



UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE

Matt Menashes
Executive Director, NERRA

September 23, 2009

Dear Matt,

I am writing to support the proposed partnership to restore fish habitat associated with the NERR System. Human impacts to fish habitat continue to be significant impediments to restoration of many fish populations and without doubt estuaries contain the most diverse and impacted essential fish habitats in our country. By establishing a planning framework to focus restoration resources on fish habitat, the partnership will help identify impacted habitat and galvanize the NERR System on a national level and help bring resources to bear locally that will attract successful restoration partners and matching funds.

I was especially pleased to read that the effort will include projects within and outside the NERRs, but the outside Reserve projects will utilize the NERR sites as references habitat, an excellent use of the Reserve System. For those reserves without substantial knowledge of fish use of the essential fish habitat within the reserve, such a program will stimulate development of a quality dataset. Several reliable techniques have been developed for fish assessment in estuarine habitats. While the preferred techniques might vary by region due to tides, geomorphology and wetland character (mangroves vs. salt marsh), there are NERRs in all estuarine regions of the US so the NERR System could provide regional reference data for all the estuarine habitat types.

The partnership, as proposed, approaches habitat restoration with a strong science component that will link to the System Wide Monitoring Program and the NERR System Restoration Science Strategy. Having this new restoration partnership fit into the existing NERR framework will help advance the science of restoration for the NERR System and for NOAA.

Sincerely,

David Burdick
Associate Research Professor

Jackson Estuarine Laboratory

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