



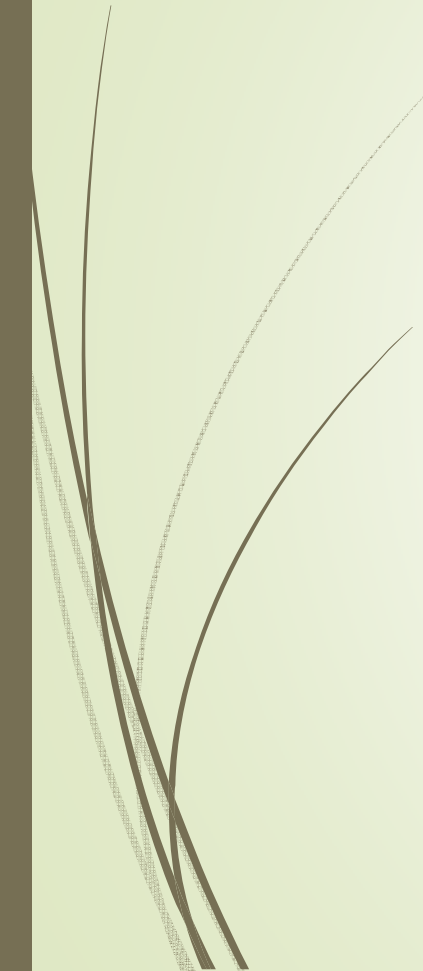
York River Study Update and Listening Session

June 20, 2016

York Public Library



Session Overview

- Hand-outs: Agenda, Watershed Map & YRSC List, Report & Data List, Session Feedback Form
 - Short presentations followed by questions, comments, and discussion related to presentation topic
 - Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers
 - Overview of York River Study
 - Watershed Resources/"ORVs"
 - Outreach and Community Involvement Plans
 - Open Discussion
- 

Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program



Photo: Jerry Monkman, Ecophotography

York River Wild & Scenic Study – Update and Listening Session

June 20, 2016

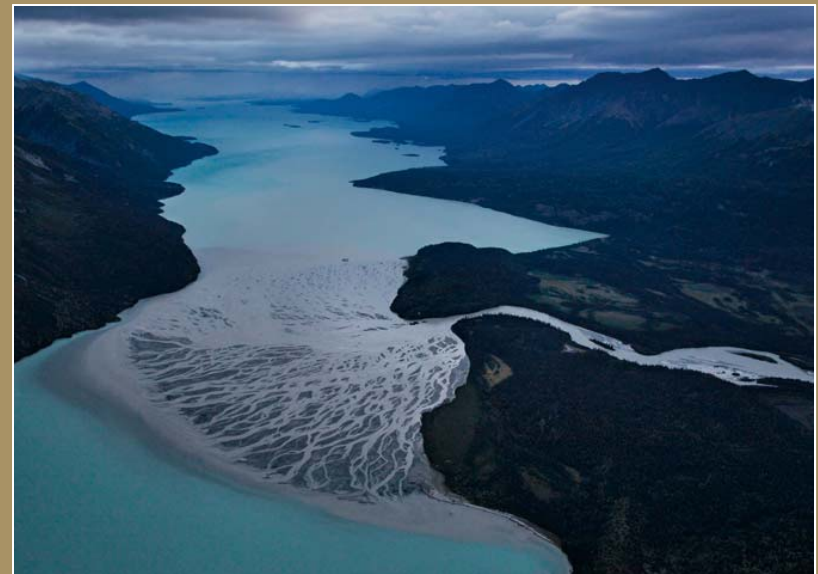
National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Congressional intent

- **Public Law 90-542**
 - Enacted October 2, 1968
- **Balance** national policy of dam and other construction
- **Protect and enhance:**
 - Free-flowing condition
 - Water quality
 - ORVs
- **Establish process** to add rivers to national system

Current status

- **208 rivers** (12,709 miles)
 - Most primarily on fed. land
 - Also **12 “Partnership Rivers”**



Tlikakila River (AK)

Photo: Natl. Geographic

What is a partnership river?

- No federal land ownership or management
- Administration through local committee
- Land use governed by existing local/state law and regulations
- Locally-developed river plans—approved prior to designation—guide future management
- Management responsibilities shared among local, state, federal, and NGO partners
- Voluntary participation by partners creates success



Missisquoi River (VT)

Photo: Shana Stewart-Deeds

York River Study

- 2009 – Friends of the York River initiate a **6-year effort** to assess local interest
- 2013 – NPS completes WSR **Reconnaissance Survey**
 - **Potential ORVs:** natural cultural , historic, scenic, and recreational values
- December 19, 2014 – **Congress authorizes** W&S Study (P.L. 113-291)
- Study segments: “... **11.25 miles** from the headwaters of the York River at York Pond to the mouth of the river at York Harbor, and any associated tributaries.”



