

4-2008

# Prime Wetland Designation Activities

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# 2008

New Hampshire Estuaries Project



## Prime Wetland Designation Activities: 2005-2008

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**April 2008**

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# **Prime Wetland Designation Activities: 2005-2008**

## **Introduction**

In 2008, Prime Wetland Designations (PWDs) were on the town ballot in the towns of Fremont, Hampton Falls, Brentwood, and Newfields. Three of the four passed (Appendix A); however, the Town of Newfields' proposed designation was not approved due to significant opposition in the community (Appendix B). Portsmouth City Council will decide whether to designate the wetlands identified by their PWD report in the late spring or summer of 2008. This report documents the NHEP and community efforts to adopt PWD and offers insight into the unique situations of each community that may assist other communities in the PWD process. The report also describes the outreach activities of the NHEP to support the designation of Prime Wetlands, associated Action Plans from the NHEP Management Plan, and NHEP expenditures in those communities to support PWD.

## **NHEP Support for PWD**

The NHEP actively supports PWD to address NHEP Action Plan LND-25 that directs the NHEP "to encourage municipal designation of Prime Wetlands and 100-foot buffers or equivalent protection." The first NHEP funded PWD process was completed in 1999 in the Town of Northwood that assessed 63 wetlands and led to adoption of a PWD. From 2005 to 2008, the NHEP funded the PWD process in six communities: Brentwood, Fremont, Hampton, Hampton Falls, Portsmouth, and Sandown. The communities of Hampton and Sandown are planning to propose PWDs in 2009. NHEP assisted all of the six communities with funding activities totaling \$74,398 that were matched with \$88,020 (Appendix C).

To address Action Plan LND-25a that calls for the "creation of a traveling Prime Wetlands display", the NHEP in 2007 followed recommendations by the NHEP Public Outreach and Education Team and produced a large poster and bookmark to help communities educate their citizens about the PWD process (Appendix D). The posters and bookmarks were designed in the style of the "Be Part of the Solution" campaign to take advantage of the branding of that campaign established earlier. In July 2007, 1000 posters and bookmarks were produced at UNH Printing Services at the cost of \$2,185 and many were distributed to all communities considering PWD (Appendix E), as well as the planning commissions and other resource planning organizations. PWD information was also included in the buffer workshops conducted by NHEP in 2007 that were given three times in the coastal watershed and reached over 75 people. The NHEP highlighted PWD in the February 2007 edition of the Eye on Estuaries newspaper series in the Portsmouth Herald. The NHEP provided targeted outreach support to the Rockingham Planning Commission for the PWD workshop held on January 23, 2008 and to the Town of Newfields leading up to Town Vote (Appendix D).

## **Interviews with PWD Leaders**

Conservation Commission Chairs from each community were interviewed on April 14, 2008 for about 10 minutes and asked to characterize the events leading up to the PWD vote, the relationship to other warrants listed on the ballot, and any other factors that may have influenced the outcome, including the local political climate. Interviewees were also asked to give advice to other communities proposing a PWD. In addition to the four Chairs, Theresa Walker, a Rockingham Planning Commission Circuit Rider for all of the towns, and Mark West, the Wetland Scientist for all the town's PWDs, were interviewed and asked the same questions of all four communities. Careful notes were taken during the interview, and interviewees' comments were summarized immediately after the interview. All interviewees were given the opportunity to review a draft of this report and submit additional comments or clarifications.

### ***Fremont***

*Interviewee:* Jack Karcz, Conservation Commission Chair

*Critical Elements/ Advice:* Karcz believed that success of the designation was in large part due to the previous designation of Spruce Swamp as a Prime Wetland five years earlier. Karcz noted that voters were simply asked to approve an amendment to the existing prime wetlands warrant that added "and other designated wetland systems" to the existing warrant (Appendix A). He believes that voter anxiety was low since they were not asked to vote for something new and it did not appear that the warrant was going to cause a big change. West Environmental was hired with assistance of NHEP funding to complete the evaluation that identified approximately 55 eligible wetlands. The Conservation Commission decided to designate 26 wetlands from Tier 1,2 and 3 (smallest = 12 acres). Karcz recalls that the Commission decided to go with the larger wetlands because of their functionality and the minimal impact on neighborhoods. Other critical elements identified by Karcz were very good coordination between Planning Board and Conservation Commission and inclusion of Fremont wetlands in the NH Wildlife Action Plan. Karcz concluded by saying that the outreach leading up to the vote focused on process transparency. The Conservation Commission created a table top display to explain the PWD process and to present a map of the proposed prime wetlands overlaid with the tax map. Mark West made a presentation at a public hearing and answered questions. Members of the Conservation Commission manned the display at the Primary leading up to voting day. Outreach was minimal at the polls.

