

President's Corner

David Funk

Eelgrass and Canaries

This is the time of year when it would seem extremely efficient to be able to hibernate in a den or fly south for the winter.

Then suddenly my mind flashes back to Dr. Fred Short's recent Hugh Gregg Center lecture about eelgrass biomass losses: 100% in Little Bay and the Piscataqua River, 65% in Great Bay and 20% in Portsmouth and Little Harbor. I feel the need to spring into action and do something, anything to help. How do I convince people to stop fertilizing their lawns and get them to understand their impact on eelgrass beds, and ultimately the water quality of our estuary?

Well, it seems that eelgrass is the "canary in the mine". At one

time, canaries were transported into the coal mines to monitor dangerous gas levels. Similarly, if eelgrass fails to remain healthy in the estuary, this is an indicator of habitat and/or ecosystem failure. Dr. Short related that in order to reduce the nitrogen entering the Great Bay Estuary we need to upgrade wastewater treatment facilities, reduce our nonpoint pollution, support the science for estuarine restoration (to get the system functioning again), and educate the public about the problems and possible solutions.

The Great Bay Stewards are actively working to become more efficient at what we do, become better communicators with the Great Bay Discovery Center and our membership, increase fundraising, and partner with like-minded groups to address issues such as nitrogen loading that threatens the very life of Great Bay's flora and fauna. The response to the Great Bay Stewards' annual appeal letter has

In Remembrance

Long time friend and supporter of Great Bay, David Funk, passed away this summer at his home on Little Bay in Dover. Beginning in 1983 he was active with the Great Bay Trust which merged in 1995 with the Great Bay Stewards, serving on the Board of Trustees until his passing. His involvement in this arena was extensive and included the NH Tidal Energy Commission subcommittee on Environmental and Wildlife Impact, Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, and Lamprey River Advisory Committee among others. Dave will be greatly missed by all.



PLEASE JOIN US!

All interested parties are cordially invited to become Great Bay Stewards. Members receive Great Bay Matters and other pertinent mailings.

Annual dues may be paid by check made payable to the **Great Bay Stewards** and sent to: Membership Committee, 89 Depot Road, Greenland, NH 03840

- Guardian \$150 Protector \$75
- Steward/Family \$35 Student \$20 Other \$ _____

name _____

address _____

town _____

state _____ zip _____

email _____

told us that the health of this estuary is tantamount in importance to you, our membership.

Eelgrass is relevant to you and me. If the largest habitat in Great Bay is compromised, what will happen to the mudflats and interrelated salt marshes? We need to stay connected and involved with Great Bay. Eelgrass is an important messenger that merits our full attention and care.

Joe Stieglitz
President, Great Bay Stewards

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ocus on Stewardship:

From Education to Action!

I have lived a few hundred yards from the Great Bay Discovery Center my entire life. Throughout my childhood, I regularly visited the Center to play on the replica ships, hike around the boardwalk, enjoy the displays and gardens, and explore estuarine wildlife on the Reserve grounds.

I value the seacoast community in which we live, and the Discovery Center has played a strong role in my understanding and appreciation for Great Bay. In addition, it has helped me gain knowledge of the threats to the delicate ecosystem of Great Bay.

I have enjoyed Scouting since joining Cub Scouts in 2000. I have been an active member of Boy Scout Troop 158 of Greenland and have particularly enjoyed the hiking and camping experiences. Scouting has a strong commitment to community service, and over the years I have participated in many volunteer activities that have been very meaningful to me. A few years ago, I worked with other scouts to identify and mark storm drains that enter the tributaries to the bay in hopes that chemicals and other pollutants would not be poured into them.

As part of the Eagle Scout process, a Life Scout has to meet with three potential community beneficiaries to develop three separate Eagle Service project proposals. When the time came for me to choose which of my three proposed projects that I wanted to pursue, I didn't have to look any further than my neighborhood. I decided to plan, raise funds for, and lead a service project that would enhance access at the Great Bay facilities.