York River (ME)

Photo: Jerry Monkman, Ecophotography

Basis of recommendation

Eligibility: (objective inventory)

- Free-flowing
- Possessing one or more **outstandingly remarkable values** (ORVs)
 - Scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or similar values
 - Directly **river-related**
 - **Unique, rare or exemplary** at regional or national scale
 - Based on professional **judgment**

Suitability: (subjective analysis)

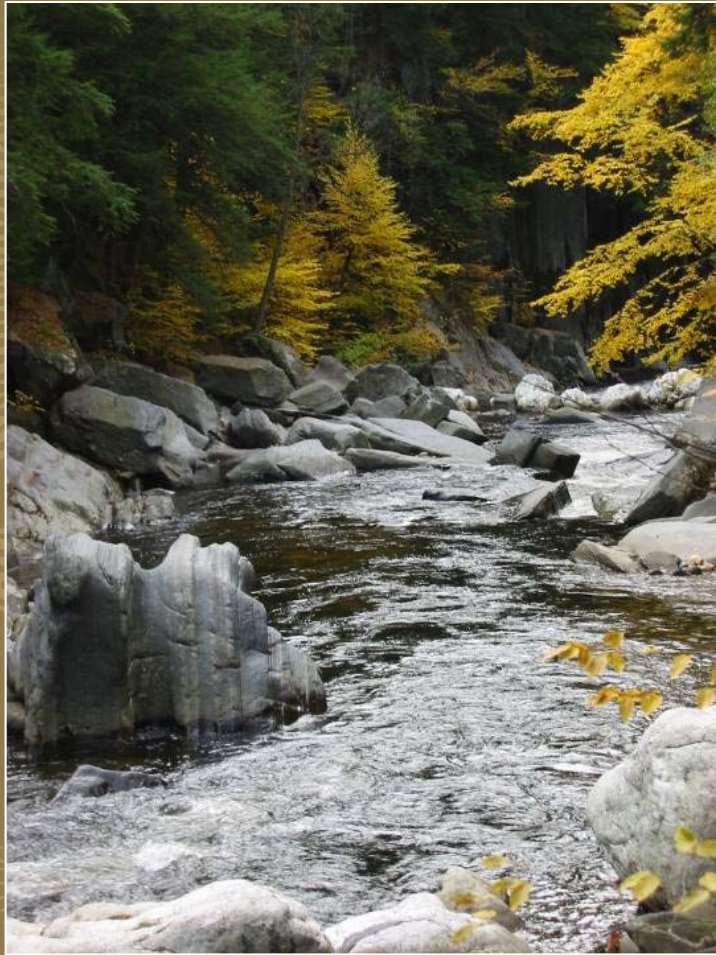
- Three main questions:
 - Should river values be **protected**?
 - Is Wild & Scenic designation the **best method**?
 - What level of **commitment** by nonfederal entities exists?



Lamprey River (NH)

Photo: Dick Lord

Benefits of designation



Westfield River (MA)

Photo: Liz Lacy

- National recognition and prestige
- Economic lift (if promoted)
- NPS technical and financial assistance to implement river plan/projects
 - Cooperative agreement
 - Grants: CCS, PLC, Call-to-Action
- NPS review of federally-assisted water resources projects to protect locally-identified river values
- Locally-appointed river committee to guide future management

20 years of Partnership Rivers

www.nps.gov/orgs/1912/Partnership-Wild-and-Scenic-Rivers.htm



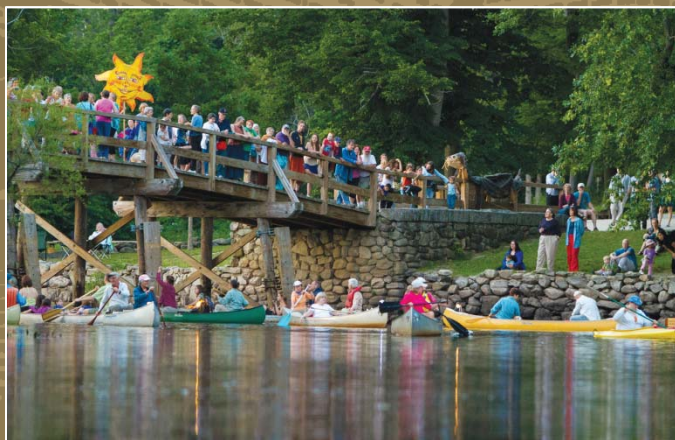
Public access – Lamprey (NH)
Photo: Dick Lord



Dam removal – Musconetcong (NJ)



Educating youth
– Maurice (NJ)



Solstice celebration – SuAsCo (MA)