### ***Hampton Falls***

*Interviewee:* Karen Ayers, Conservation Commission Chair

*Critical Elements/ Advice:* Ayers believed that an important element that led to the successful designation was that no town funds were associated with the warrant. She noted that the ballot was very full with numerous articles and that nearly all warrants that required town funds were rejected, while "no cost" warrants were accepted. Ayers then cited substantial Conservation Commission outreach on the PWD including (1) three newsletter articles, (2) a PWD map overlaid onto the tax map and placed in Town Hall, the library and on the Town web site, (3) posters and bookmarks placed in the library, (4) a flyer sent to every household (Appendix F), and (5) sponsorship of well-attended public hearings. She reported that some negativity grounded in the "local verses state control" issue was present, but did not spread throughout the town. Ayers

believed that designating ten of the largest, most visible wetlands (smallest was 40 acres) was a better approach than attempting to designate smaller wetlands. She noted that going back repeatedly to designate more wetlands may not work. Ayers cited the town's Master Plan as a key document to justify the designation with the Board of Selectmen and other town officials. Mark West made a presentation at a public meeting to address concerns. Ayers concluded that the process was transparent and information was readily available.

## ***Brentwood***

*Interviewee:* Jonathan Ellis Conservation Commission Chair

*Critical Elements/ Advice:* Ellis believed that the designation was successful primarily because of the high-level of community confidence in recommendations by the Planning Board. There were five planning warrants approved on the ballot this year, with the PWD garnering the second highest number of votes. He also noted that public reaction was minimal, perhaps due to the limited number of properties impacted by the proposed prime wetlands. Outreach included an informal presentation at the town offices in December 2007, a public meeting in January 2008 that was only attended by either current or past Conservation Commission members, and an article in the Brentwood newsletter; crafted with the assistance of Rockingham Planning Commission and authored by Ellis. There was no organized opposition and only a few phone calls from concerned citizens were received. The Conservation Commission designated 14 wetlands totaling 696 acres. The initial evaluation identified approximately 65 wetlands that covered 3,074 acres. The smallest wetland designated is about five and half acres. Most proposed prime wetlands were adjacent to the Exeter River or land protected by conservation easement. Ellis said he never had the sense the warrant was in trouble.

## ***Newfields***

*Interviewee:* Alison Watts, Conservation Commission Chair

*Critical Elements/ Advice:* Watts reported that the most critical element that led to the failure of the designation at town vote was the dynamic nature of the town boards. She noted that board membership had nearly completely changed since three years prior when she received the approval and support of the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen to apply for NHEP funding for the prime wetlands evaluation. She noted that it is very important to continue to communicate with all boards, especially new members. Watts also noted that public opinion was very unpredictable and influenced by a few opinion leaders in the community. She believes that early conservation education to local school children would help to change community attitudes. Watts noted that significant opposition was not detected until after the second Planning Board meeting when the warrant was placed on the town ballot. She believes that if opposition by community public opinion leaders were known earlier, the warrant would not have been placed on the ballot. When informed about Fremont's "foot in the door" approach to PWD, Watts said that focusing on one, large wetland would have been better, because of the reduced number of abutters affected. The actual warrant did cite that the Planning Board recommended the warrant. Watts concluded that there is a sense in the town that conservation actions are not needed and that the town has already taken sufficient action, and that there is a strong perception that conservation should be regulated at the town, rather than state level.

