



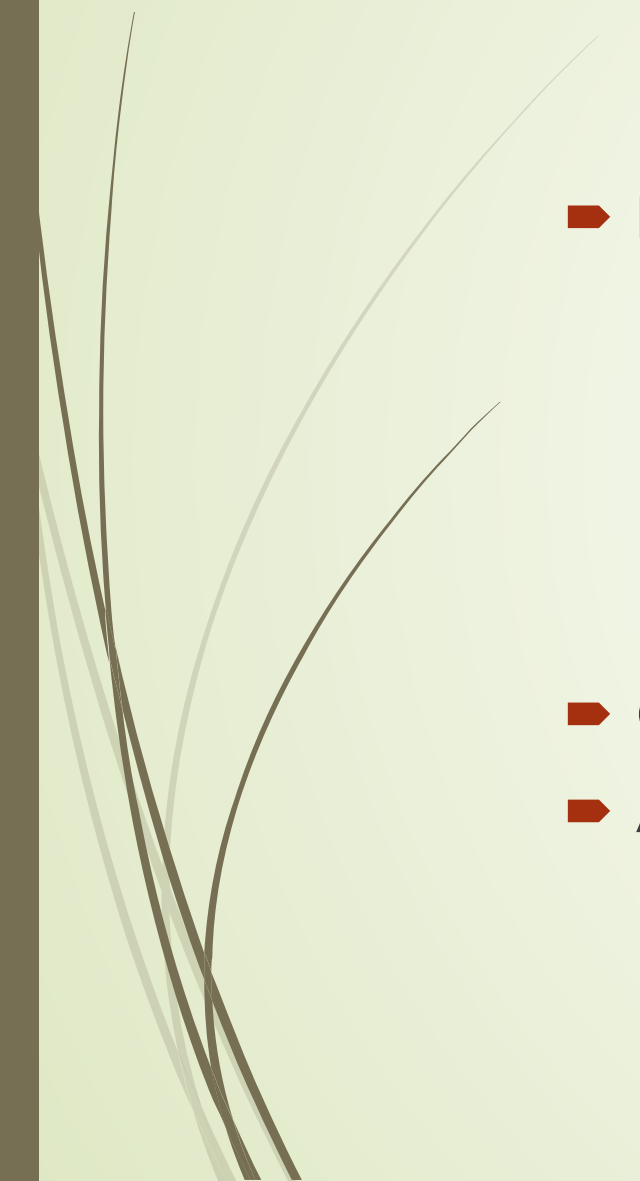
York River Study

October 17, 2016, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

York Public Library Community Room



Welcome and Meeting Overview

- Presentations, 6:30-7:00
 - ❖ Chuck Ott – York River watershed and the York River Study
 - ❖ Jim MacCartney – National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program
 - ❖ Joan LeBlanc – York River watershed resources and management plan
 - Group discussion and feedback, 7:00-7:30
 - Additional time for input and discussion
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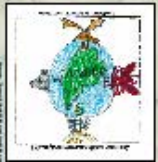
York River Watershed

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
 - Begins in South Berwick
 - Fresh water and tidal
- York River Watershed
 - 33 square mile area
 - 4 communities
 - About 110 miles of rivers and streams



