

# An Equitable, Inclusive Update to the Merrimack River Watershed Conservation Plan



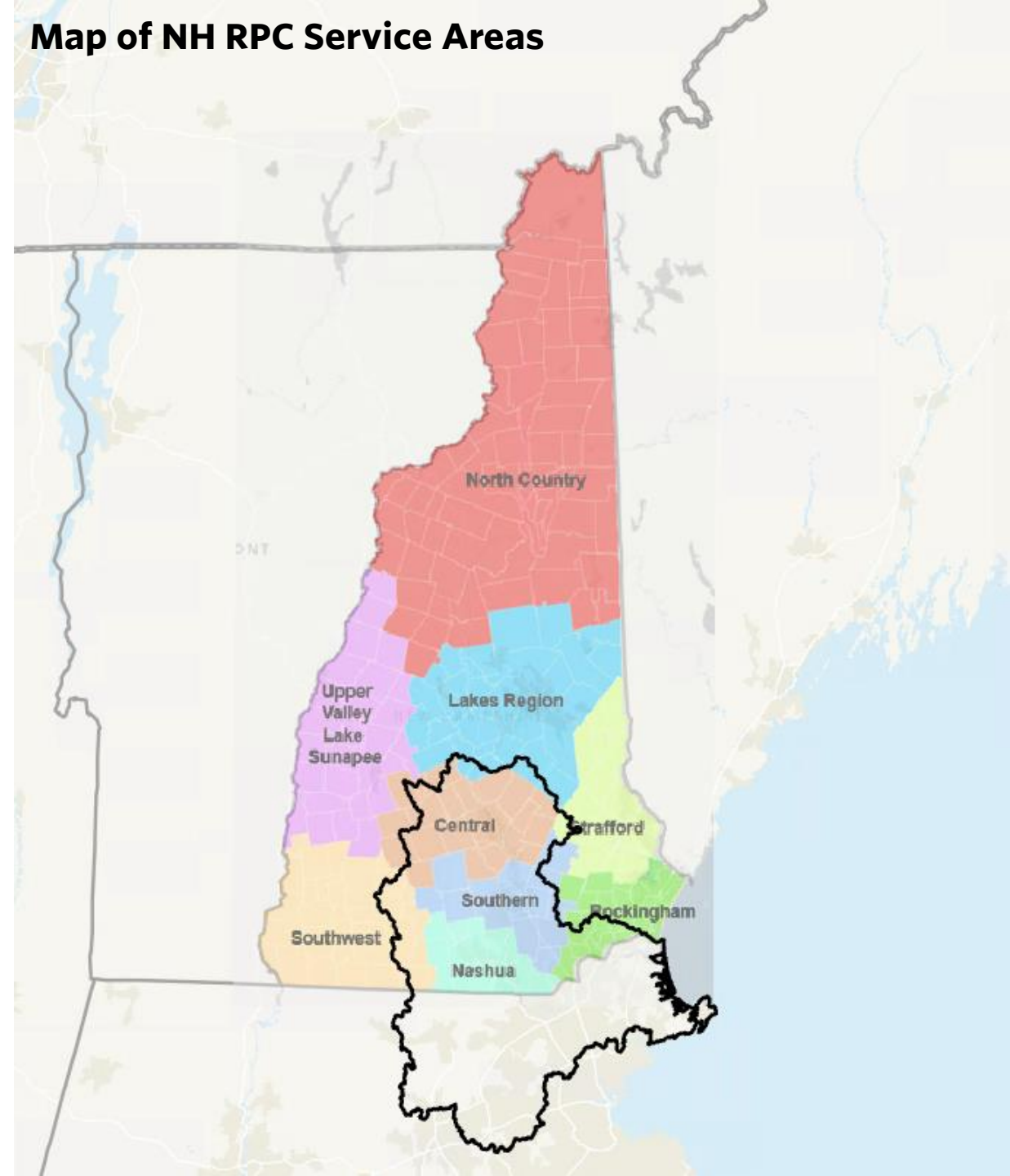
*Anna Ormiston, NH GIS Manager and Spatial Scientist  
Ben Sweeney, NH Conservation Coordinator*

