



York River Study

November 1, 2016

South Berwick Town Council Workshop

York River Watershed

York River Watershed Area by Town

York =	23.25 square miles
Eliot =	4.75 square miles
Kittery =	3.25 square miles
South Berwick =	1.75 square miles
Total =	33 square miles

York River and Its Watershed

- What is a watershed?
- York River
 - About 12 miles long
 - Headwaters in South Berwick
- York River Watershed
 - 33 square mile area
 - 4 communities
 - About 110 miles of rivers and streams



Why Care about the York River Watershed

- Shared, connected resource among the communities
- High concentration of resources – significant natural and historic resources
- Economic importance and cultural importance to region
- Water supply for region
- Threats to resources – development, changing landscape, over use
- Stewardship / Protecting resources for future generations



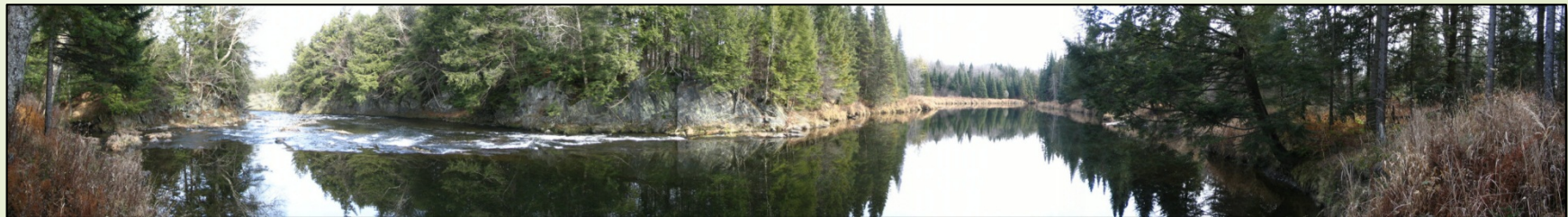
York River Study

- Watershed approach to protecting the York River
- Congressionally-authorized study to explore if the National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic River designation is a good fit for the York River and its communities
- A locally-appointed Study Committee oversees the study
- Goal to engage watershed communities in the long-term protection and management of the York River
 - Development of watershed management plan
 - Evaluation of PWSR designation
- www.YorkRiverMaine.org



Overview of National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program

- Subset of **National Wild and Scenic Rivers System** – 208 rivers, primarily on federal lands
- Twelve **“Partnership Rivers”** (non-federal lands)
 - **No federal land ownership/management** resulting from designation
 - Administration and governance through **local river council**
 - Land use governed by **existing local/state law** and regulations
 - **Locally-developed river plans** – approved prior to designation – guide future management with responsibilities shared among local, state, federal, and NGO partners
 - **Voluntary participation** by partners creates success
 - **Federal funding** leverages additional state, local, and private funding



Missisquoi River (VT)
Photo: Shana Stewart-Deeds

Basis to Recommend PWSR Designation

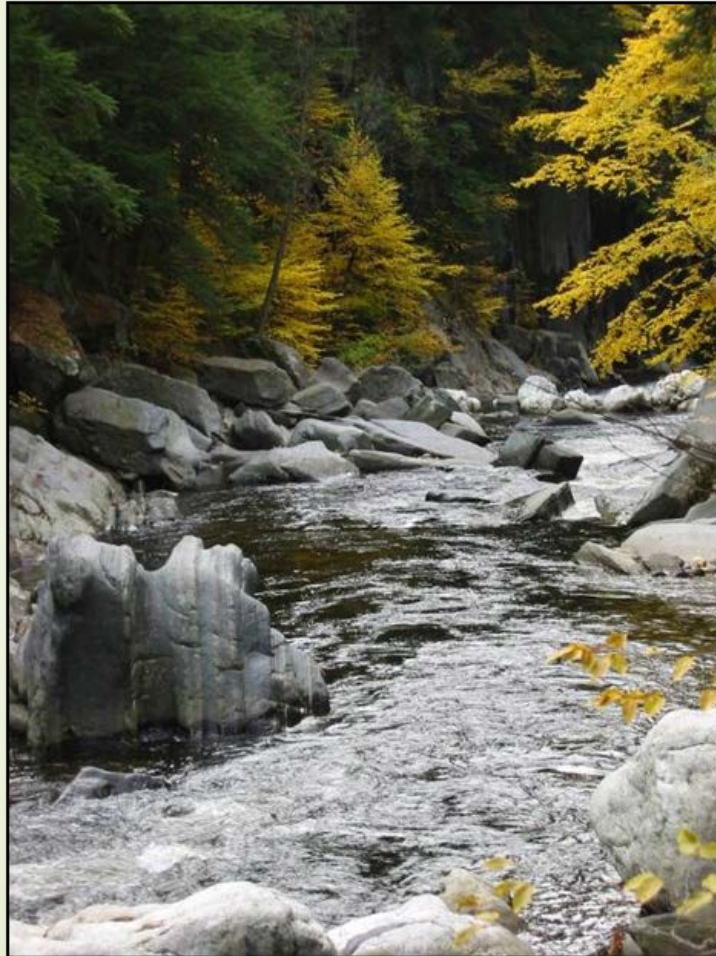
- **Eligibility:** Free-flowing, possessing one or more **outstandingly remarkable values** (ORVs) that based on professional **judgment** are directly **river-related** and **unique, rare or exemplary** at regional or national scale
 - Scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or similar values
- **Suitability:** Three main questions... Should river values be **protected**? Is Wild and Scenic the **best method**? What level of nonfederal **commitment** exists?
- **Partnership Rivers:** Is there a locally-developed and approved **Management Plan**? Is there **community support**? Do **local river protection measures** exist?
- If the York River is found eligible and suitable for designation (with community support), **Congress must enact law** for the river to become a Partnership Wild and Scenic River