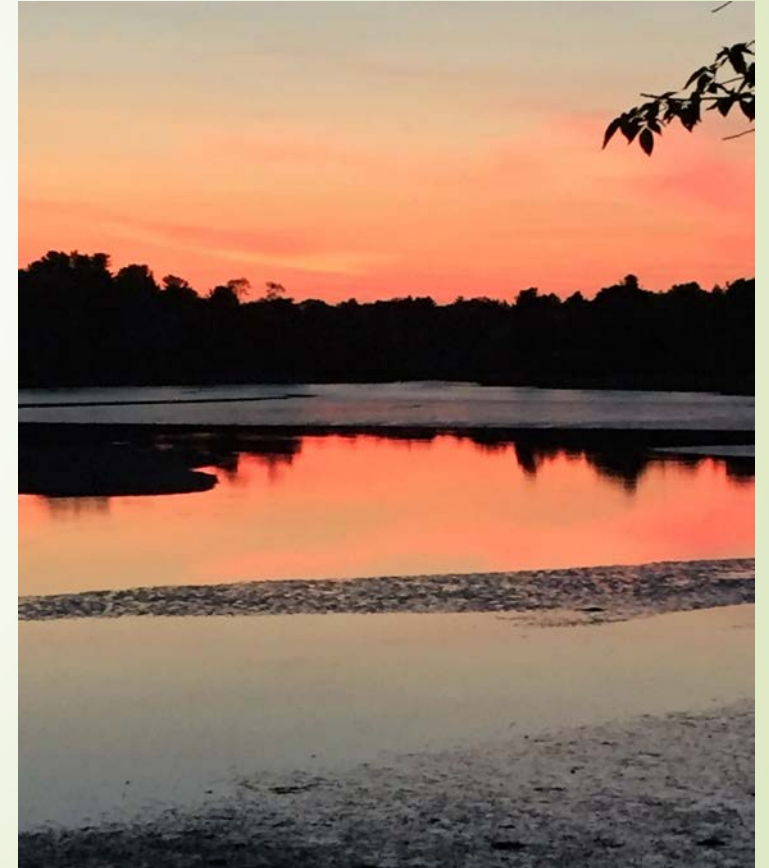
Why Care about the York River Watershed

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



York River Study – Background

- Watershed approach to protecting the York River
- Formation of York River Study
 - Process began about 10 years ago
 - Support from Maine's Congressional delegation; York River Study was authorized by Congress to explore if the National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic River designation is a good fit for the York River and its communities
 - Includes development of community-based management plan
 - Began in late 2015 when funding was appropriated
 - A locally-appointed committee oversees the study



York River Study Committee

- Charged with conducting the study: developing a management plan and evaluating suitability of designation
- Includes town-appointed volunteer members (voting members) and agency members (non-voting members)
- Monthly meetings
- Currently has two subcommittees



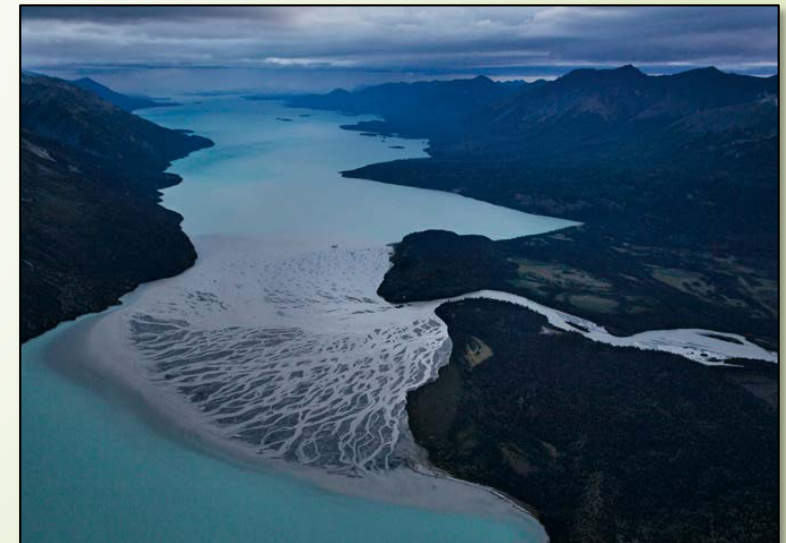
York River Study – Status

- Information gathering stage to identify important watershed resources
 - Compiling and reviewing existing studies and data
 - Gathering public input
 - Gathering expert knowledge
 - Identifying data gaps and areas for additional study
- Currently conducting series of public meetings and events to gather input
- Website: www.YorkRiverMaine.org



Overview of National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program

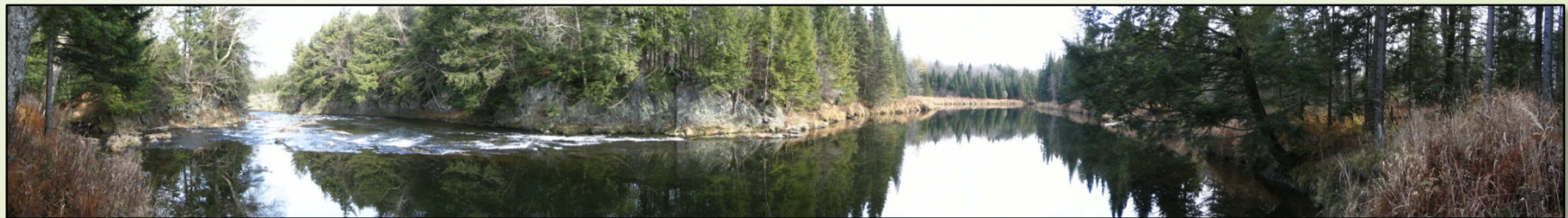
- Subset of National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
 - Enacted October 2, 1968 (P.L. 90-542)
 - Balance national policy of dam and other construction
 - Protect and enhance:
 - Free-flowing condition and water quality
 - ORV(s) of national or regional importance
 - Process to add rivers to national system
 - 208 rivers (12,709 miles)
 - Primarily on federal lands
- Twelve "Partnership Rivers" (non-federal lands)



Tlikakila River (AK)
Photo: Natl. Geographic

What is a Partnership River?