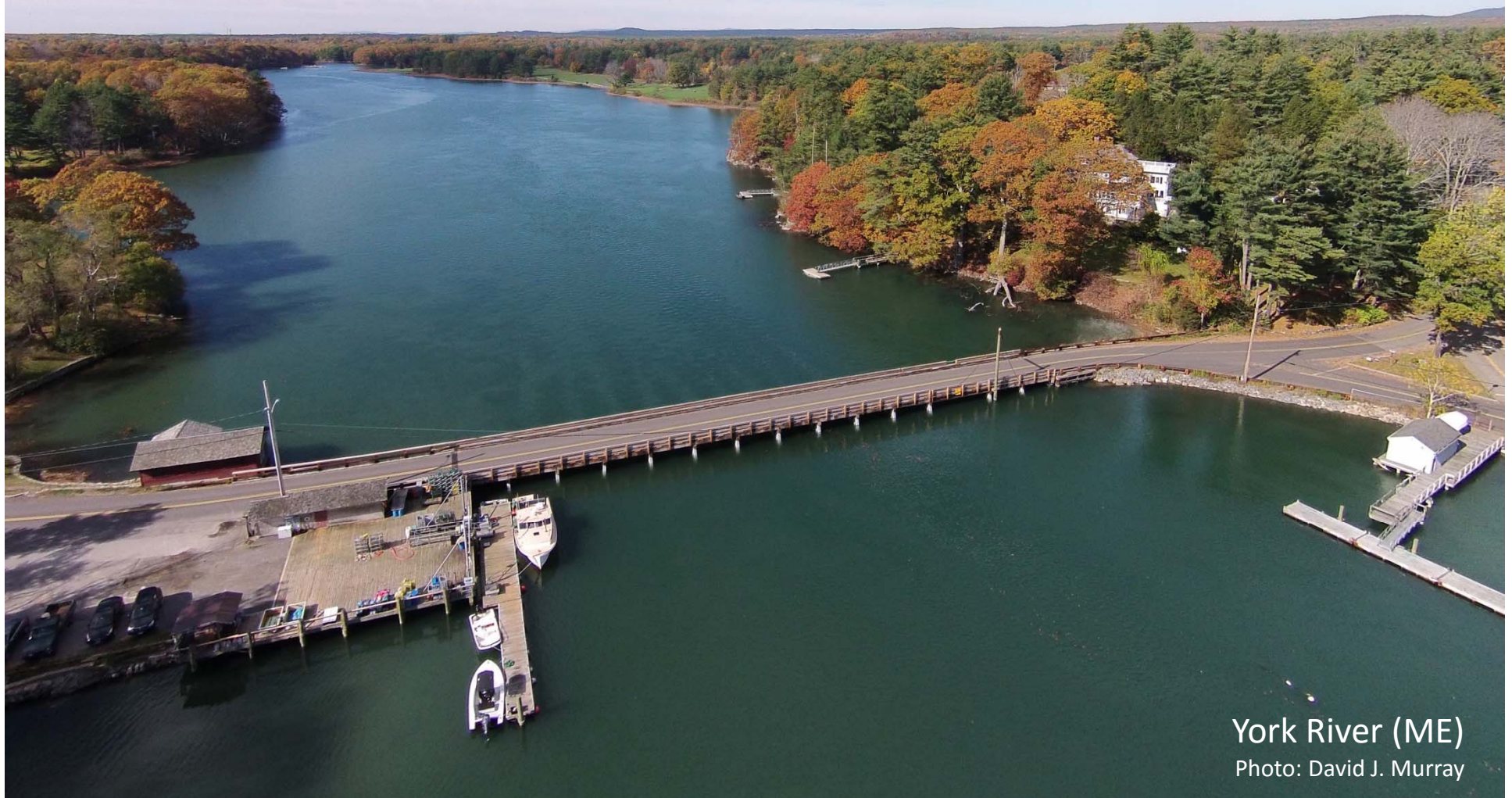
Protecting wildlife
– Wekiva (FL)



Land preservation – Great Egg Harbor (NJ)
Photo: Tim Palmer

Questions?

