

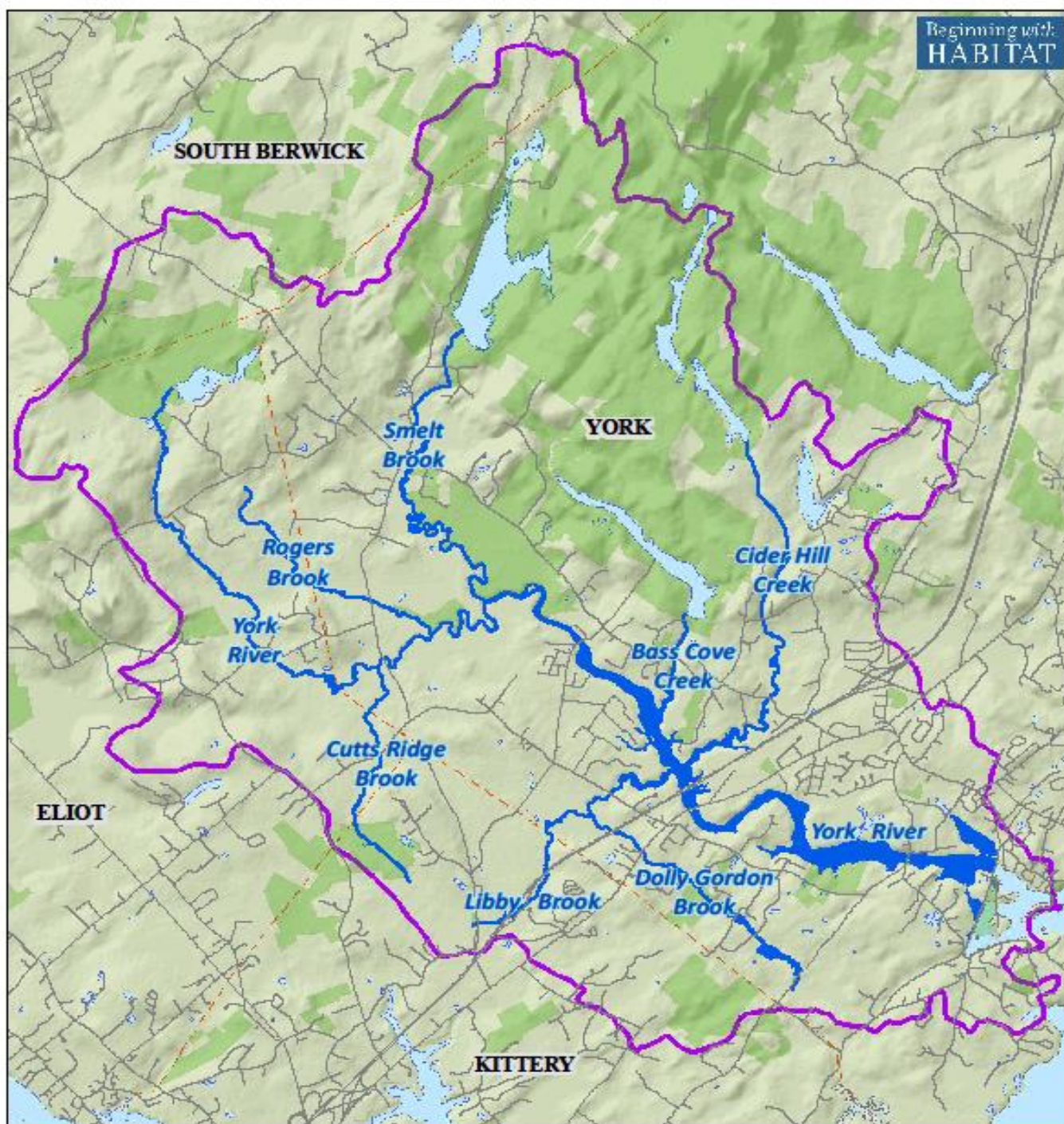


# York River Wild and Scenic Study

Presentation and Update to Kittery Town Council – 12/11/17

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[www.YorkRiverMaine.org](http://www.YorkRiverMaine.org)



# York River Watershed

- 33 square mile area
- Lands in 4 communities
- About 110 miles of rivers and streams
- Watershed approach

# York River Wild and Scenic Study

Congressionally-  
authorized study of the  
York River for inclusion in  
the National Wild and  
Scenic Rivers System

YR Study Committee:  
Engage community  
Research “ORVs” &  
resources  
Evaluate designation  
Develop Stewardship  
Plan