## ***Wetland Scientist***

*Interviewee:* Mark West, President of West Environmental

*Critical Elements/ Advice:* West believes that success depends largely on how aggressive a Conservation Commission is at educating the other boards and citizens about the PWD. He also noted that the number of people who oppose the designation and their status in the community plays an important role as well. The Fremont public hearing where he spoke was low key and had very few public citizens in attendance. This may be because they had previously designated the 782 acre Spruce Swamp several years earlier. Conversely, he said that the Newfields public hearing was heavily attended by land owners in opposition to the PWD. West recommends that a Conservation Commission should get every board informed of the PWD and get the explicit support of the Selectmen before proceeding to town vote. He said that if organized opposition is detected, it may be better to pull the warrant from the ballot and spend a year addressing the concerns of the opposition. This gives proponents more time to educate citizens and also shows that there is a willingness to consider all sides of the issue. West recounted a story from Brentwood where there were concerns that a recreation trail bridge would not be able to undergo repair due to its location near a prime wetland. West was able to determine that the proposed bridge was far enough away from the prime wetland such that there was no permitting problem. He told the story to emphasize the point that new regulations tend to cause concerns that are sometimes based on lack of information and it is important to have enough time to address those concerns before town vote. Also, it illustrates the importance of coordination at the town level. When a Conservation Commission is selecting which wetlands to designate, West advises to not only consider the sound scientific evaluation, but also consider the relationship of the wetlands to zoning and the political ramifications of designation. When asked about the “foot in the door” approach, West felt that the approach made sense for Fremont because of the massive size of one wetland in town. It would not have made sense in Newfields since not large, isolated wetland exists.

## ***Planning Circuit Rider***

*Interviewee:* Theresa Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission

*Critical Elements/ Advice:* In Hampton Falls, Walker thought the coordination between the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and Board of Selectmen was critical and she emphasized the importance of a few members that had multiple roles in the town government. She also noted that the Hampton Falls philosophy toward outside influence is different from a more isolationist outlook in Newfields. There were several Hampton Falls residents who voiced a similar, anti-state oversight opposition as Newfields, but Walker believes the influence of an influential Newfields Selectman was the difference in the outcomes of the two communities. She thought that the opposition was very strategic and waited until the Conservation Commission was fully committed to announce plans for opposition. She noted that since only two people are on Newfields’ Board of Selectmen, 50% of the Board was against the PWD. Walker’s last thoughts on Newfields was that conservation momentum is waning in the town because the last big proposed development was four years ago. In Brentwood, Walker said the PWD caused little concern because much of the abutting land was already protected. In Fremont, since Spruce Swamp was already designated, that warrant was easily amended and approved. Walker’s advice to other communities is to rely heavily on the consultant (wetland scientist) to educate the public about the PWD and to budget three or four presentations by the consultant during the process leading to the town vote. She cautioned that it is very easy to give a wrong answer during the

PWD public hearings. When asked about the “foot in the door” approach, Walker did not believe that it was a good plan. She felt that sound evaluation and selection criteria are enough to justify the number of wetlands proposed for designation.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the comments from the interviewers, there appear to be several actions that Conservation Commissions should take that may improve the likelihood of PWD success:

- Garner explicit support from the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board before placing the PWD warrant on the ballot.
- Inform all boards often throughout the process to educate new members.
- Always insist on a transparent process to determine the PWD.
- Direct concerns and misconceptions to the consultant for explanation.
- Consider postponing placing the warrant on the ballot if organized opposition is detected.
- Consider the implications of designating large areas in the town that have many abutters. It may be prudent to take a “foot in the door” approach and designate a few high-profile wetlands with few abutters and then plan to add other wetlands in subsequent years.



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## *Appendix A: Warrant Articles and Vote Counts*

Fremont:

**ARTICLE 2:** Are you in favor of amending Article IX Section G of the Fremont Zoning Ordinance as follows:

In accordance with RSA 482-A:15 the wetland system commonly known as "Spruce Swamp" and other designated wetland systems as described in documents and maps filed by the Planning Board and Conservation Commission with the Town Clerk and the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, is hereby designated as prime wetland.

The Planning Board recommends this article.

**YES 502    NO 141    Article passed by ballot vote.**

Hampton Falls:

**ARTICLE III  
SECTION 8 - WETLANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**8.2 Definitions and Boundaries of Wetlands Conservation District**

**8.2.4 Prime Wetlands**

In conjunction with the definition of wetlands in Section 8.2, the Town of Hampton Falls has also delineated a special classification of wetlands referred to as Prime Wetlands, in accordance with the requirements of RSA 482-A:15 and Chapter Env-Wt 700 of the NHDES Wetlands Bureau Administrative Rules authorizing such designation. The boundaries of Prime Wetlands located in Hampton Falls are illustrated on tax map dated October 2007, along with an accompanying report entitled Prime Wetland Inventory Report, Hampton and Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, February 2006, which identifies the important values and critical functions that are provided by these wetlands. The Prime Wetland map and report are on file at the Hampton Falls Town Offices.

