



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Heads of the Estuaries Partnership Awarded \$1 Million Large NAWCA Grant

**Addison, Maine:** Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation announced today that on July 8 the North American Wetlands Conservation Council approved the first round of Fiscal Year 2010 grants under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Maine ranks high nationally for wildlife habitat quality and this year three \$1 million grants were awarded to projects in the State pending final approval by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission in September. The application submitted by the Heads of the Estuaries Partnership was one of those approved.

The announcement says that “This project (The HEP project) targets high-priority acquisitions in undeveloped bays in several coastal focus areas in Downeast Maine that have been identified for their high habitat values (i.e. shallow bays with a very high tidal amplitude and extensive mudflats) for wetland birds, particularly migrating shorebirds and migrating and wintering waterfowl. Due to the extensive mudflats and marshes and low level of disturbance, the Downeast Maine area provides some of the most important wintering habitat for American Black Ducks in the Atlantic Flyway. Most grant and match parcels are undeveloped waterfront parcels with uplands that are now threatened by (primarily second home) development. This project is being carried out by an impressive coalition of partners that are working together in recognition of the outstanding bird habitat values and limited opportunities to protect coastal land while it is still largely undeveloped along this part of the Maine Coast.”

By working together through the Heads of the Estuaries Partnership, local and regional land trusts can compete successfully for scarce governmental funds to support conservation in Maine’s coastal estuaries. The organizations that have participated in the Heads of the



Estuaries Partnership planning are 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 Heads of the Estuaries Partnership Region stretches 31 miles from the mouth of the Narraguagus River northeast to the mouth of the Machias River. What distinguishes the Partnership is that

- HEP has a regional vision that is bold and ambitious and successfully incorporates smaller projects as part of 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 cooperation part



The funds from this Large NAWCA grant will permit three of the partners, Great Auk Land Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation, to protect 954 acres through the acquisitions of properties in Pleasant Bay, Mason Bay and Little Kennebec Bay. These acquisitions will not only help black ducks and other water birds, but also help assure public access to undeveloped lands for recreation and access to the shorelines for clammers and worms, and for those exploring these bays in kayaks, canoes or small boats.

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