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# Merrimack River Watershed

- Overlaps all communities within SNHPC service area
- 2.6 million residents across 180 communities
- Merrimack River supplies 500,000 people with drinking water. Expected to increase by 40%
- Merrimack River identified as one of most threatened rivers in the US

Map of NH RPC Service Areas





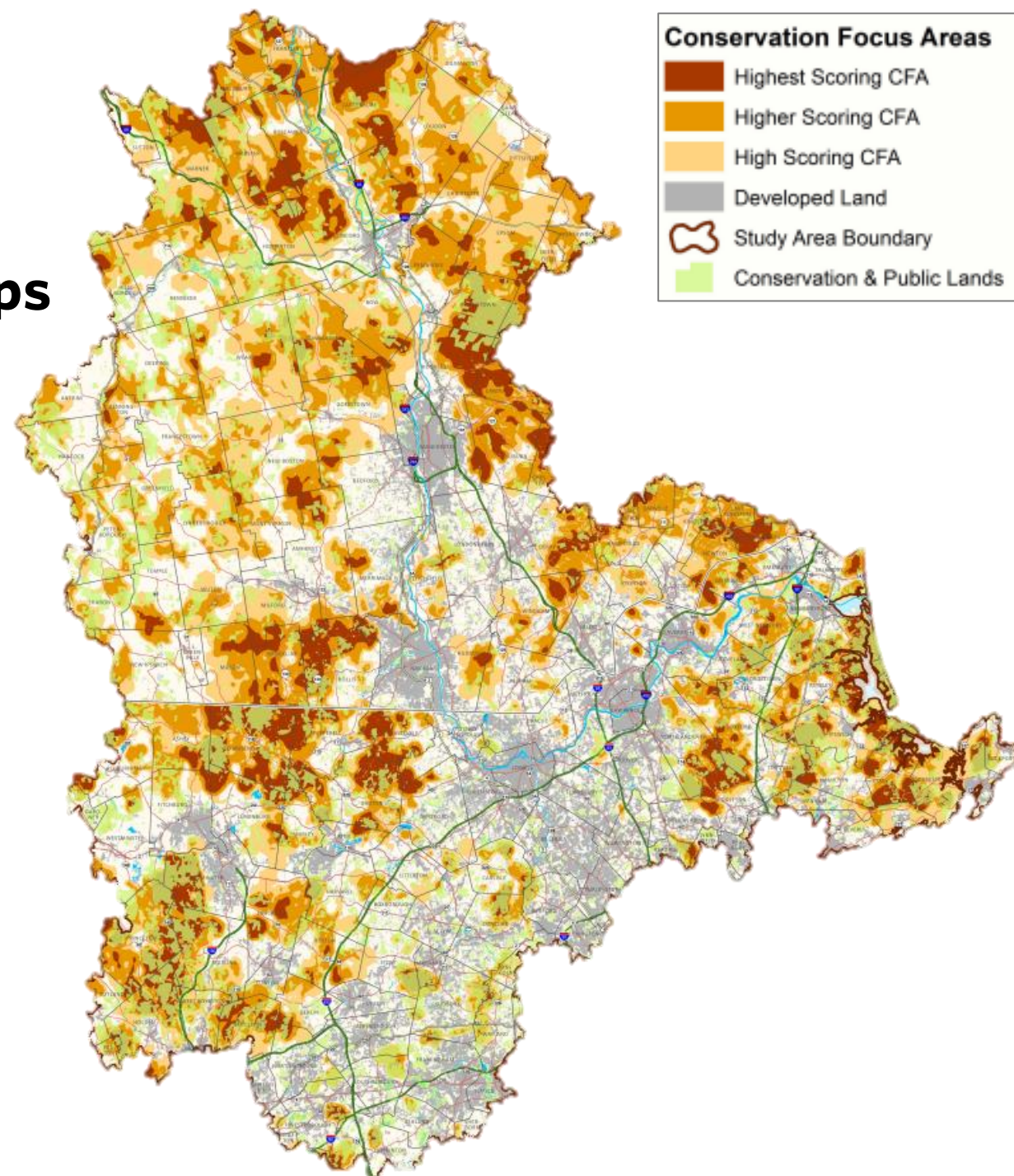
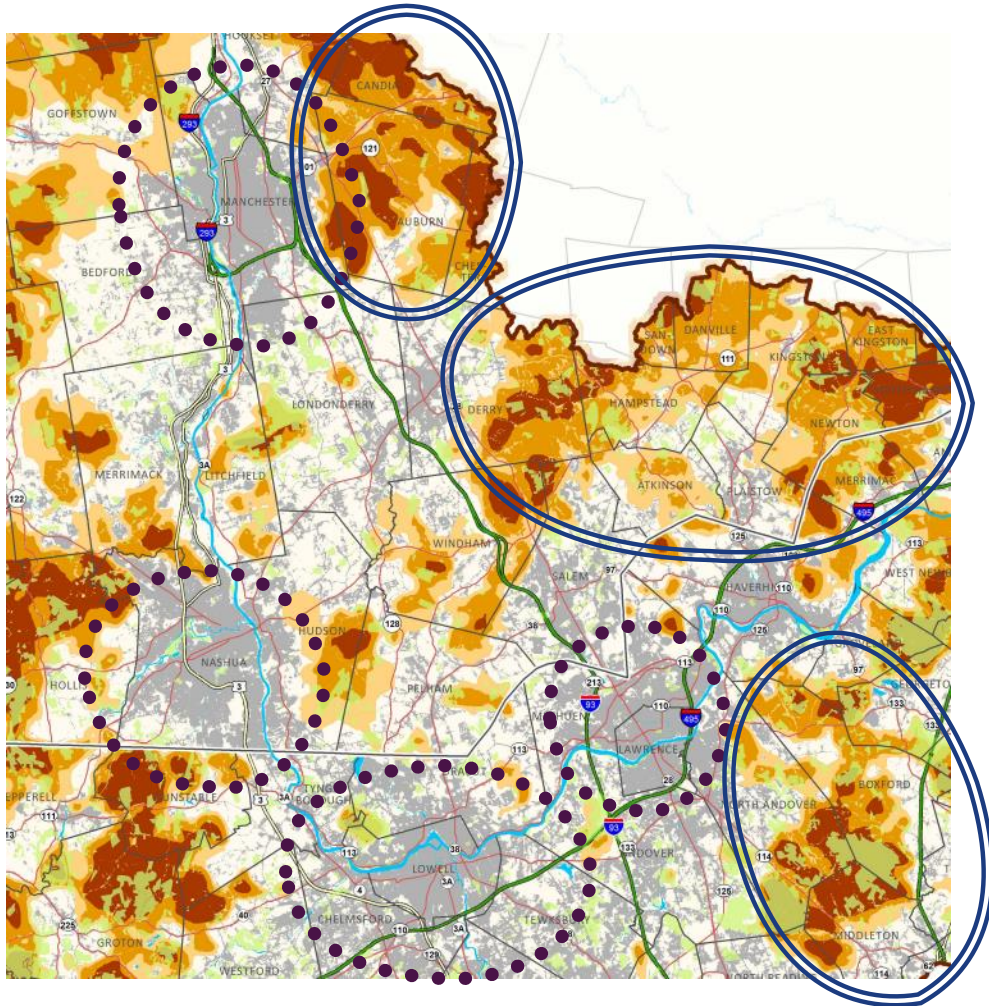
## Overall Goals for the Updated Plan

