



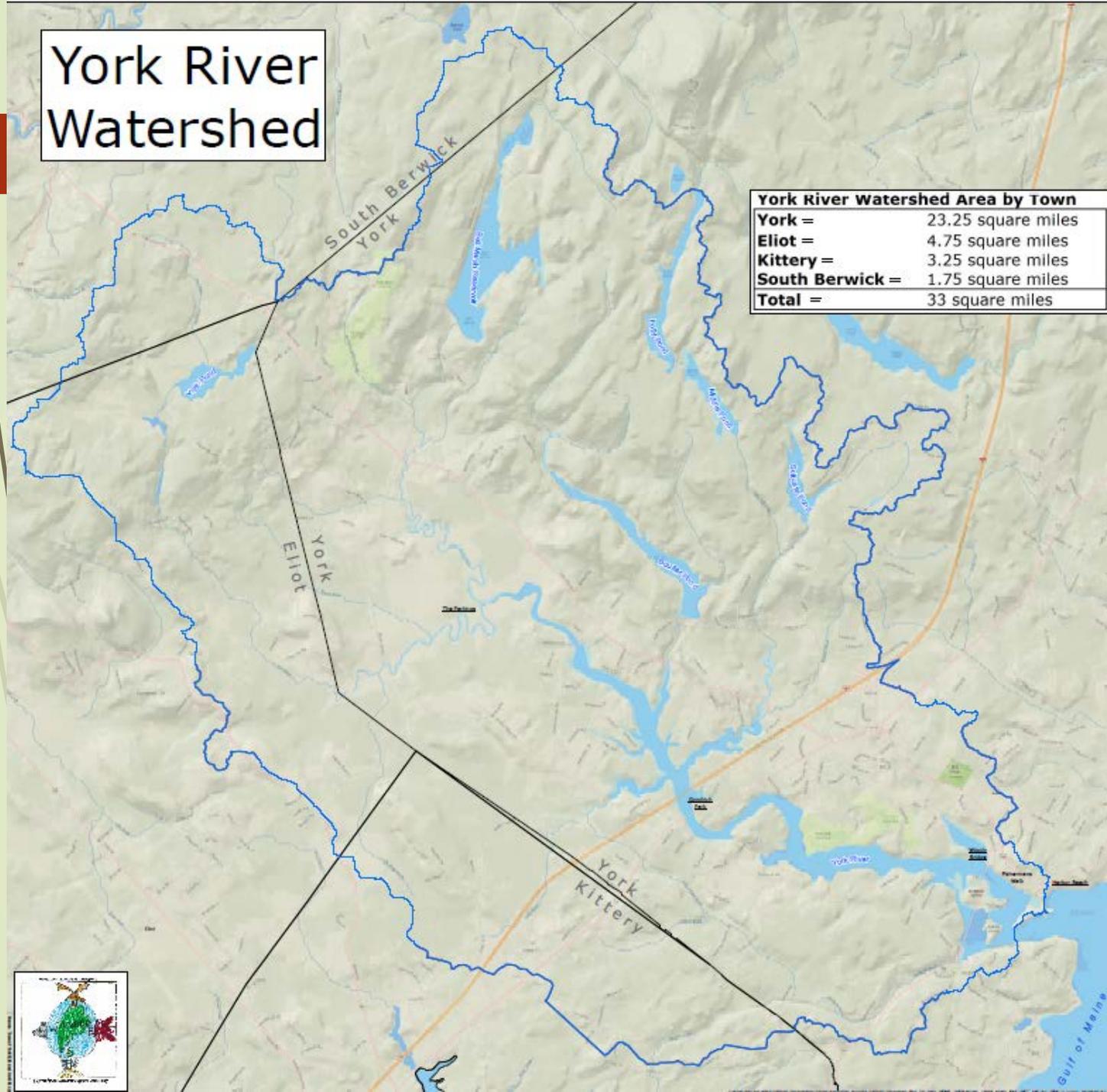
# York River Study



October 24, 2016

Kittery Town Council Workshop

# York River Watershed



# York River and Its Watershed

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

# 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



# 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
- ▶ Information gathering stage to identify important watershed resources
- ▶ [www.YorkRiverMaine.org](http://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
  - **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