- No federal land ownership or 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
- Management 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

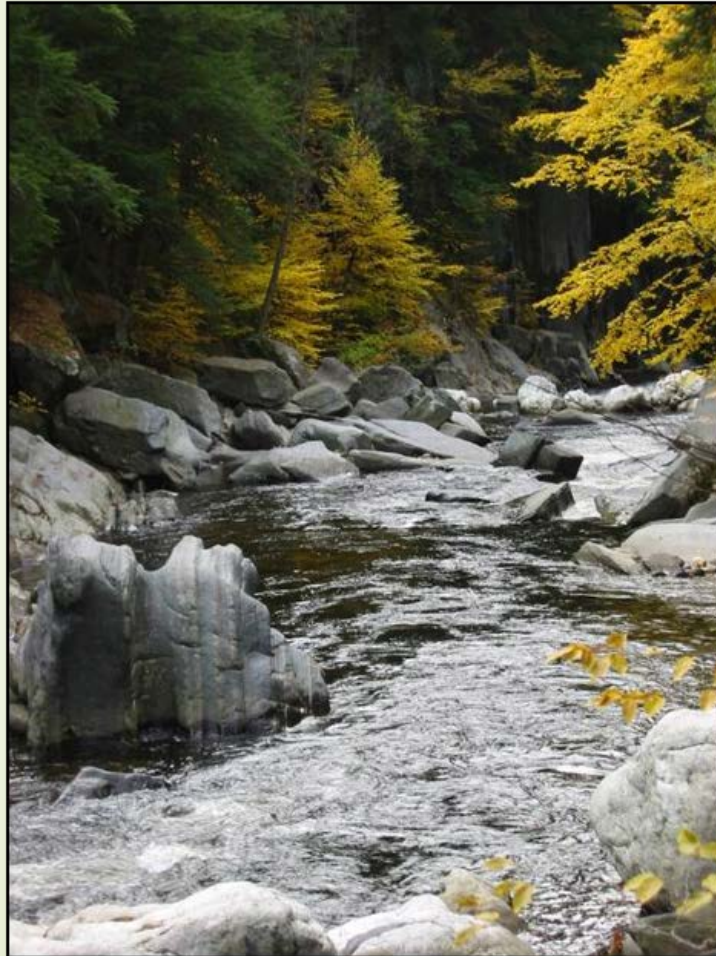
Basis to Recommend PWSR Designation

- ▶ **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**, e.g., ordinances exist?



Lamprey River (NH)
Photo: Dick Lord

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)
 - CCS, PLC, Call-to-Action (~\$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

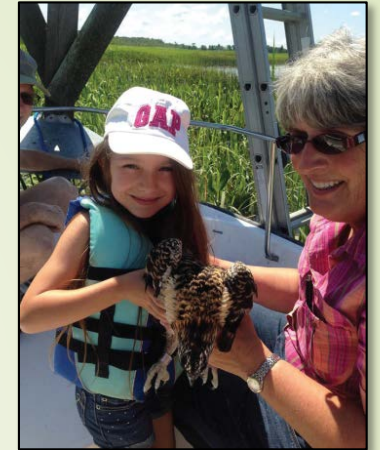
20 Years of Partnership Rivers



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

York River Study



York River (ME)

Photo: Jerry Monkman, Ecophotography

- 2013 – NPS WSR **Reconnaissance Survey** completed
 - **Potential ORVs:** natural cultural , historic, scenic, and recreational values
 - **Strong candidate** for Congressional Study
- December 19, 2014 – Congressional **WSR Study authorized** (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.**”
- NPS provides **advice, technical support, and funds** (cooperative agreement)
- If the York River is found eligible and suitable for designation (with community support), **Congress must enact law** for the river to become Wild and Scenic