- Jim MacCartney, (603) 226-3240, jim_maccartney@nps.gov



York River (ME)
Photo: David J. Murray

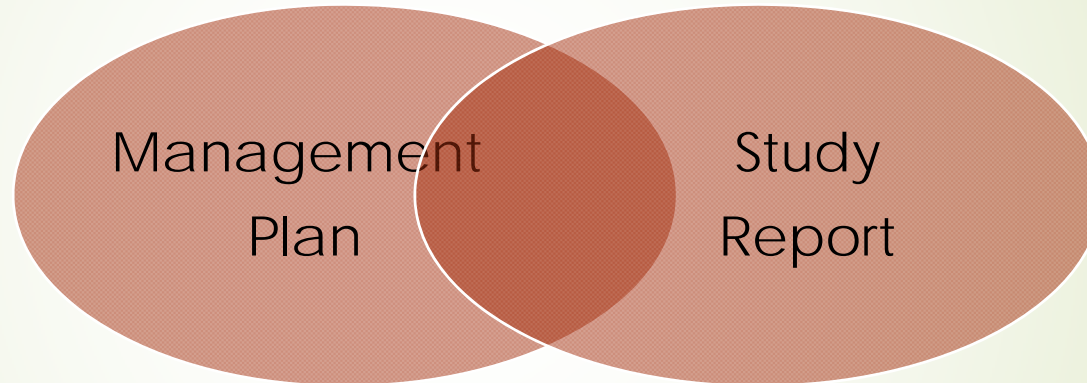


Overview of York River Study

Jennifer Hunter, jh.yorkriver@gmail.com

York River Study

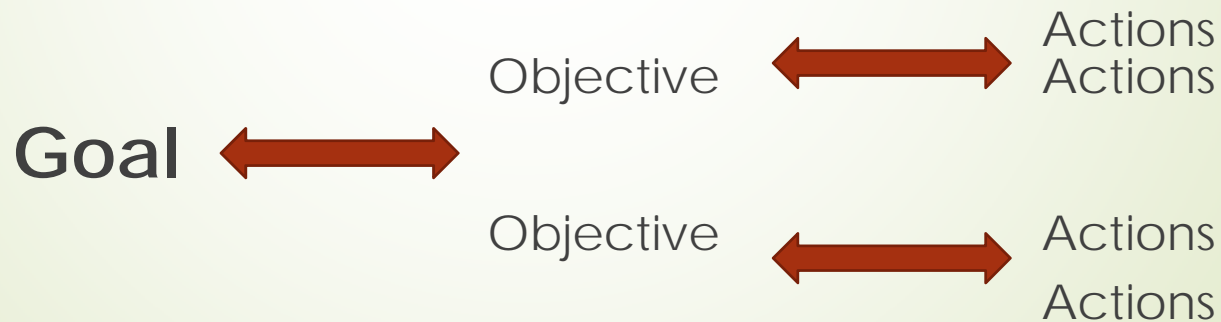
- Two Major Components: Watershed Management Plan & Study Report



- 3 year timeframe (complete at end of 2018)
- Goal of community support
 - Need to determine approach/mechanism suitable for each town's approval

York River Watershed Management Plan

- Watershed Focus
- Locally-based, voluntary, community-driven
- Watershed Resources: cultural & historic; natural resources & biodiversity; recreational & scenic; water quality; watershed resiliency & economic value
- Identifies actions or strategies to protect or enhance watershed resources that are valued by the communities





York River W&S Study Report

- River Focus
- Report on the eligibility and suitability of the York River and its tributaries for Partnership Wild & Scenic River designation
 - River-related Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)
 - “Free-flow” condition of river and high water quality
 - Public support
 - Local governance
 - Identification and comparison of alternatives
 - Recommended stream segments for designation

Priorities for 2016



- Compiling and reviewing York River Watershed studies and data; determining data gaps
- Identifying and documenting outstanding watershed resources
- Engaging the public and key stakeholders in developing management plan goals, objectives, and strategies to protect valued resources
- Identifying mechanisms and timeline for demonstrating communities' approval

York River Study Committee

- YRSC – Monthly Meetings
(4th Tuesday, 5:30-7:30)
- Subcommittee – Monthly Meetings
 - Outreach Subcommittee
(1st Thursday, 5:30-7)
 - “ORV” Subcommittee
(TBD each month,
generally noon-1:30)
- Study Coordinator: Jennifer Hunter,
jh.yorkriver@gmail.com



Photo: Michael Cuomo

Questions and Comments on Overview of York River Study

▀ Jennifer Hunter, jh.yorkriver@gmail.com





York River Watershed Resources

Jean Demetracopoulos

Stefan Claesson

Beth Walter

Identifying York River Values

- Understanding **Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)**
- or what makes this watershed so special - will:
- Help inform the **Wild and Scenic Study Report &**
- Provide foundation for a community-based **Watershed Management Plan**



Photo: Jerry Monkman

** Goal: Recognize, document, and protect the York River's unique character for future generations*

York River Watershed Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)