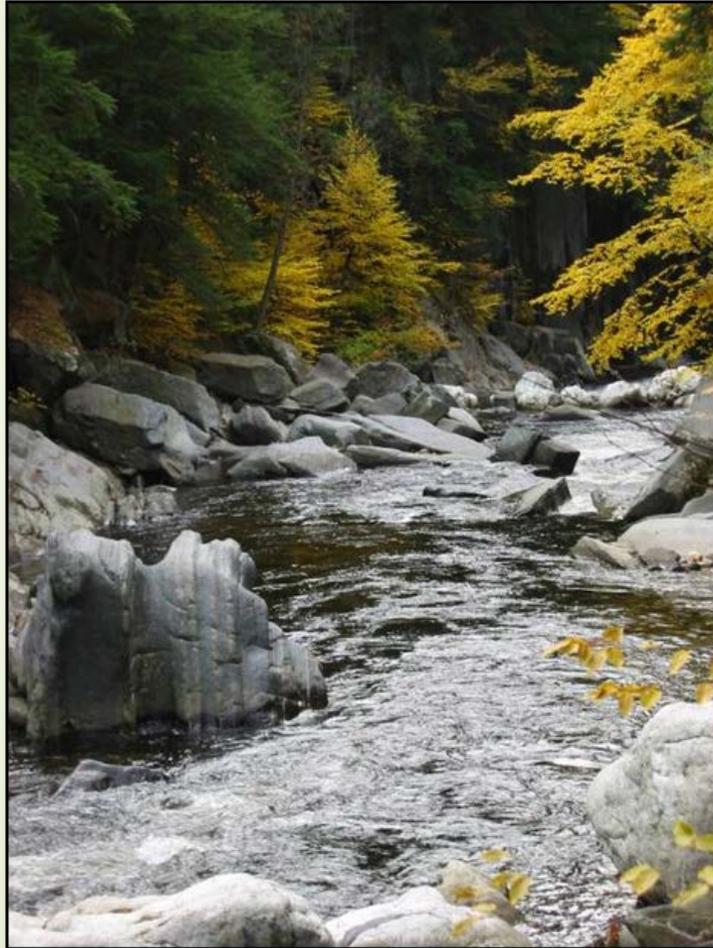
- ▶ **Eligibility:** Free-flowing, possessing one or more **outstandingly remarkable values** (ORVs) that based on professional **judgment** are directly **river-related** and **unique, rare or exemplary** at regional or national scale
  - ▶ Scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, 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** 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



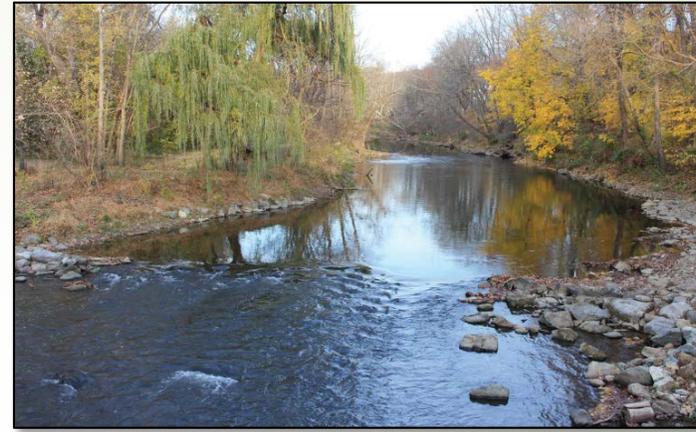
Westfield River (MA)  
Photo: Carrie Banks