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*

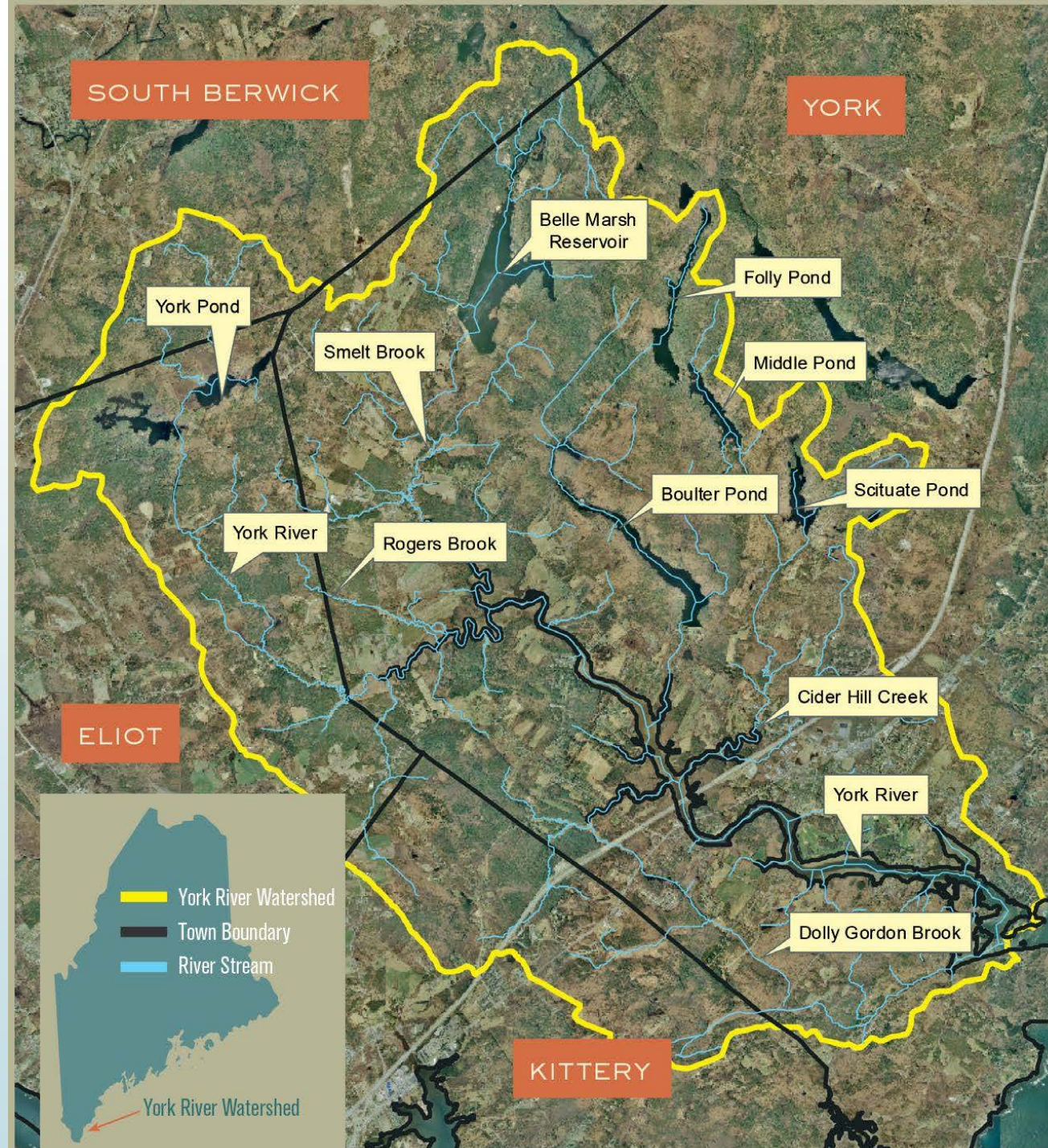
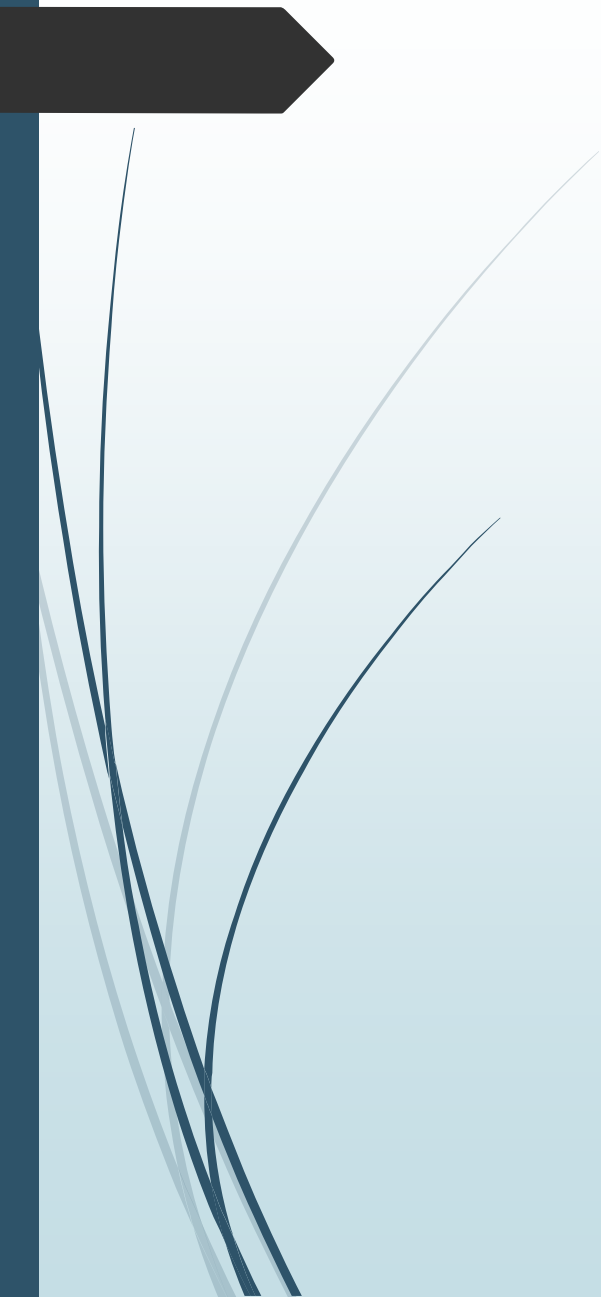
York River Watershed