**Ten Prime Wetlands Complexes**

1	Dodge Ponds Complexes	73.5 acres
2	Grapevine Run Complex	40.7 acres
3	Grapevine Run Headwaters	113 acres
4	Hampton Falls River Complex	40.5 acres
5	Hampton Falls Salt Marsh	
6	Taylor River Complex (Central)	244.9 acres
7	Taylor River Complex (West)	221.4 acres
8	Taylor River Headwaters Complex	141.5 acres
9	The Cove Complex	186.9 acres
10	Winkley Brook Complex	208.4 acres

*(Adoption of the Prime Wetlands article does not change the current wetlands setback requirements which were approved by Hampton Falls' voters on March 8, 1988. Proposed Article III recognizes that there are ten prime wetlands in town of substantial significance due to their size, unspoiled character, fragile conditions or other relevant factors. This designation enables the town to protect these water resources.)*

**YES 430  
NO 159**

**Recommended by the Planning Board  
Majority vote required**

Brentwood:

**Zoning Amendments for 2008 Town Meeting Ballot**

1. Are you in favor of the adopting Amendment number 1 for the Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board and recommended by Brentwood Conservation Commission to include language in the Wetlands Protection District as follows:

Prime wetlands have been delineated in accordance with RSA 482-A:15 for the town in a study entitled, "Town of Brentwood Prime Wetlands Study and Mapping by West Environmental, Inc and dated December, 2007.

YES  No

Newfields:

**Zoning Question**

Are you in favor of approving the map entitled, "Prime Wetlands Map of Newfields, New Hampshire by Cartographic Associates, Inc. dated November 21, 2007", which delineates certain wetlands designated as Prime Wetlands within the Town of Newfields, New Hampshire and further designated as Tier 1 and Tier 2 Prime Wetlands as listed upon page 10 of a report entitled, "Town of Newfields Wetland Evaluation Report, prepared for the Newfields Conservation Commission, November 2006 by West Environmental"?

The effect of the proposed designation will be to elevate the review process and the requirements for permits issued by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services for wetlands impacts and projects that are adjacent to Prime Wetlands in accordance with New Hampshire R.S.A. 482-A:15 and New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Rules Env Wt 700. The Planning Board recommends a yes vote.

Yes-197 No-307

## Appendix B: Opposition Outreach Materials in Newfields

### NEWFIELDS NEEDS YOUR HELP!



*Residents of Newfields, are you aware that you may be voting away local control of your town to legislators in Concord? Are you aware that many people believe that the citizens of Newfields can no longer be trusted to be responsible stewards of the land that they own?*

### VOTE "NO" ON THE ZONING BALLOT

*Dear Friends and Neighbors of Newfields,*

*We need your vote in the March 11 town elections. The conservation board has pushed a motion to remove local control of building permits on certain lands adjacent Tier 1 and 2 wetlands, thus turning control over to the State.*

*The land in question is already protected by federal government regulations governing its use.*

*A large part of Newfields is adjacent to Tier 1 and 2 wetlands and many landowners are unaware that their land will be impacted by the proposed regulations. That means you or your neighbors land use could be affected.*

*No longer will you be able to maintain your yard or farm a little slice of Newfields heaven without spending thousands of dollars in permit fees, or face possible court hearings in Concord, begging lawyers who don't even know where Newfields is, just to maintain the wooded paths you grew up on, rebuild a shed that has existed for years, or add a swimming pool for your children.*

*This new zoning rule will change the grassroots fabric that has made Newfields the town you chose to live in.*

*Let's stop wasting large amounts of town funds duplicating regulations that are already in place, and spend our money where it is truly needed.*

*These decisions have always been made at the local level and should remain there.*

*If we are not capable of making decisions that affect us as a community, then who is more capable? If we do not trust ourselves to decide what quality of life we want in our own neighborhoods and community, then does that mean We as a town are untrustworthy? Please join with your neighbors and vote NO on the Zoning ballot.*

*Vote "**NO**" on the Zoning Ballot on Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> to keep control of Newfields at home.*

Please read for yourself what your neighbors are thinking. Go to [www.newfieldsnh.gov](http://www.newfieldsnh.gov). Under "Town Boards," click on "Town Officials." Go down to "Planning Board," click on "review Minutes from past meetings" and click on "January 2, 2008."