Develop a conservation plan for the Merrimack Watershed which is inclusive, community-centered, and equitable.

- **Multiple benefits**
- **Meaningful engagement**
- **Focusing on equity, community needs and priorities**
  - Prioritize projects in disadvantaged and burdened communities
  - Use input from community engagement to add, inform and amplify priorities
  - Use CJEST Data to amplify priorities within disadvantaged and burdened communities
- **More than a map**

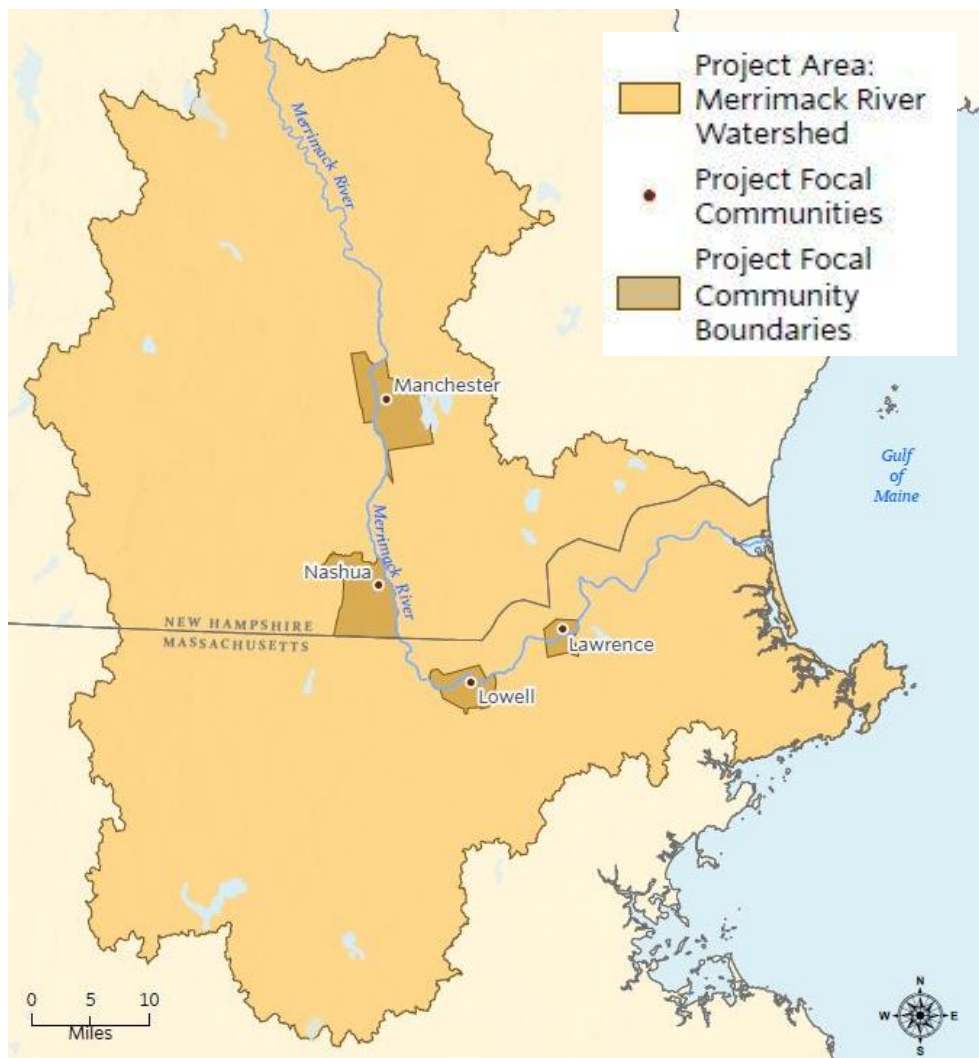
# Updating the 2014 Plan

Keeping what works & filling in the gaps





# Conservation Targets for All Communities



## Wildlife Habitat & Connectivity

Habitats, resilient and connected lands, WAP, wildlife corridors

## Working Lands

Farms & forests management

## Water Resources

Drinking water, surface water, water quantity

## Community Climate Resilience

Flood risk reduction, heat island relief, recreation & access to green space

# Learning from Communities: Manchester

## Community Engagement Meetings

- Planning Department
- Parks Department
- Environmental Protection Division
- Conservation Commission
- NAACP Manchester – Environmental and Justice Committee

## Emerging Themes

- Stormwater management
- Combined sewer overflow abatement
- Increase access and recreation along river corridors
- Increase street trees and green space
- Improve existing parks & green space