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)



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

Context: Protecting Watershed Values in a Changing Climate



Economic Value

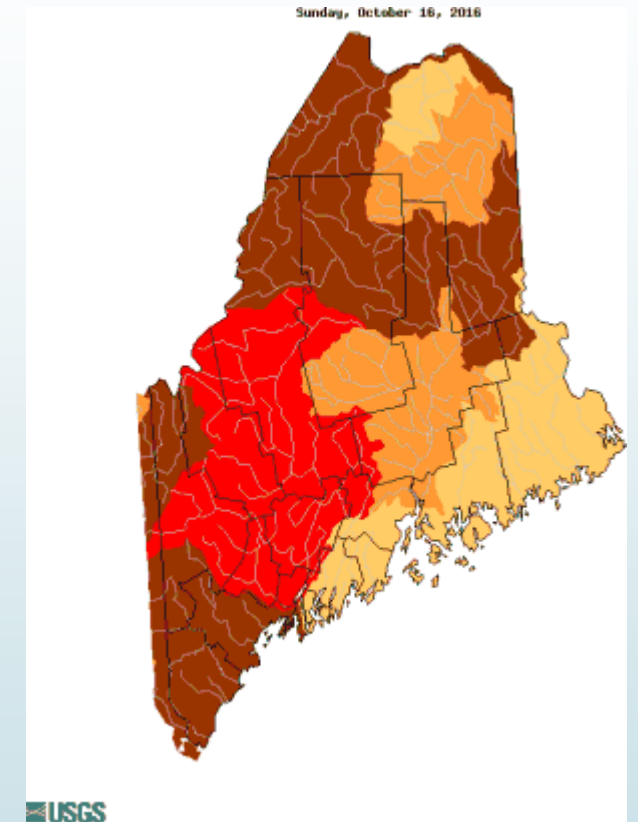
- Healthy Watershed is Crucial to Supporting Local Economy
 - Fishing industry
 - Tourist industry



Drinking Water Supply

- York River watershed encompasses several ponds that provide public water supply to York, Kittery and Eliot
- Priorities include:
 - Protecting water quality
 - Promoting water conservation
 - Conserving watershed buffer areas

Explanation - Percentile classes				
Low	<=5	6-9	10-24	Insufficient data for a hydrologic region
Extreme hydrologic drought	Severe hydrologic drought	Moderate hydrologic drought	Below normal	



USGS National Drought Watch – October 16 – 7 day average

Water Quality

- Clean and healthy rivers support:
 - Drinking water
 - Shellfish harvesting
 - Fishing
 - Swimming
 - Boating