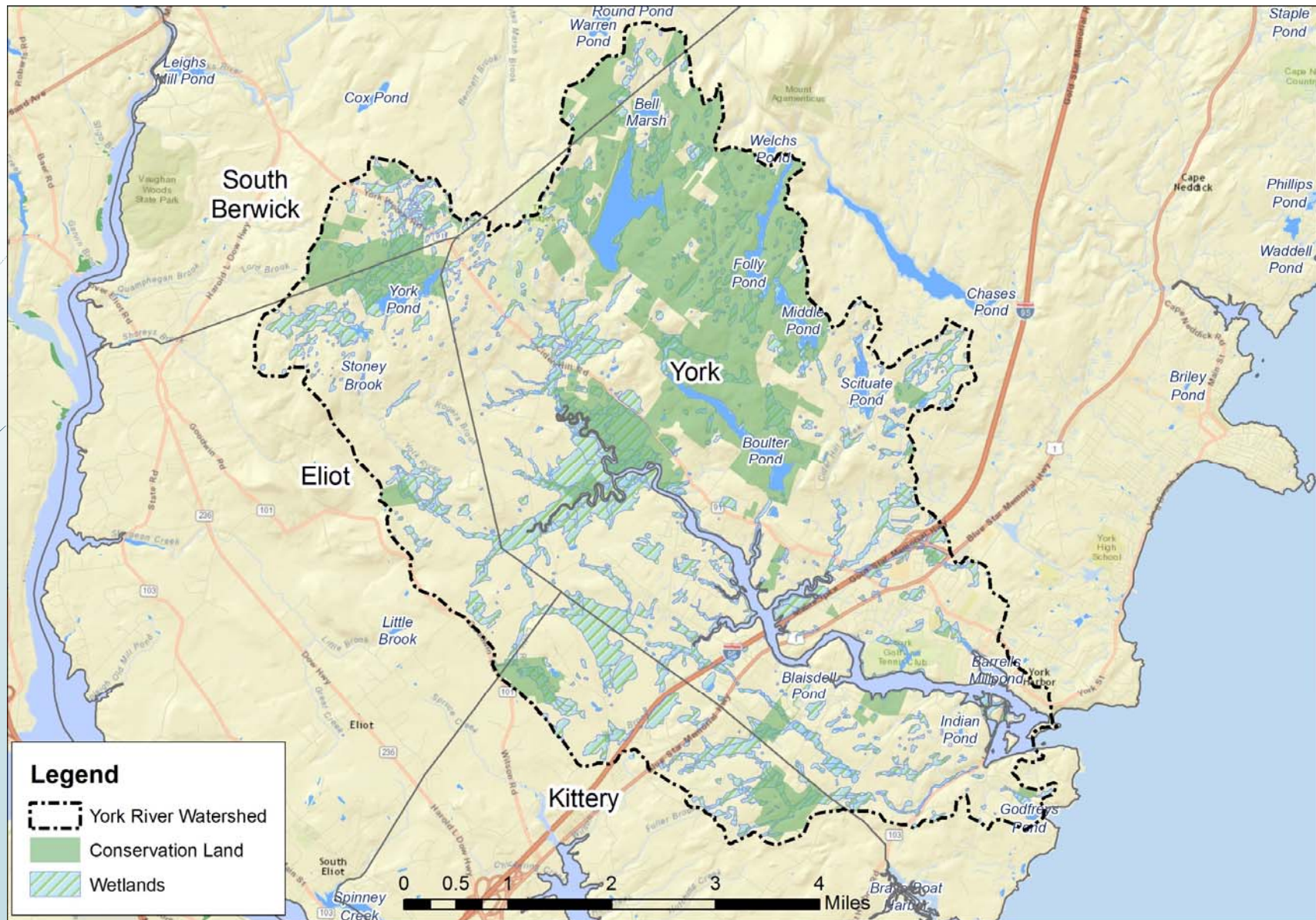


- Cultural and historic resources
- Natural resources
- Scenic beauty
- Economic value
- Recreational value
- Water quality and drinking water source
- Others ?

Natural Resources

- York River Watershed features
 - large tracts of undeveloped forest
 - healthy stream buffers
 - unique natural habitats
- All supporting a wide range of diverse and rare species





Natural Resources / Biological Diversity

- More different **threatened** and **endangered species** than any other region in Maine



Examples:

- Blandings Turtle
- New England Cottontail
- Ringed boghaunter dragonfly
- Saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrow

Natural Resources

The **York River estuary** is one of the

- ▶ **least disturbed salt marsh ecosystems** and
- ▶ possibly the **most ecologically diverse** for its size in the Gulf of Maine



Photo: Jerry Monkman

Natural Resources / Biological Diversity

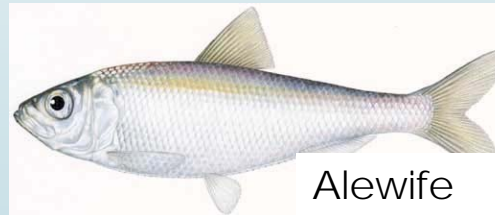
- Rich habitat supports at least **23 different species of fish**



