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Bagaduce River Watershed Conservation Efforts Get \$1 Million Boost

Blue Hill: Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a statewide land conservation organization, has received a \$1 Million federal matching grant to work with local conservation partners Blue Hill Heritage Trust and The Conservation Trust of Brooksville, Castine and Penobscot to further wetland habitat conservation and land protection efforts in the Bagaduce River watershed. The Bagaduce River is a 15-mile long tidal estuarine river that local residents and state biologists alike consider extraordinary -- providing more than 2,700 acres of intertidal habitat which supports migrating and wintering waterfowl, migrating shorebirds, wintering, migrating and nesting bald eagles, and black ducks. "Maine Coast Heritage Trust is very pleased at this news, honored to be a partner in this conservation effort, and grateful to Maine's congressional delegation for recognizing the importance of this work and this place," said Tim Glidden, MCHT's President.

Funding for the grant comes from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), recommended by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, and will support a specific set of land conservation projects in the Bagaduce River Watershed. The grant requires the partners to provide a financial match that is one and a half times the amount of the grant.

"The US Fish and Wildlife Service's recent announcement of a NAWCA grant to support the protection of critical coastal habitat along the Bagaduce River in Penobscot Bay is the latest example of conservation in Maine done right," commented Senator Susan Collins. "It is always

encouraging to see willing private landowners engaged with Federal, State, and local partners focused on the long-term protection of the natural resources that are vital to the future economic success of Maine.”

The Bagaduce River is an integral part of the character of the surrounding communities of Blue Hill, Penobscot, Brooksville, Sedgwick and Castine. The Watershed includes undeveloped coastal ponds, streams and wetlands that offer a diversity of recreational opportunities in addition to pristine wildlife habitat. "This award represents an important confirmation of the importance of the Bagaduce. We look forward to beginning the work necessary to take advantage of this exciting opportunity for our communities," said Jim Dow, Executive Director of Blue Hill Heritage Trust. Approval of this grant provides the conservation partners the opportunity to work with willing landowners to complete a specific set of land protection projects, and secure the necessary matching funds within a two year period.

This grant is a significant milestone in an ongoing regional conservation partnership spearheaded by Blue Hill Heritage Trust, The Conservation Trust of Brooksville, Castine and Penobscot and MCHT. Other partners in this grant effort included the Maine Island Trail Association, a private individual, The Biodiversity Research Institute, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department, and US Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Program.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the

United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. The Standard Grants Program is a competitive, matching grants program that supports public-private partnerships carrying out projects around the nation.