Please join your neighbors in saving local government and protecting your neighborhood. **Vote NO.**

Sincerely, CONCERNED CITIZENS OF NEWFIELDS

Newfields residents, neighbors and friends,

On March 11, we will once again go to Town Hall to cast our votes for town and school elected officials, town and school warrant articles, and other ballot items. The purpose of this letter is to discuss one particular ballot item – Prime Wetlands Designation.

The voters of Newfields are being asked to decide if they want to designate a significant portion of the Town's wetlands as Prime Wetlands. Should this ballot item pass, any property owner activity that potentially affects those wetlands will no longer be under the purview of the Newfields Planning Board, but will instead be turned over to the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. The people of Newfields will relinquish local control, turning that control over to outsiders. Rather than your friends and neighbors working with you to assist in your building project, the State will decide what you can and cannot do with your property.

Under the Prime Wetlands Designation, you won't be able to legally dig a hole within 100 feet of any area considered Prime Wetlands. Under the current system, the voters of Newfields decide wetland setbacks, currently 100 feet. Under Prime Wetlands, the state can set any setback they want which means in the future, the distance could be much more than 100 feet.

You should know that this does not just affect the land owners on whose land the Prime Wetlands exist. Abutters who desire to make a change to their property are equally affected when their project is within the setback area – even when crossing property lines.

While the ballot article is the result of a Planning Board vote, which was not unanimous, the genesis of the Prime Wetlands initiative rests with the Conservation Commission. To give credit where credit is due, Newfields is blessed to have a well managed, hard working group of volunteers on the Commission and it is through their efforts that we have so much land placed in conservation. We owe them our gratitude. However, on the matter of Prime Wetlands Designation, we strongly disagree.

Newfields has already done its share to protect our environment. Specifically:

- Wetlands setbacks have increased from 25' to 50' to 75' and are now 100'.
- To create a house lot, a minimum of 2 contiguous dry acres must exist within its boundaries – this often means several acres are required.
- No subdivision can exist unless there are two entrances – except a small cul-de-sac. This severely restricts land that can be developed.
- Taxpayers are currently paying over 4 million dollars in land conservation bonds to pay for the hundreds of acres placed in conservation.

You may not have not seen the map of the wetlands being designated. Look out your window where you live. Are there any wetlands? Remember, a wetland is not just an area of standing water. It is often an area where the ground has certain wet soils. If those exist on your land or if you abut or are near those soils, you will be subject to restrictions that effect what you can do with your property.

Lets keep control of issues affecting Newfields with the people of Newfields. Don't turn your property rights over to the State. Please vote no on the Prime Wetlands Designation.

Thank you.

Paul Watson  
Jim STEPHANIE  
JACENT  
Gull Suelnick  
Tom Connor  
Jim Dough  
Thomas J. Sage  
Susan Hill  
Lisa Buxton  
Fany Kelly  
Daphne Ruff  
HARR  
Patricia Dedgeley  
Ray Buxton  
Eda Buxton  
D RUGG  
Way Moore  
Chris J

**Appendix C: NHEP funding and designated acres for PWD projects from 2005-2008**

Town	NHEP Funds	NHEP Program	Match	Total	Acres Designated
Brentwood	\$ 10,000.00	Local Grants	\$16,253.60	\$ 26,253.60	696
Fremont	\$ 9,000.00	CTAP	\$10,678.00	\$ 19,678.00	1338
Hampton*/ Hampton Falls (Evaluation)	\$ 34,696.00	Targeted RFP	\$39,018.33	\$ 73,714.33	
Hampton Falls (PWD Preparation)	\$ 4,980.00	CTAP	\$ 0	\$ 4,980.00	1270.8
696+Newfields	\$ 10,000.00	Local Grants	\$16,253.60	\$ 26,253.60	
Newfields	\$ 242.89	NHEP Outreach Assistance	\$0	\$ 242.89	
Portsmouth	\$ 8,450.00	CTAP	\$0	\$ 8,450.00	1908
Sandown*	\$ 7,040.00	CTAP	\$19,610	\$ 26,650.00	TBD
NHEP Posters and Bookmarks	\$2,185.15	NHEP Targeted Outreach	\$0	\$2,185.15	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 86,594.04.00</b>		<b>\$101,813.50</b>	<b>\$ 188,407.60</b>	<b>5212.8</b>

\* planned for 2009 designation

# Appendix D: NHEP PWD Outreach Materials

PWD Posters (1000 produced)

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

**Blue Frog**  
*Rana sylvatica*

Blue frogs are found in wetlands and other aquatic habitats. They are an important part of the food chain and are also a popular species for pet owners.