Stewardship Plan  
Adoption  
+  
Community Support for  
Designation  
+  
Congressional  
Authorization  
=  
Designation as PWSR



# York River Watershed

## Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)



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



# York River Study Committee – ORV research

Data compilation and review

Monthly meetings on watershed resources

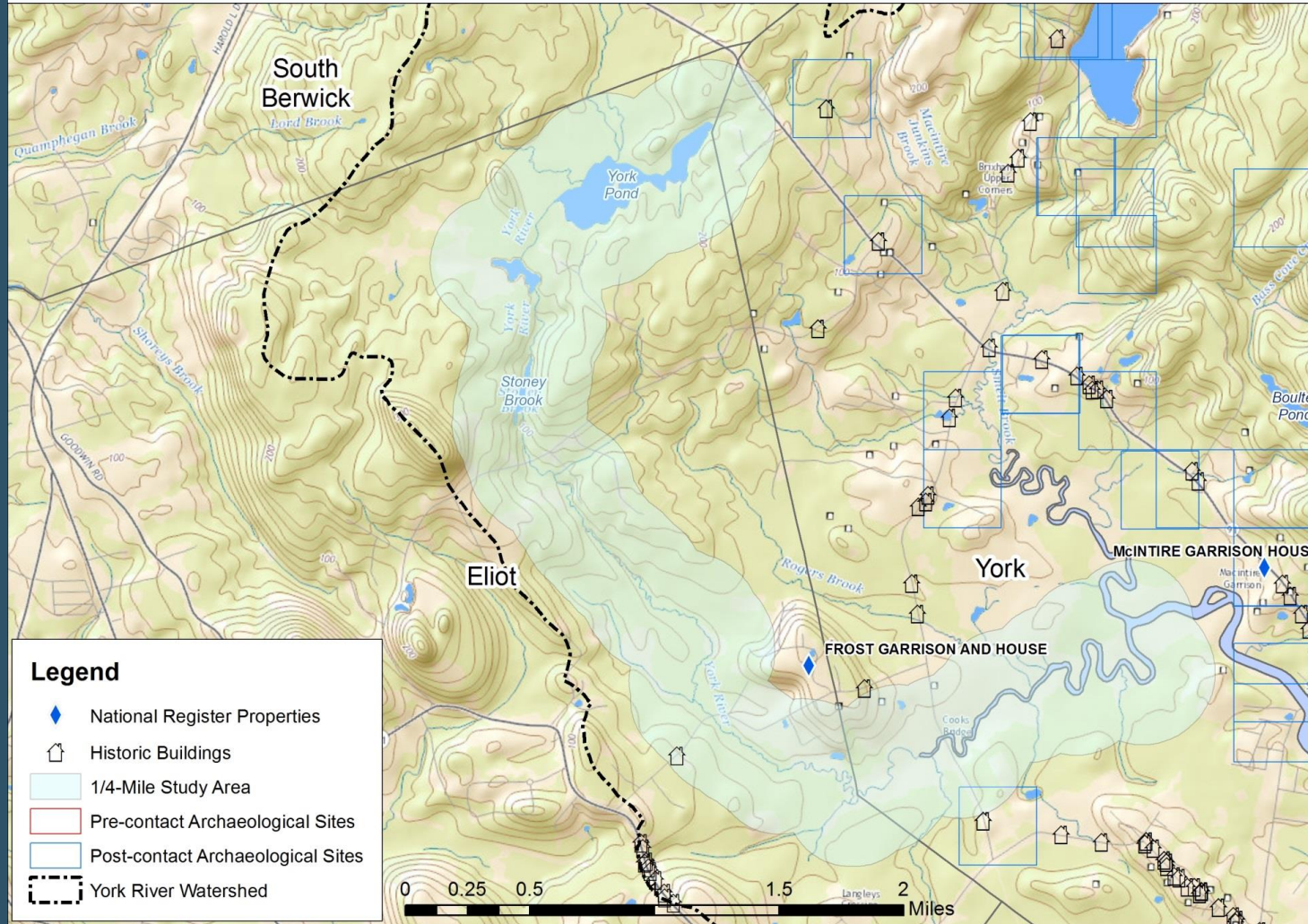
New studies and surveys

- Historic Resources Survey (archaeology & architectural history)
- Diadromous Fish Survey
- Build-out Study
- User survey (York Harbor Board)
- Water quality assessment (Maine Dept of Env Protection)





# Historic Resources



10 National Register sites,  
hundreds of historic buildings,  
and about 85 archaeological  
sites

## HR Survey 2017

### ➤ Archaeology survey

- 4-day dig at 9 areas
- 6 new pre-contact Native American sites
- 6 historic Euroamerican sites

