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UNH Great Bay Coast Watch Seeks New Volunteers at March 10 Meeting

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NH Sea Grant

March 4, 2004

DURHAM, N.H. -- Are you concerned about the quality of your local water? Would you like to help protect it and the environment it supports? University of New Hampshire Great Bay Coast Watch (GBCW) invites individuals interested in monitoring the water quality of Great Bay and the New Hampshire coast to its annual spring meeting Wednesday, March 10, at the N.H. Fish and Game Building, Route 155A in Durham, at 7 pm.

Sponsored by NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension, GBCW is New Hampshire's leading citizen volunteer group for monitoring water quality in saltwater and estuarine systems. The watch needs additional volunteers for its upcoming sampling season set to begin in mid-March.

GBCW volunteer teams sample water quality at 21 sites along the Seacoast and around Great Bay monthly from March through October. Additional teams monitor phytoplankton populations on a weekly basis at five coastal sites and one offshore site. Phytoplankton are single-celled algae that form the base of the marine food chain and may produce a harmful algae bloom known as "red tide."

Other activities include walking the shorelines seeking causes of erosion, monitoring storm drains, collecting rainfall runoff samples and assisting the N.H. Department of Environmental Services with boat-based sampling and shellfish monitoring.

Community outreach is also an important watch activity. Volunteers can train to give presentations about GBCW activities to local organizations and town boards. They also conduct demonstrations in schools, on public cruises and at local festivals.

To learn more about volunteering and GBCW activities, contact Ann Reid at NH Sea Grant Extension at 603-749-1565 or ann.reid@unh.edu.