**Spotted Turtle**  
*Emydoidea blandingii*

Spotted turtles are found in wetlands and other aquatic habitats. They are an important part of the food chain and are also a popular species for pet owners.

**Swan**  
*Anas platyrhynchos*

Swans are found in wetlands and other aquatic habitats. They are an important part of the food chain and are also a popular species for pet owners.

**Spotted Sandpiper**  
*Actitis macularia*

Spotted sandpipers are found in wetlands and other aquatic habitats. They are an important part of the food chain and are also a popular species for pet owners.

**New Hampshire Estuaries**

Estuaries are areas where fresh water from rivers meets salt water from the ocean. They are important for many species of fish and other animals. They are also important for humans because they provide a source of food and recreation.

### Protect Valuable Wetlands

Wetlands are a high priority of the New Hampshire Estuaries Project. Wetlands are important for many reasons. They provide a source of food and recreation. They also provide a habitat for many species of fish and other animals. Wetlands are also important for humans because they provide a source of food and recreation.

1. Identify potential wetlands.
2. Select a subset of wetlands for protection.
3. Hold a public hearing to discuss the evaluation and the effect of proposed wetland designations.
4. Vote to approve the designation of selected wetlands.
5. Obtain the maps and report to the NH Department of Environmental Services.

The assessment process involves a field visit to wetlands and a review of different functions, such as:

- filtering and reducing pollutants
- trapping sediments to reduce runoff from surrounding upland
- reducing erosion and sediment runoff
- providing wildlife habitat
- recharging the water table aquifer to provide drinking water

To learn more about the New Hampshire Estuaries Project, contact the project director at the Department of Environmental Services at 603-271-1247 or [www.nhep.unh.edu](http://www.nhep.unh.edu).

Check out [www.nhep.unh.edu](http://www.nhep.unh.edu) to learn more about protecting New Hampshire's estuaries.

**New Hampshire Estuaries Project**

<http://www.nhep.unh.edu/resources/bpots/pwd-bpots.pdf>

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

### Protect Valuable Wetlands



*To maintain a high quality of life in New Hampshire, communities must protect vital natural resources from development. One way to provide a greater degree of protection is by designating exemplary wetlands as Prime Wetlands.*

*To learn more about the Prime Wetlands Designation process, contact Sandy Crystall at NH Department of Environmental Services at 603-271-2147 or [scrySTALL@des.state.nh.us](mailto:scrySTALL@des.state.nh.us).*

*(See back for more information)*



### Prime Wetlands Designation Process

To designate Prime Wetlands, communities must hire a wetlands scientist to map and evaluate a community's wetlands, hold a public hearing to discuss the evaluation, and vote to approve the designation for selected wetlands.

The evaluation process assesses how well wetlands perform 14 different functions, such as:

- Storing and reducing floodwaters
- Trapping sediment in runoff water from surrounding upland
- Reducing excess nutrients in runoff water
- Providing wildlife habitat
- Recharging the underlying aquifer to provide drinking water

Go to [www.nhep.unh.edu](http://www.nhep.unh.edu) to find other ways to enhance and protect New Hampshire's Estuaries



This bookmark was produced by the New Hampshire Estuaries Project and was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through an agreement with the University of New Hampshire.

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Email postcards sent to likely attendees from six communities considering PWD

## You are Invited to a Workshop for Town Planning Officials to Understand New Hampshire's Prime Wetlands Designation Process

Sandy Crystall, NHDES Wetlands Bureau, will lead a workshop about the Prime Wetlands Designation process in New Hampshire to help participants understand the impacts on new development. She will discuss how NHDES reviews permit applications for areas in or within 100 feet of Prime Wetlands

**WHEN:** Wednesday, January 23rd  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices  
10 Front Street, Exeter



Forested wetland in Chester, NH - Ed Karjala

The workshop is free, but space is limited. Pre-registration is required at least one week prior to the workshop date. Register by contacting Theresa Walker at 778-0885 or email@rpc-nh.org. This workshop is hosted by the Rockingham Planning Commission.

## FRIENDLY REMINDER

There is a Prime Wetlands Designation Workshop for Town Planning Officials on Wednesday, January 23rd, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Nowak Room at the Exeter Town Offices, located at 10 Front Street in Exeter.