### ➤ Architectural history survey: 26 sites documented



# Natural Resources: Regional and Statewide Significance

**Estuary and Salt Marsh Habitats:** one of the least disturbed marsh-estuarine ecosystems and may be the most ecologically diverse coastal drainage for its size in the Gulf of Maine (Maine IFW)



**Unfragmented, Diverse Forests:** Part of largest intact coastal forest between New Jersey Pine Barrens and Acadia National Park

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



# Natural Resources: continued

**Fish and Fish Habitat:** Tidal streams support over 25 different species of fish; 2017 survey –

- Four tributary sites examined over 10 weeks
- Quality habitat for diadromous fish, smelt in particular
- Rainbow smelt is a species of “greatest conservation need” in Maine

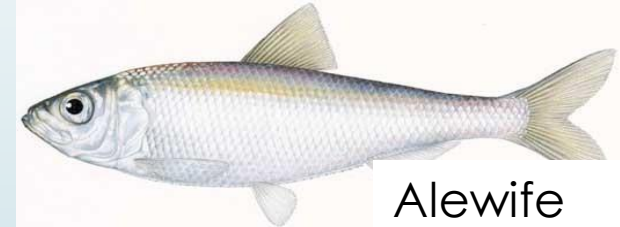
**Coastal Resiliency:** top 1% of tidal habitats in northeast most likely to support biological diversity and ecological functions under different scenarios of sea level rise