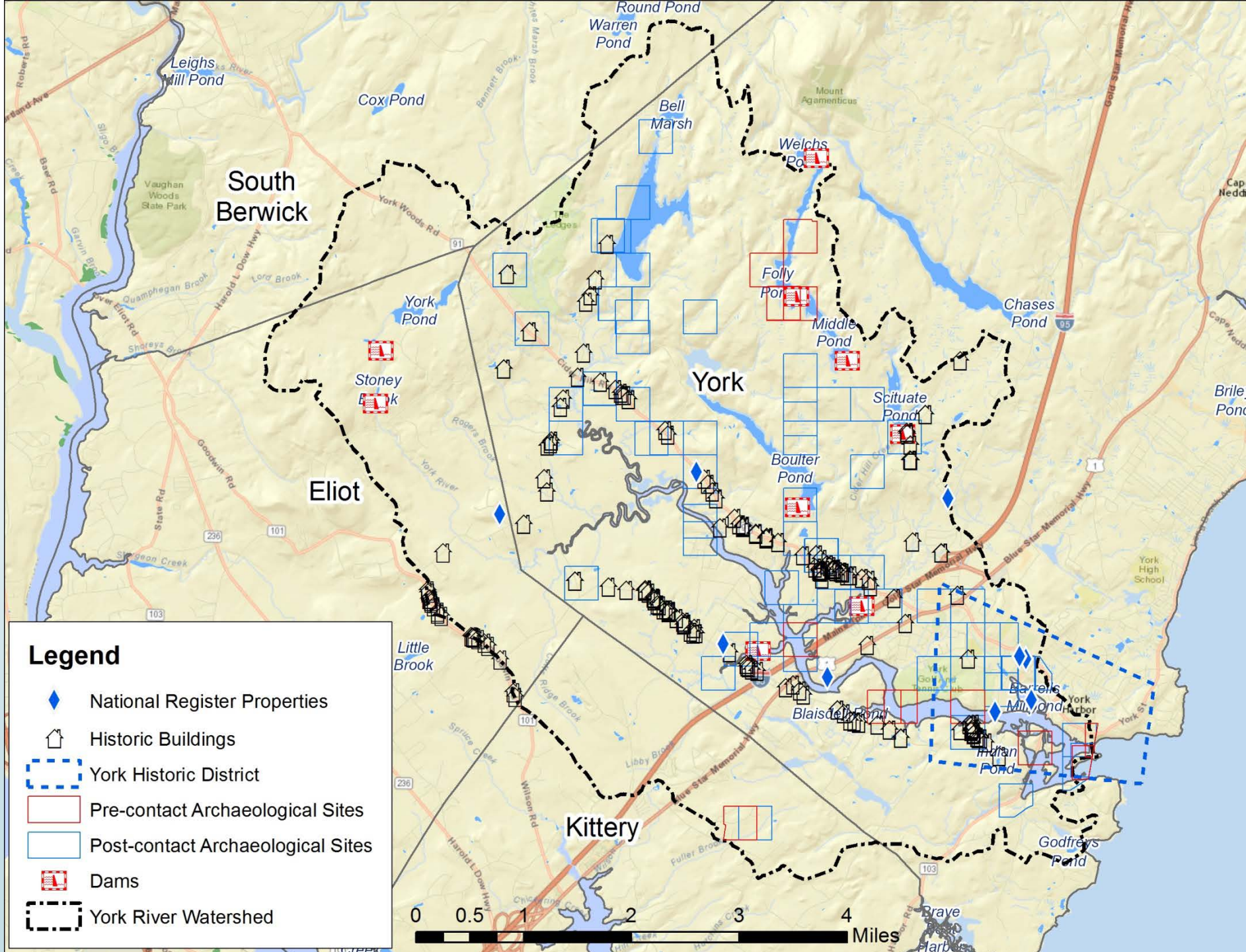


Cultural and Historic Resources

- **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)
- **Artistic Inspiration** (Visual and literary arts)
- **Archaeological Resources** (Native American, Euro-American, maritime industrial sites)
- **Cultural Landscapes** (Marsh hay fields, historic and working waterfronts)