Sandy Crystall, NHDES Wetlands Bureau, will lead the workshop about the Prime Wetlands Designation process in New Hampshire to help participants understand the impacts on new development. She will discuss how NHDES reviews permit applications for areas in or within 100 feet of Prime Wetlands.



Forested wetland in Chester, NH - Ed Karjala

The workshop is free, but space is limited. Pre-registration is required prior to the workshop date. Register by contacting Theresa Walker at 778-0885 or email@rpc-nh.org. This workshop is hosted by the Rockingham Planning Commission.



# Protect Newfields' Natural Resources Vote **YES** For Prime Wetlands

On March 11, Newfields citizens will vote on a Planning Board article to protect one of our town's most valuable resources: our pristine wetlands.

A project led by the Newfields Conservation Commission in 2006 used scientific analysis to identify seven tidal wetlands and fifteen large freshwater wetlands as eligible for Prime Wetland designation. Prime Wetlands are exceptional wetlands that provide especially high-value benefits, such as flood control, water quality protection, aquifer recharge that provides drinking water, and wildlife habitat.




*Every citizen benefits from pristine wetlands that provide flood protection, clean water, and healthy wildlife.*

If the Planning Board article is approved, our most valuable wetlands will be better protected against encroaching development. Proposed development, including large subdivisions, within 100 feet of Prime Wetlands will require a public hearing to inform the community of the proposed development and to gather citizens' comments. These comments as well as a site evaluation will be needed before a permit is issued. This ensures a fair consideration of public needs when evaluating the impacts of development on our natural resources.

The towns of Exeter and Newmarket have already protected their most valuable natural resources by voting **YES** to designate Prime Wetlands. Newfields residents now have an opportunity to do the same and help ensure that future generations will benefit from healthy, protected wetlands.

For more information on this important vote, go to [www.NewfieldsNH.gov](http://www.NewfieldsNH.gov) or contact the Newfields Conservation Commission Chair at 773-9675.

 **NewHampshire EstuariesProject**  
University of New Hampshire  
123 Nesmith Hall  
Durham, NH 03824

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DURHAM, NH  
PERMIT NO. 2



Resident

Vote **YES** to protect  
Newfields's Prime Wetlands.

***Appendix E: Letter to Town Administrators that accompanied the PWD outreach materials.***

Dear Town Administrator,

Enclosed you will find four copies of a flyer announcing a workshop for municipalities considering designation of prime wetlands in either March 2008 or 2009. In addition to the flyers there are also bookmarks and posters to further explain Prime Wetlands Designation.

The workshop will be led by New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services staff and is hosted by Rockingham Planning Commission. Only six towns have been invited to the workshop, so this is a unique opportunity to ask specific questions about the process and how it will affect your town.

Please distribute one flyer, bookmark, and poster to the Planning Board Chair, Conservation Commission Chair, Zoning Board of Adjustments Chair and your Building Inspector.

Please direct all questions about the workshop to Theresa Walker at 778-0885 or email@rpc-nh.org.

Cheers,

Dave Kellam  
Project Coordinator

*Appendix F: Hampton Falls outreach materials sent to all households*

## **Prime Wetlands: High Quality Wetlands**



RSA 482-A:15 Prime Wetlands are wetlands of substantial significance due to their size, unspoiled character, fragile condition or other relevant factors.

Designated wetlands of exceptional value (Prime Wetlands) receive extra protection through State oversight, protecting water resources and wildlife habitat.

### **Are there Prime Wetlands on your property?**

View the locations of the proposed Prime Wetlands Designation as an overlay on the Town tax maps by visiting the Conservation Commission web page at [www.hamptonfalls.org](http://www.hamptonfalls.org). Hard copies are available at the Town Hall and the Library.

This map is only a guide. Site specific delineation by a State certified soils scientist will more precisely locate these wetlands when projects that could impact them are proposed.

Join us on Tuesday, November 27 at 7pm in the Town Hall for a public hearing to discuss the proposed Warrant Article designating Prime Wetlands in Hampton Falls.

For further information on Prime Wetlands visit the links on the Conservation Commission web page.

Hampton Falls Conservation Commission

Hampton Falls Conservation Commission



To:

Public Hearing on the Proposed Prime Wetlands Designation,  
Tuesday, November 27, 2007, at 7pm in the Town Hall

Funding for this project provided through a grant from the New  
Hampshire Estuaries Program.