Rainbow Smelt



Brook trout



Alewife

** Research plans: conduct 2017 study to enhance understanding of diadromous fish*

Natural Resources

Protected Headwaters, Stream Buffers and Salt Marsh

- Provides valuable **habitat** and **wildlife corridors**
- Supports **coastal resilience** from sea level rise and storm surge
- Includes part of largest **intact coastal wetland** area in southern Maine



Photo: Jerry Monkman

** Research plans: evaluate salt marsh migration and extend studies to winter/spring species of diadromous fish*

Natural Resources / Next Steps

- Continue review of existing studies / data
- Identify additional data or research needs
- Conduct new research to better understand the resources
- Develop recommendations for protecting the York River's unique ecosystem values

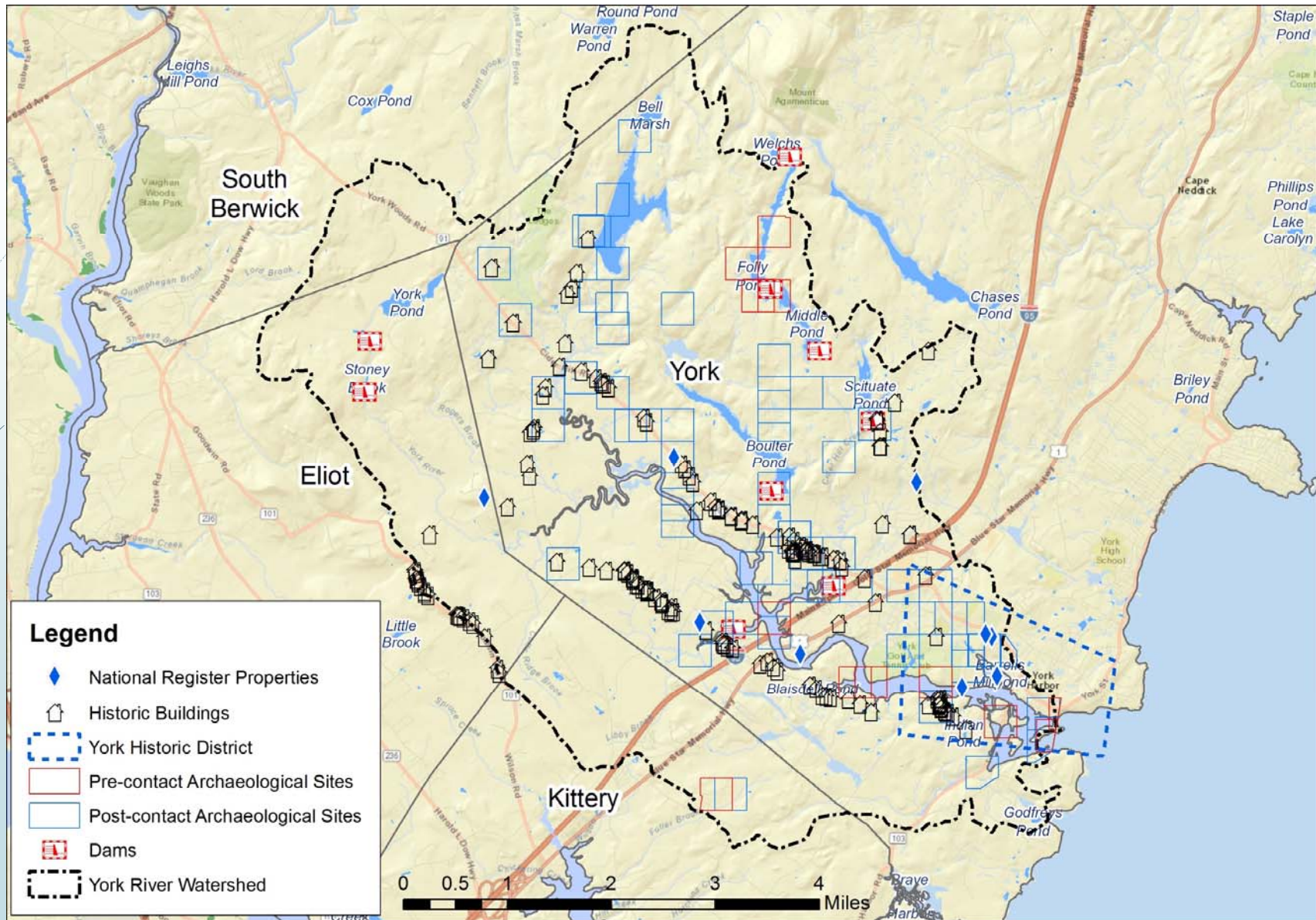




Cultural and Historic Resources

- **National Register of Historic Places** (1 district, 9 individual properties)
- **Historic Buildings and Structures** (Colonial-era homesteads, farms, dams)
- **Bridges** (e.g., Sewall's Bridge, Thermoplastic Bridge, Wiggly Bridge)
- **Living History** (Museums of Old York, Portsmouth Gundalow)
- **Artistic Inspiration** (Visual and literary arts)
- **Archaeological Resources** (Native American, Euro-American, maritime industrial sites)
- **Cultural Landscapes** (Marsh hay fields, historic and working waterfronts)

Cultural and Historic Resources



Cultural and Historic Resources – Research Priorities



AN EXPLORATION OF ABORIGINAL SHELL HEAPS REVEALING TRACES OF CANNIBALISM ON YORK RIVER, MAINE.

