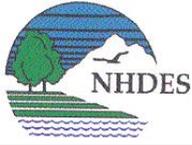


## News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**DATE: May 30, 2007**

**CONTACT: Ted Walsh, (603) 271-2083 or Jen Drociak, (603) 271-0699**

### **NHDES Thanks Estuaries Project for Equipment Donation to Volunteer Monitoring Groups**

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) recognizes the New Hampshire Estuaries Project (NHEP) for its generous donation of water quality monitoring equipment to four volunteer water quality monitoring groups in the Great Bay watershed. All four groups are active participants in DES’s Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP). Watershed and river groups participating in the VRAP program provide an invaluable service to the state in its efforts to preserve and protect New Hampshire rivers and streams. The VRAP data collected by volunteers can be used to determine how safe our rivers and streams are for swimming, the quality of habitat for healthy fish populations, and to determine if water quality is changing over time.

The NHEP purchased and distributed water quality monitoring equipment to the Cocheco River Watershed Coalition, the Oyster River Watershed Association, the Lamprey River Watershed Association and the Bellamy River VRAP group. VRAP Program Manager Ted Walsh said, “this generous donation of over \$8,000 worth of monitoring equipment will facilitate a continuation and expansion of the long term water quality monitoring program that these VRAP groups have initiated and that are vital to understanding the water quality trends in the Great Bay watershed.”

The NHEP, which is part of the University of New Hampshire system, is a program established under the Clean Water Act with the goal of protecting and enhancing nationally significant estuarine resources. “Getting equipment in the hands of trained, committed volunteers not only results in important data on Great Bay tributaries, but it also promotes citizen-driven, science-based stewardship of water resources,” notes NHEP Director Jennifer Hunter. “This helps us achieve the NHEP mission to protect, enhance, and monitor the environmental quality of New Hampshire’s estuaries.”

Dawn Genes, Executive Director of the Lamprey River Watershed Association, has begun developing an expanding monitoring plan for the Lamprey River watershed that became possible with this new equipment. “This generous gift from the NHEP will allow us to expand our participation in DES’s VRAP program and begin monitoring additional tributaries and river segments in the Lamprey River watershed. This brings us closer to our goal of being able to monitor the entire Lamprey River watershed each year.”

Individuals or organizations interested in assisting existing VRAP groups or starting a new VRAP group can contact Ted Walsh at (603) 271-2083 or [twalsh@des.state.nh.us](mailto:twalsh@des.state.nh.us), or Jen Drociak at (603) 271-0699 or [jdrociak@des.state.nh.us](mailto:jdrociak@des.state.nh.us). For more information on the NHEP contact Jennifer Hunter at (603) 862-3403.

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