition and protection.

Each of the three land trusts also agreed to focus on specific areas within the Partnership Region, which extends from the mouth of the Narraguagus River east to the mouth of the Machias River. GALT will focus its efforts on the Upper Pleasant Bay and Pleasant River salt marshes and the Milbridge/Harrington tidal bays. MCHT will extend its existing work in Little Kennebec Bay and begin to explore protection opportunities in Machias Bay. PRWF will continue to expand existing initiatives in Pleasant Bay (Long Cove), interior Addison (Lily Pond Meadows), Crowley Island and in Mason Bay.

The representatives of federal and state agencies who attended the meeting were excited by the scope the Partnership vision and the cooperation displayed by the participating land trusts and expressed their continued commitment to supporting conservation initiatives in Washington County.

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