By HENRY C. MERCER.

YORK RIVER,¹ an estuary of the Atlantic Ocean in southwestern Maine with a small fresh-water affluent, navigable by ships of light draught for about 4 miles, and for boats and canoes for 8, with a landlocked harbor, and extensive clam-banks daily bared at ebb tide, exhibits on both its shores, and for 2½ miles from the sea, a series of deposits of shells which on examination are found to contain charcoal, pieces of burnt stone, the bones of animals, and very rare fragments of pottery.

Like the Kjoekkenmoeddings of Scandinavia, and like the many other similar shell heaps that skirt the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia to Panama,² these rubbish deposits represent

¹ In York County, on the extreme southwestern coast of Maine. The estuary, forming a small landlocked harbor of dangerous access, opens upon the sea about 9 miles north of the New Hampshire boundary and the mouth of the Piscataqua River.

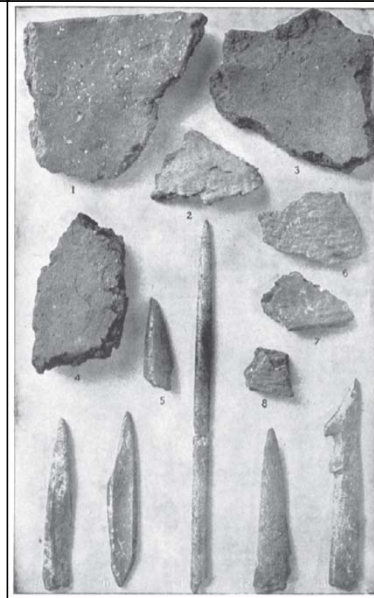
² *At St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia.* J. M. Jones: *Forster's Prehistoric Races*, p. 161.

Along the coasts of Maine and Massachusetts [containing elk, wild turkey, and great auk]. Professor Jeffries Wyman: *Am. Naturalist*, Vol. I, p. 560. [Cannibalism] Hardy: *Peab. Mus. Rep.* 1877, Vol. II., p. 197.

On Long Island. Elias Lewis, Jr.: *Pop. Sci. Monthly*, Vol. X., p. 436.

On the New Jersey coast. C. C. Abbott: *Primitive Industry*, Chap. XXX. [Heap 11 feet high, 25 feet long, 6 feet wide.] C. F. Woolley: *Am. Antiquarian*, Vol. I., p. 225. [Apparently sinking in the sea.] *Prim. Industr.*, 446, 448. [The Keyport heap.] Described by Professor Rau upon the investigations of Dr. Samuel Lockwood. *Smithson. Rep.* 1864, p. 370.

On the Chesapeake shores. Lardner Vanuxem: *Am. Ass. of Geologists and Naturalists*, 1840-42, pp. 21-23.

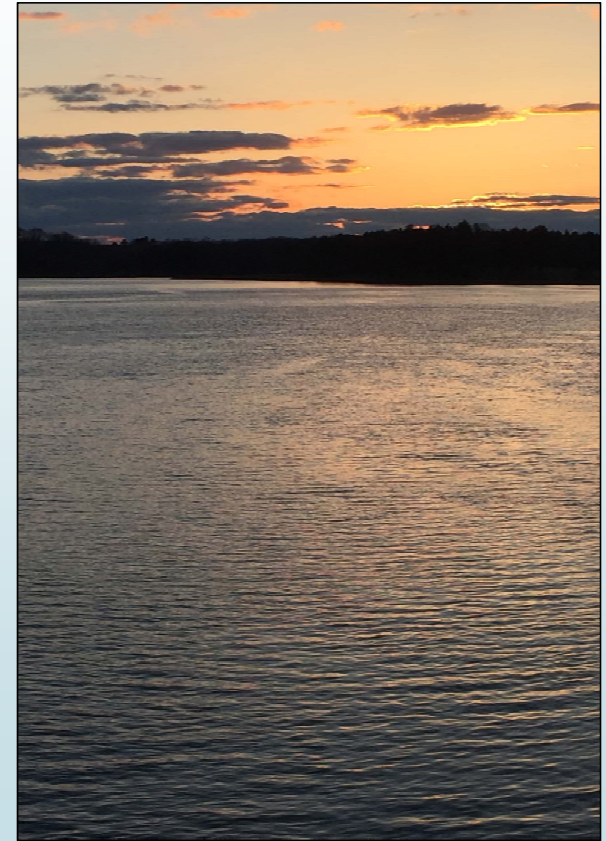


Topics/Proposals:

- Archaeological and Architectural History surveys of York Pond and surrounding areas (Eliot and South Berwick)
- Update to York Historic District National Register nomination
- Impact of sea-level rise to historic waterfront properties and archaeological resources
- Other ideas?

