



**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
and
PISCATAQUA REGION ESTUARIES PARTNERSHIP**

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) share the common goals of protecting and restoring the state's estuaries and coastal watersheds; using sound science to inform management decisions; and working collaboratively with local, state, and federal governments, non-profits, businesses, researchers, and citizen-based groups to address challenges in the coastal watershed.

DES was established in January 1987 under the provisions of Chapter 202, Laws of 1986 and brought together programs from four previously separate state agencies that had responsibility for such matters as water and air pollution control, water supply protection, dams and flood control, and waste disposal. Today DES implements these and other programs through a variety of regulatory, compliance assistance, and educational efforts.

PREP was formed in 1995 as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program. It is based at the University of New Hampshire and is governed by a 27-person management committee. PREP is a collaborative watershed program that implements a comprehensive management plan for the region's estuaries related to water resources, habitat protection and restoration, land use, and watershed stewardship.

In the past, DES and PREP have worked cooperatively and in partnership on:

- Implementing monitoring programs such as the Gulfwatch Program, Ambient Rivers Monitoring Program, and National Coastal Assessment
- Jointly funding regional projects including the Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire's Coastal Watershed, Great Bay Estuary Restoration Compendium, and Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Restoration Compendium
- Developing nutrient criteria for the Great Bay estuary
- Implementing the State Shellfish Program and requisite shellfish tissue and water quality analyses and securing resources to sustain the program
- Providing technical and financial support to communities' and Local Advisory Committees' projects in the coastal watershed
- Developing and sustaining a Coastal Scientist position with responsibilities and funding shared between DES and PREP

Based upon the successes of prior partnership and cooperative efforts and to bring greater recognition, effectiveness, structure, and efficiency to future partnership efforts, DES and PREP hereby enter into this Partnership Agreement. It is anticipated that this Partnership Agreement will result in enhanced communication between DES and PREP and improved environmental protection.

The specific areas of cooperation are detailed in the attached work plan, which is the result of discussions between representatives of DES and PREP. The tasks are nonbinding and voluntary, and can be revised at any time by agreement of both parties.



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner, DES

Date: 10/16/2009



Jennifer Hunter, Director, PREP

Date: 10/16/09

PARTNERSHIP WORK PLAN

- I. Timeframe: This Work Plan shall be for the period from October 16, 2009 to October 15, 2011 and may be amended from time to time by mutual written agreement of the parties.
- II. Program Areas and Tasks
 - A. Implementation of the "*Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Region's Estuaries*": DES and PREP will work together to identify opportunities to coordinate efforts and align resources and program activities to implement actions from the Management Plan.
 1. DES will seek opportunities to coordinate and leverage efforts with PREP for coastal watershed projects supported through its Watershed Management Bureau programs and Source Water Protection Program.
 2. PREP will provide technical and financial assistance to communities and watershed organizations to support volunteer monitoring, designating rivers and developing and implementing management plans, source water protection, and habitat protection and restoration.
 - B. Environmental monitoring and reporting: DES and PREP will work to sustain environmental monitoring efforts in the Piscataqua Region watersheds. The environmental information will be summarized in environmental indicators and published every three years in a State of the Estuaries report.
 1. DES will:
 - a. Provide funding and in-kind services, as available, for monitoring programs for indicators of water quality, land use, habitats, and species
 - b. Provide coordination and technical assistance to volunteer monitoring groups operating in the Piscataqua Region watersheds
 - c. Participate in the State of the Estuaries conference every three years by providing speakers and other technical information
 2. PREP will:
 - a. Provide funding, as available, to state agencies, universities, and watershed associations for monitoring programs for indicators of water quality, land use, habitats, and species
 - b. Compile environmental data into environmental indicators with measurable goals
 - c. Maintain a comprehensive Monitoring Plan for the Piscataqua Region watersheds
 - d. Incorporate environmental data into the DES Environmental Monitoring Database
 - e. Produce a State of the Estuaries report every three years

C. Nitrogen load reductions: DES and PREP will work cooperatively to provide technical assistance and conduct outreach to raise the public's awareness of the problems and solutions related to nitrogen loading to the Great Bay Estuary. DES and PREP will provide assistance to the Southeast Watershed Alliance through such activities as participation in the statutorily-created advisory committee for the alliance. In addition,

1. DES will:

- a. Publish numeric nutrient criteria for the Great Bay/Piscataqua River estuary
- b. Provide leadership in developing and implementing regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms for nitrogen load reductions
- c. Develop scientific estimates of nitrogen loads from point and nonpoint sources in the coastal watershed

2. PREP will:

- a. Continue monitoring programs and data analysis to quantify trends in nitrogen concentrations and nitrogen loading
- b. Provide information on DES programs, resources, and manuals to communities and watershed groups to assist with nitrogen reduction strategies
- c. Facilitate development of an integrated watershed approach to nitrogen reduction that spans state political boundaries

D. Program administration coordination and input*

1. DES will participate in PREP's Management Committee and Technical Advisory Committee

2. PREP will:

- a. Review and provide input to DES on watershed plans, policies, and guidance materials that pertain to the coastal watershed, as requested by DES
- b. Assist DES with defining the downstream extent of tidal river reaches nominated for designation through the rivers management and protection program
- c. Facilitate coordination of watershed projects for the Great Bay Estuary with Maine agencies and organizations, where appropriate

III. Resources to Implement Partnership Agreement

- A. DES will provide staff support to meet the goals of this partnership, subject to budgetary limitations.
- B. PREP will provide staff and board time to meet the goals of this partnership, as time and budget permit.

* A separate annual sub-award agreement between PREP and DES describes the work tasks for the PREP Coastal Scientist position, which is employed by DES and funded by PREP.