



For Immediate Release

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Conservancy of Canada Salt Marsh Musquash Estuary Nature Preserve
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In December 1989, the governors and premiers of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia signed an agreement creating **the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (GOMC)**. The Council's efforts are focused on promoting sustainable development of marine and coastal resources, raising public awareness about the Gulf of Maine, and cultivating support for stewardship at the local level.

In preparation for the upcoming Gulf of Maine Summit, October 26-29, 2004 in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, the Gulf of Maine Council has launched a visibility campaign to share news related to the Summit and to highlight the efforts of partner organizations throughout the region working as stewards of the marine environment. The following information on the Nature Conservancy of Canada is the sixth release in the series which will run through September 2004.

Movement to Conserve Last Fully Functioning Estuary in the Bay of Fundy Gets Boost from the Nature Conservancy of Canada

What do you get when you toss together all the habitat types found along the Bay of Fundy coast? The extraordinary Musquash Estuary! In recognition of its ecological significance, the Musquash Estuary, just west of Saint John, has been nominated as one of the first coastal Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in Canada. However, MPA designation will only protect intertidal, subtidal and deep water habitats. Unless other action is taken, ecologically significant upland habitat, salt-marshes, buffer zones and coastal islands will remain unprotected. Thus, NCC and its partners have put together a seven year, \$3.75M

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strategy to conserve 3,000 acres of surrounding land to create the Musquash Estuary Nature Preserve. To date, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has secured 12 parcels of land (1207 acres).

Among the properties acquired is a magnificent salt-marsh. Unfortunately, over 65 per cent of the Bay of Fundy's original salt marsh has disappeared due to diking, construction of tidal barrages and other activities associated with agricultural and residential development

“Salt marshes are extremely important from an ecological point of view“_says Darla Saunders, Land Securement Officer for NCC's Atlantic division. “They are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. Salt marshes provide habitat for many plants, birds and animals. The dense grasses of the marsh filter sediments and nutrients from tidal waters. They also prevent flooding and protect and stabilize shorelines from erosion. It's critical that we protect the remaining examples of these extraordinary habitats, “says Ms. Saunders.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is a non-profit, non-advocacy organization that takes a quiet, business-like approach to land conservation and the preservation of biological diversity. Its plan of action involves partnership-building and entering into creative conservation solutions with any individual, corporation, community group, conservation organization or government body that shares its passion. Since 1962, NCC and its supporters have protected more than 1.8 million acres of ecologically significant land nationwide; 31,589 acres are in Atlantic Canada and 4,983 acres have been protected in New Brunswick since the first NCC project in the province in 1990.

NCC's work in Musquash is supported by the W. Garfield Weston Foundation, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environment Canada, North America Wetlands Conservation Act, Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy (US), Sir James Dunn Foundation, Greater Saint John Community Foundation, Bayside Power, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund, New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund, Moosehead Breweries, and J.D. Irving, Limited. \$2.2 million must still be raised to complete the fundraising goal to support our work in Musquash.

For more information contact:

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Gulf of Maine Summit: Committing to Change

The Gulf of Maine Council and Global Programme of Action Coalition for the Gulf of Maine will host the **Gulf of Maine Summit: Committing to Change, October 26-29, 2004** in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. The Summit will bring together coastal experts, concerned citizens, fisheries and aquaculture representatives, businesses and leaders from around the Gulf of Maine to celebrate 15 years of partnerships, assess current environmental conditions, share knowledge and together develop plans for future actions needed to continue improving the environmental quality of the Gulf.

The Summit promises an action packed agenda that seeks full participation from individuals working at all levels as stewards of the environmental health of the Gulf region. One way that the plans crafted at this meeting will be used is for consideration for the Councils next five year action plan. If you are committed to the on-going health of the Gulf of Maine's resources, attend the Summit and be a part of the plans for the future.

Register now!

Time and Location:

The Summit will be held October 26-29, 2004 at the Fairmont Algonquin Hotel in St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

For additional Summit information: Visit the Summit website at-

www.gulfofmainesummit.org

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