In a series of meetings with Discovery Center Education Coordinator, Kelle Loughlin, I formulated a plan to build a set of stairs between two pathways on site. Initially, the plan was to build a set

of stairs that would increase access to the Hugh Gregg Building. However, the plans evolved to include site work and construction of two sets of stairs that would provide access to an observation deck and the lower level of the Hugh Gregg Coastal Conservation Center.

Project planning began on January 17, 2010 when the first emails were sent to explore project opportunities. The project construction was completed August 29, 2010. Over the course of seven months, twenty-three volunteers donated 384.25 hours to the project. These volunteers include Troop 158 scouts, Discovery Center neighbors, friends, classmates, and family. About half of these hours were spent in research, logistics, and fundraising. The rest of these hours were spent in construction. The total cost of the project was \$3,101.25.

Major sponsors who provided in-kind donations include Pike Industries and Lowe's Home Improvement in Greenland. In addition, generous donations were made by 30 families from the Seacoast area. Major financial contributors include: The Greenland Women's Club, Dr. Thomas and Jane King, Bernard Gendron, Arnet and Anne Taylor, Joseph and Karen Oldfield, and Don and Leila MacFeeley. Construction advice and assistance was willingly



donated by Greenland residents Steve Bacon, Rick Mauer, and Glenn Graham. GBDC Caretaker Paul St. Pierre was instrumental in project support and coordination with existing structures.

I learned a great deal about project management, calculations, budgeting, planning, scheduling, and using unfamiliar tools. I am very thankful for the community support that the project generated. In appreciation of their support of my project, I am providing each donor with a framed photograph of Great Bay from Sandy Point that I took at sunset earlier this summer.

Pierce Gendron
Eagle Scout Candidate
Troop 158 Greenland/Portsmouth

Many thanks to Pierce, his volunteers and the many donors to this project!

Destination: *Puerto Rico*

Jobs Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Escape to Jobs Bay in Puerto Rico, where colorful coral reefs, a refreshing Caribbean breeze, and crystalline water bustling with tropical fish await winter weary travelers. Jobs Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve was established in 1981. The site is the second largest estuarine system in Puerto Rico, encompassing approximately 2,883 acres on the southeastern side of the island. A rehabilitated clubhouse from the old Aguirre sugar plantation serves as the visitor center. The facility includes exhibits, an extensive photo gallery and interactive displays highlighting the flora and fauna of Puerto Rico, as well as the Aguirre cultural history that dates back to the Arcaico and Taino Indians.

The thriving eco-tourism trade in Puerto Rico supports a vast array of excursions for Jobs Bay explorers. The Jagueyes Forest Trail, named for the white Jaguey tree, includes an observation platform that extends out over the water where bird-watchers may catch a glimpse of local and migratory shore birds. The Reserve is a haven for rare or endangered species including, the yellow-shouldered blackbird and brown pelican.

Nature photographers are encouraged to bring cameras appropriate for both land and sea. Capture the complex branching patterns of Elkhorn coral while snorkeling near the shores of Cayo Caribe, or the striking, red bark of Gumbo-Limbo trees, growing along the trails. While cruising by kayak through the Mar Negro canals, try to snap a rare picture of the endangered West Indian manatees foraging in sea grass prairies.

True adventure seekers and kayak enthusiasts can light up the night with a paddle in one of the bioluminescent



Sea fans in Jobs Bay NERR.

lagoons. Tiny dinoflagellates in the water emit an otherworldly bluish glow. Pay attention to the phase of the moon when scheduling this expedition because the darkness offered by a new moon enhances this incredible, natural lightshow!

Treasure hunters and geocache fans get ready, because Jobs Bay is in the process of designing a geocache program. In an effort to enhance the Reserve's visibility to the general public, geocache canisters will be strategically positioned in key representative habitats throughout the Reserve. In addition, the staff is collaborating with eco-tourist sites and the Office of Tourism to improve existing wireless network infrastructure. Rental car GPS units will highlight specific sites throughout the Reserve, and cell phone applications will offer self-guided tours of the lands, providing a unique experience.

For more information, or to view a virtual tour visit the Jobs Bay website at <http://jbnerr.org/english/>, and discover the Caribbean jewel of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

 Katie Arey
Naturalist, GBNERR