Rainbow Smelt



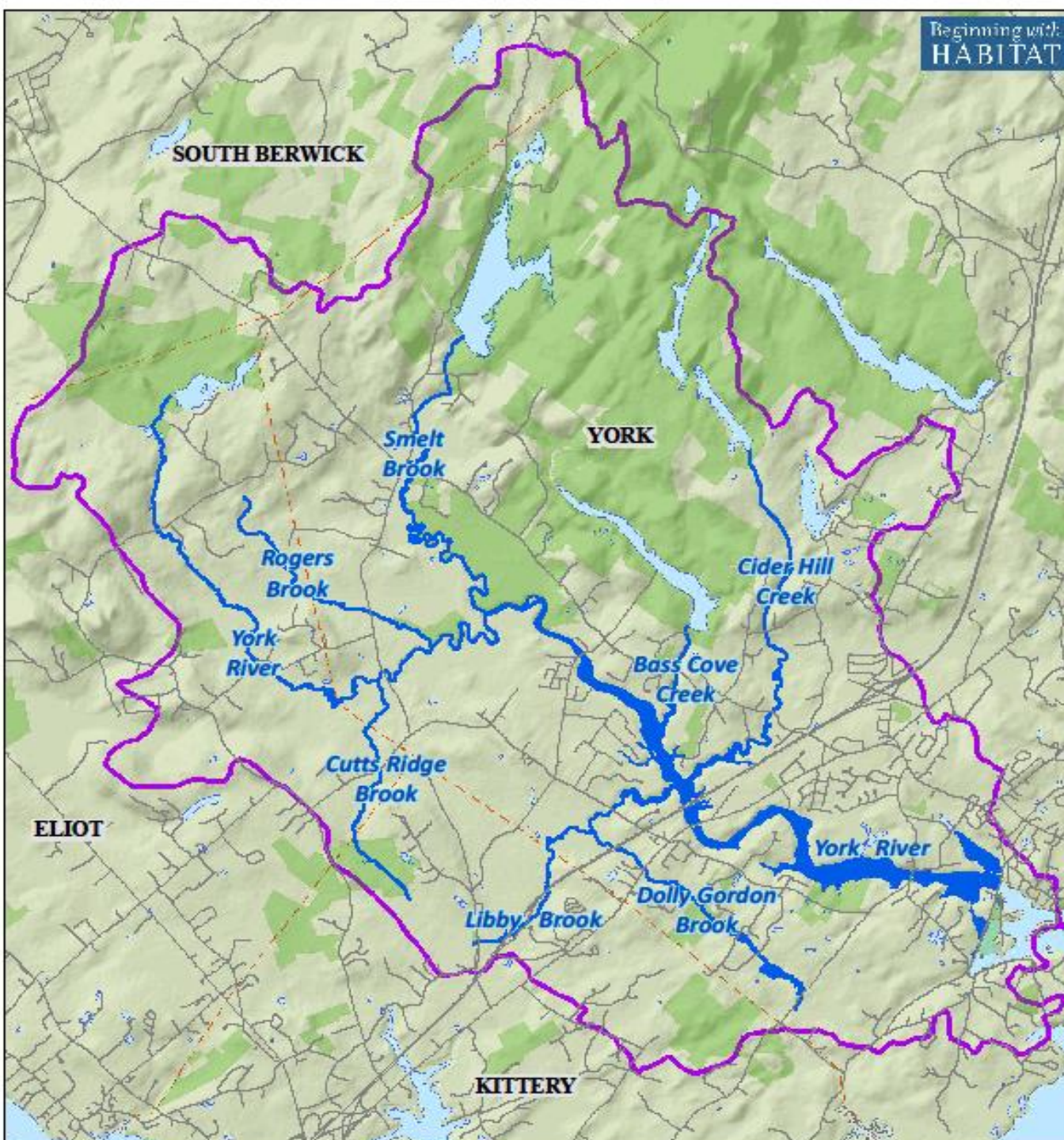
Brook trout



Alewife

***The York River watershed has been identified as significant by federal, state, regional and local groups because of its natural resources.***





# PWSR Designation

**YRSC recommendation:** A Partnership Wild and Scenic River designation will help communities continue to protect the many river-related values and resources in the York River watershed that are important to the region's character, quality of life, and economy.

## PWSR designation:

- Annual federal funding
- Local stewardship plan
- Local committee to decide priorities
- Creates partnerships and leverages additional financial resources

# York River Watershed Stewardship Plan

- Advisory, guidance document
- Characterizes resources, threats and management objectives and actions
  - Range of recommended actions: outreach and education, restoration, protection, regulatory, monitoring and assessment, further studies, capacity building, etc.

## Organized across three areas:

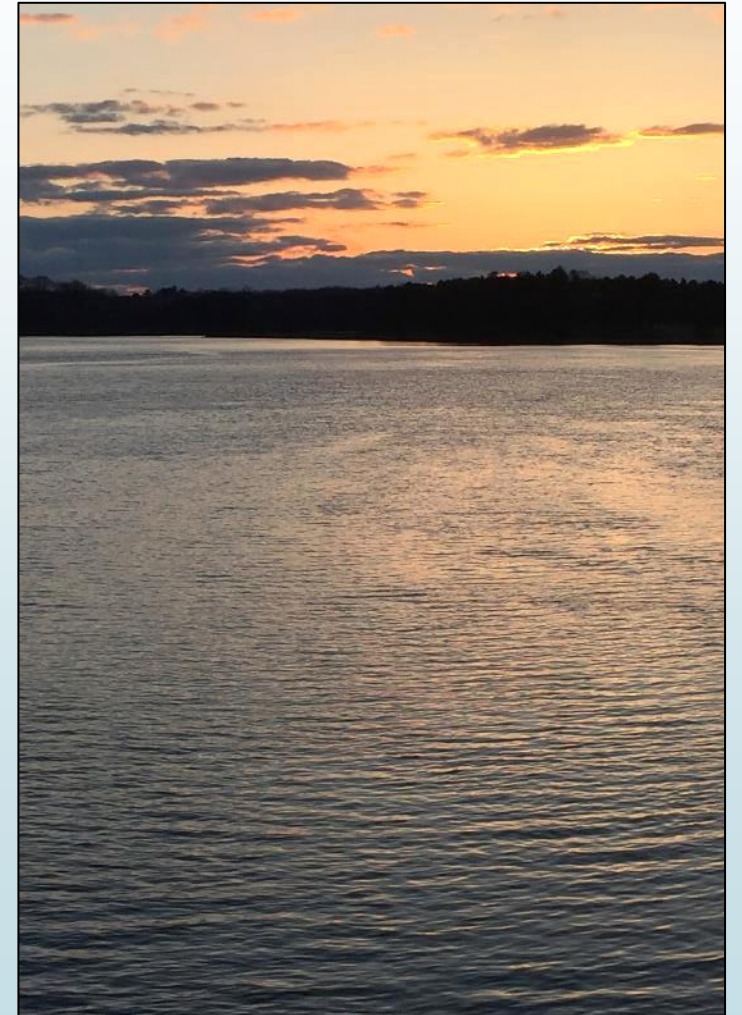
- Natural Resources
- Economic Resources and Community Character
- Cultural and Historic Resources





# Community input and community decisions

- Stewardship Plan development in early 2018
- Votes in November and December 2018: Support for designation and stewardship plan







# York River Study

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**Next meeting/event: Historic Resources Survey  
Presentations at Eliot Historical Society meeting on  
January 8, 2018, 7pm at Eliot Grange**