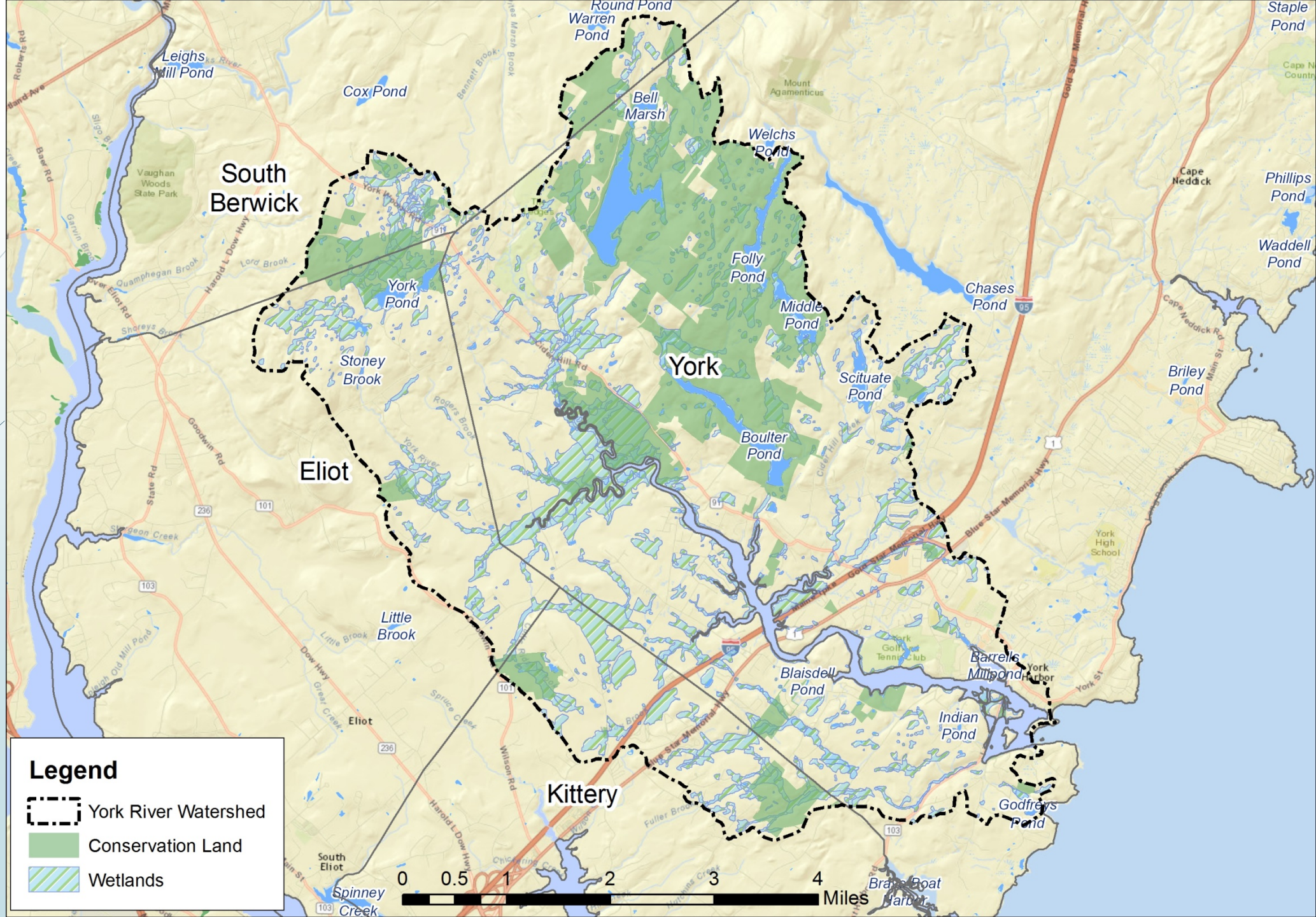
Cultural & Historic Resources



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

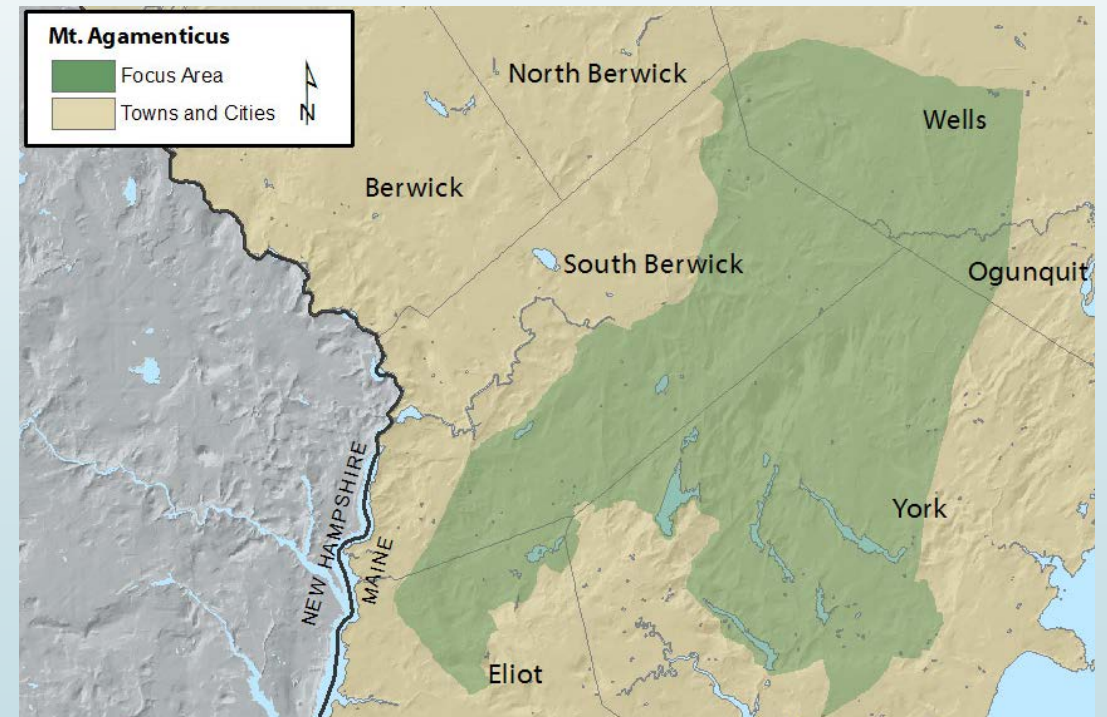
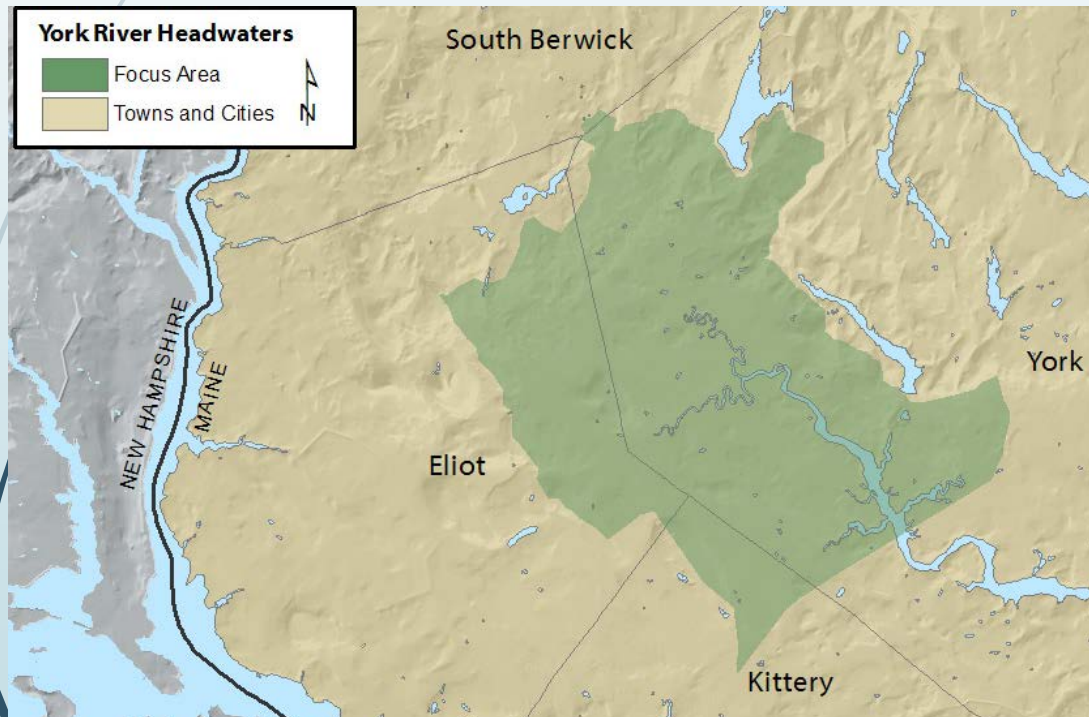
Protected Headwaters, Stream Buffers and Salt Marsh

