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NH Sea Grant Hosts Public Forum May 10 on Ocean Commission Report

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DURHAM, N.H. -- NH Sea Grant will host a panel discussion on the recently released U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy preliminary report Monday, May 10, 2004, from 1 to 2:30 pm in Theater II on the third floor of the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB).

“New Hampshire and the Sea: What Will the Ocean Commission Report Mean for Us?” will provide a forum to discuss the potential impacts of the report on New Hampshire.

The event is free and open to the public. Free parking will be available in Lot C, located on Mill Road. An electronic copy of the report is available on the commission Website, www.oceancommission.gov.

The report is the first major government assessment of the state of the oceans in 35 years. It recommends sweeping changes in the way marine resources are studied and managed, citing habitat loss, commercial fishing, polluted runoff and invasive species as pressing issues threatening the coastal areas where half the nation's population now lives.

Andrew Rosenberg, member of the commission and UNH professor of natural resources in the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, will provide an overview of the report, followed by a panel discussion and question-and-answer session. Panel members will speak for five to 10 minutes from their perspectives as representatives of diverse stakeholder groups, including researchers, educators, commercial fishermen, resource managers and state government.

New Hampshire has more than 230 miles of inland tidal shoreline in addition to 18 miles of open ocean coastline on the Gulf of Maine. It is also the fastest growing state in New England, expanding by about 19,000 people every year -- many of who move into these sensitive coastal areas. While not everyone lives next to the sea, six of the 10 counties in the state are classified as wetland counties, meaning they contain major rivers and streams that flow into the ocean.

The NH Sea Grant College Program provides support, leadership and expertise for marine research, education and extension. A component of the National Sea Grant College Program and housed at UNH, NH Sea Grant promotes the understanding, development, wise use and conservation of our ocean and coastal resources.

There are 33 Sea Grant programs based at colleges and universities in every coastal and Great Lakes state, as well as in Puerto Rico. Each program receives funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Department of Commerce, as well as matching funds from nonfederal sources.