York River Water Quality

- York River Classification **SB (estuarine)**
- 2nd Highest Classification – *"suitable for recreation in and on the water, fishing, aquaculture, shell fishing ... and as habitat for fish and other estuarine and marine life."*
- Water Quality of the York River is assessed annually by the Maine Dept. of Marine Resources to support National Shellfish Sanitation Program





Water Quality Parameters

- Water Quality Sampling - Focus Primarily on Bacterial Pollution (fecal coliform) and Dissolved Oxygen (DO)
- York Conservation Commission (1994 – 1998)
 - Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature, pH, Fecal Coliform
- Maine Dept. of Marine Resources (1995 – Present)
 - Annual Sampling Program
 - Temperature, Salinity and Fecal Coliform

Water Quality Impact on Shell Fishing

- Shell fishing closure areas based on elevated levels of Fecal Coliform and DO detected in water samples
- **All areas of York River West of Sewalls Bridge** *Prohibited for Shellfishing*
- **Area East of Sewalls Bridge to Stage Neck** *Conditionally Approved for Shellfishing* – [due to seasonal impacts to the River this area is closed to shell fishing from May 1 – Nov 15]



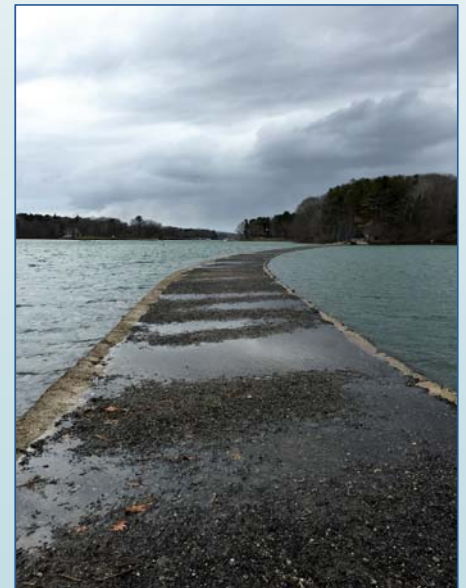


Water Quality Parameters to Consider

- Water quality monitoring to characterize the suitability of the York River for fish habitat
- Biomonitoring (tissue analysis of mussels/clams collected from areas within the River)
- Macroinvertebrate Surveys as indicators of Water Quality suitable for fish habitat
- Water quality monitoring of nutrients

Questions and Comments on Watershed Resources/ORVs?

- Jean Demetracopoulos
- Stefan Claesson
- Beth Walter





Outreach/Community Involvement

Chuck Ott

Thom Kearns

Oral History of the York River Watershed

► Possible Video Project





Outreach Overview



- ▶ Established website: www.yorkrivermaine.org
 - ▶ News, announcements, and updates on progress available via website
- ▶ Email list and mailing list being developed
- ▶ Local students to be involved
- ▶ YRSC members to attend community and watershed events and meetings of Boards/Councils to provide updates and information



Community Involvement and Committee Outreach for Management Plan Development

- ▶ Solicit input and feedback from all stakeholders throughout the Study
- ▶ Hold series of public workshops to solicit community input on ORVs and detailed plans to address ORV priorities, starting in Fall 2016
- ▶ Promote community engagement with watershed and Study
 - ▶ Arrange for guest speakers to present different areas of expertise
 - ▶ Arrange for or promote watershed nature hikes, boating trips, etc.
 - ▶ Participate in local fairs, festivals, waterfront activities, etc.
- ▶ Conduct presentations at schools and encourage student involvement in watershed projects
- ▶ Contact other Partnership W&S River committees

Questions & Comments on Outreach and Community Involvement

- ▶ Thom Kearns
- ▶ Chuck Ott



David J. Murray, ClearEyePhoto.com



How to Assist and Stay Involved

- ▶ www.yorkrivermaine.org
- ▶ Come to meetings (YRSC or subcommittees)
- ▶ Provide data or reports
- ▶ Provide list of upcoming activities or events
- ▶ Participate in and promote fall public meetings
- ▶ Provide feedback, share information (tonight and any time)
- ▶ Contact Study Coordinator Jennifer Hunter,
jh.yorkriver@gmail.com or 641-9122