- 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

- **York River Headwaters Focus Area** and **Mt. Agamenticus Focus Area** – designated as '**Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance**' based on an "unusually rich convergence of rare plant and animal occurrences, high value habitats, and relatively intact natural landscapes."



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 / Biological Diversity

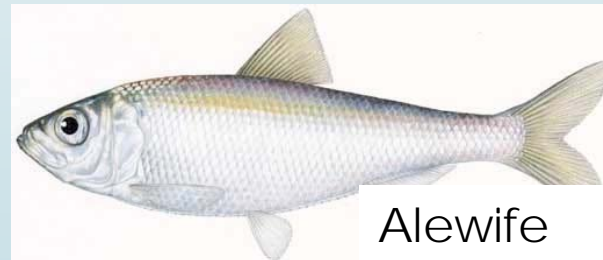
- Rich habitat supports at least **23 different species of fish**



Rainbow Smelt



Brook trout



Alewife

Next Steps - Outstandingly Remarkable Values

1. Continue review of existing data / studies
2. Conduct new research
 - 2017 fish monitoring and habitat study (approved)
 - Other potential research areas
 - Watershed build-out
 - Archeological / Architectural historic surveys – York Pond and surrounding areas in S. Berwick and Eliot (includes Punkintown area)
 - Mapping of wetlands and marsh areas
 - Identifying and mitigating impacts of sea level rise on natural, historic and economic resources



Next Steps - Outstandingly Remarkable Values

3. Develop York River Watershed Management Plan

- Ensure community-based approach
- Identify and document valuable resources
- Recommend additional studies needed
- Recommend strategies for protecting the York River's unique values
- Identify opportunities for York, Kittery, Eliot, South Berwick and partner organizations to implement the plan





How You Can Help

- Provide input: Watershed Values Poster & Sheet
- Provide data, reports, photos
- Participate in meetings (YRSC or subcommittees)

Stay Informed

- Contact Study Coordinator Jennifer Hunter at jh.yorkriver@gmail.com
- www.yorkrivermaine.org (sign up for email list)

Questions and Comments



Photo: Michael Cuomo