- ▶ 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

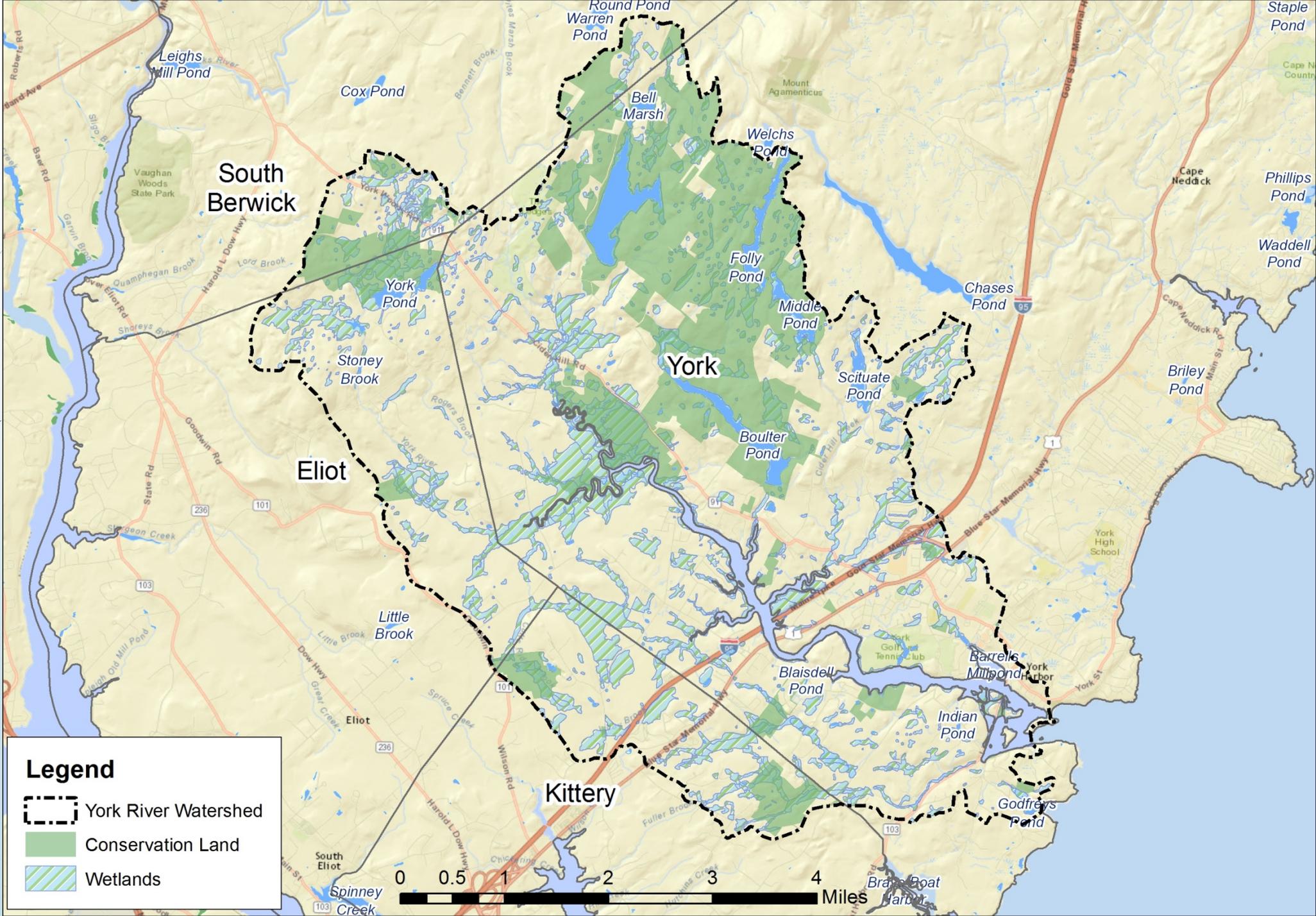
## Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)



- 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**



**Legend**

-  York River Watershed
-  Conservation Land
-  Wetlands



# Next Steps - Outstandingly Remarkable Values

- ▶ Review of existing data / studies
- ▶ Conduct limited new research
- ▶ Study Report / Recommendation
  - ▶ Decide whether to recommend 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](http://www.yorkrivermaine.org)



Questions / Comments?