



NEWS RELEASE

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National Coastal Wetlands Grants Announced

Addison, Maine: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today a \$521,000 Coastal Wetlands Grant to Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation for conservation in Mason Bay in Jonesboro and Jonesport under the Heads of the Estuaries Partnership (HEP) program.

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.

In total four grants were issued for State of Maine projects. Two are for Heads of the Estuaries Partnership work. The Mason Bay grant will help Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation acquire four properties in Mason Bay in Jonesboro and in Jonesport. This grant will supplement funding under the Land for Maine's Future Program announced earlier in the year to protect in perpetuity over 300 acres of scarce bay front uplands and substantial intertidal wetlands.



Mason Bay salt marsh system at Libby Creek

The second HEP Coastal Wetlands Grant was a grant of \$375,000 to Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Great Auk Land Trust towards the conservation of 204 acres of salt marsh, intertidal flats and adjacent uplands at Grain Point in Back Bay, Milbridge. The Grain Point grant extends a multi-year effort to protect the Beaver Meadow Brook marshes and flats in Milbridge where three other important properties have already been protected.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program was established in 1990. Under the program the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides matching grants to states for acquisition, restoration, management or enhancement of coastal wetlands. “Coastal wetlands provide valuable habitat for many fish and wildlife species, help keep our oceans cleaner, and serve as buffers to protect coastal communities from storms and flooding” (H. Dale Hall, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) Funding for the program comes from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels.

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. Protecting Mason Bay is a key part of this mission. Mason Bay is largely undeveloped and provides undisturbed access to feeding areas for waterfowl both in the fall and in the winter. This is particularly important for black ducks because they are less tolerant of human disturbance than other waterfowl species. In addition specific hydrologic conditions and geologic features in the bay work in concert to provide open water, even in the most frigid winter conditions. Mason Bay is one of the few places where waterfowl can feed throughout the winter.

In addition to the superb wildlife habitat that is being protected with the help of these Coastal Wetlands Grants, recreational opportunities for local people and visitors are also being preserved. At both locations views of the nearby waters are spectacular. There are trails that can be used for hiking in summer and snowshoeing or cross country skiing in winter. People can go bird watching or paddle a kayak at high tide to explore extensive tidal stream and marsh systems.

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