York River (ME)

Photo: Jerry Monkman, Ecophotography

Benefits of Designation



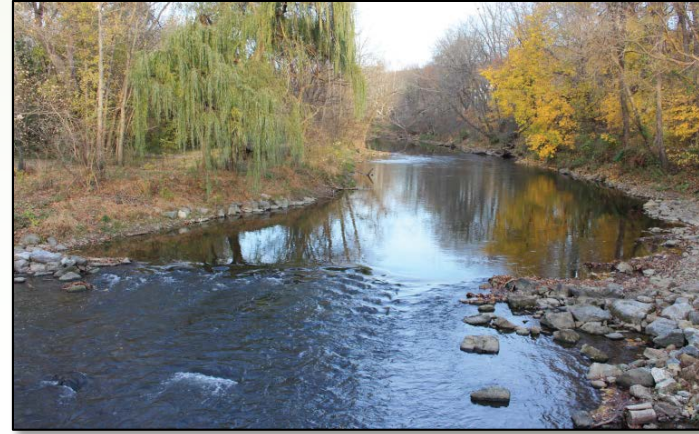
Westfield River (MA)
Photo: Carrie Banks

- National **recognition and prestige**
 - **Additional grants**, e.g., fish passage, land protection, youth education, etc.
- NPS **technical and financial assistance** to implement river plan/projects
 - Cooperative agreement (~\$75K/year)
 - Other NPS funding (~\$10K/year)
- NPS **review of federally-assisted** water resources projects to protect locally-identified river values
- Locally-appointed **river council** provides long-term structure to guide future management **across local jurisdictions** within the watershed

20 Years of Partnership Rivers



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

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**



** Goal: Protect the York River's unique character and resources for future generations*

York River Watershed

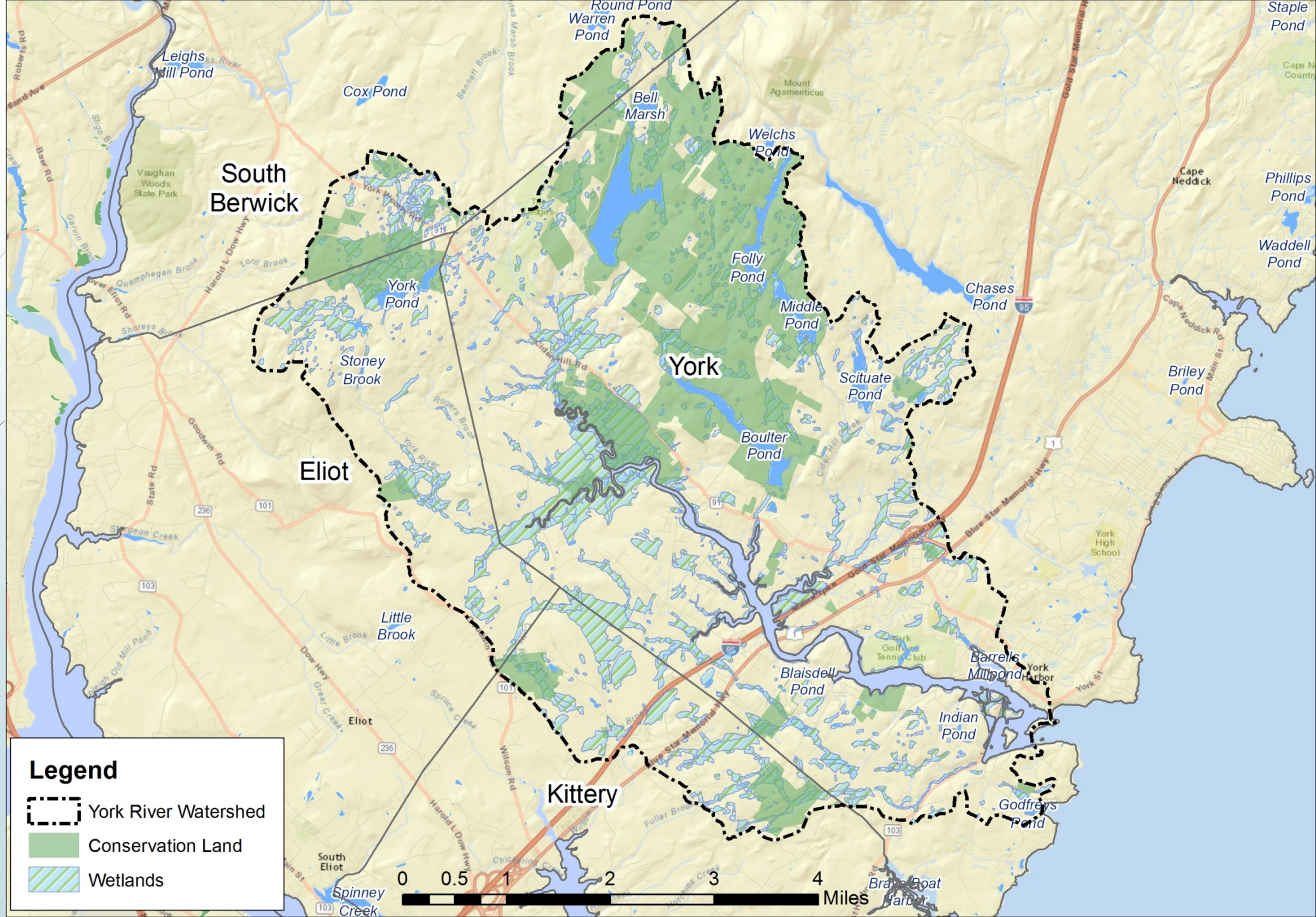
Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)



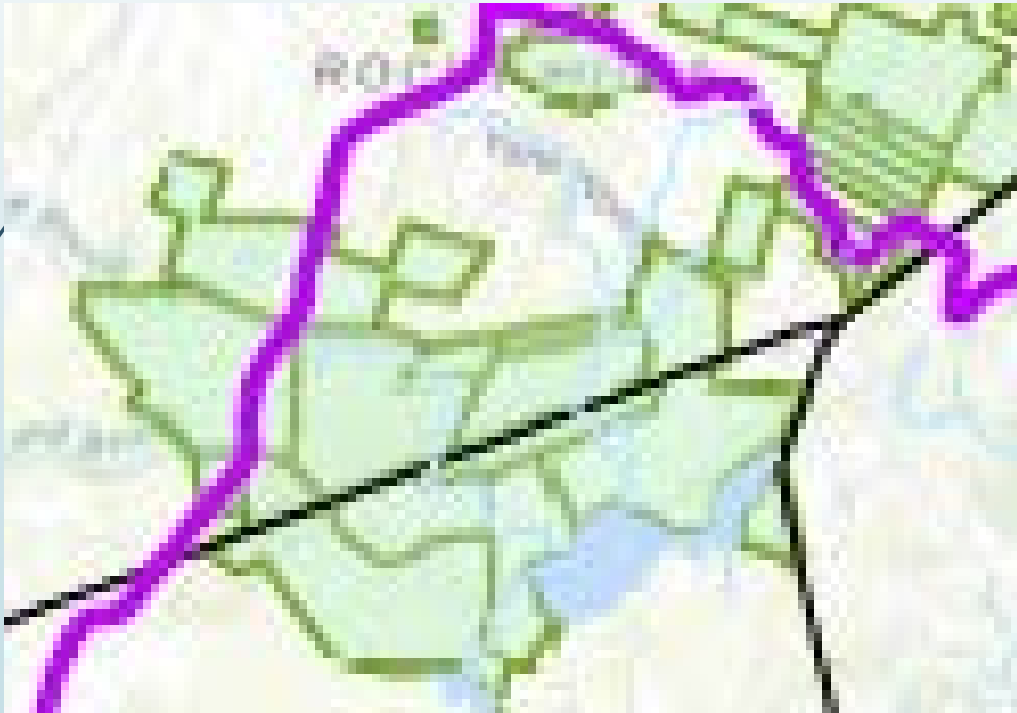
- Economic value
- Source of drinking water
- Natural resources
- Cultural and historic resources
- Water quality
- Recreational value
- Scenic beauty
- Others ?



Context: Protecting Watershed Values in a Changing Climate



Watershed within South Berwick



Next Steps – Outstandingly Remarkable Values

- Review of existing data / studies
- Conduct limited new research
- Study Report / Recommendation
 - Decide whether to recommend Partnership Wild & Scenic Designation
- **Community-based York River Watershed Management Plan**
 - Document valuable resources
 - Recommend additional studies needed
 - Recommend strategies for protecting the watershed's unique values
 - Identify opportunities for York, Kittery, Eliot, South Berwick and partner organizations to implement the plan



How You Can Help

- Provide input tonight
- Send in photos, data, reports
- Participate in meetings

For More Information

- Study Coordinator Jennifer Hunter
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- www.YorkRiverMaine.org



Photo: Michael Cuomo

Questions / Comments?