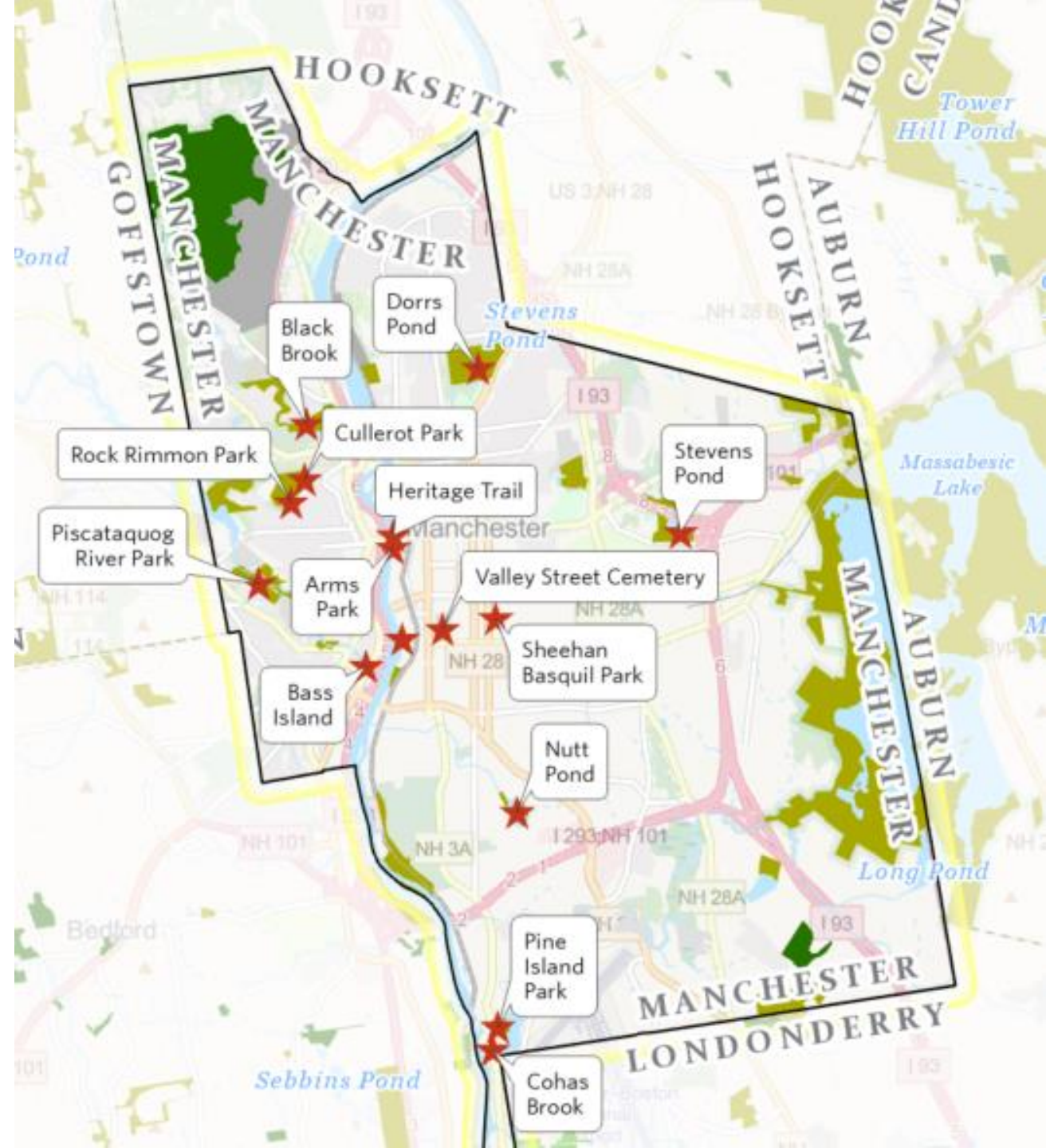
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# Learning from Communities: Manchester

## Points of Interest Identified

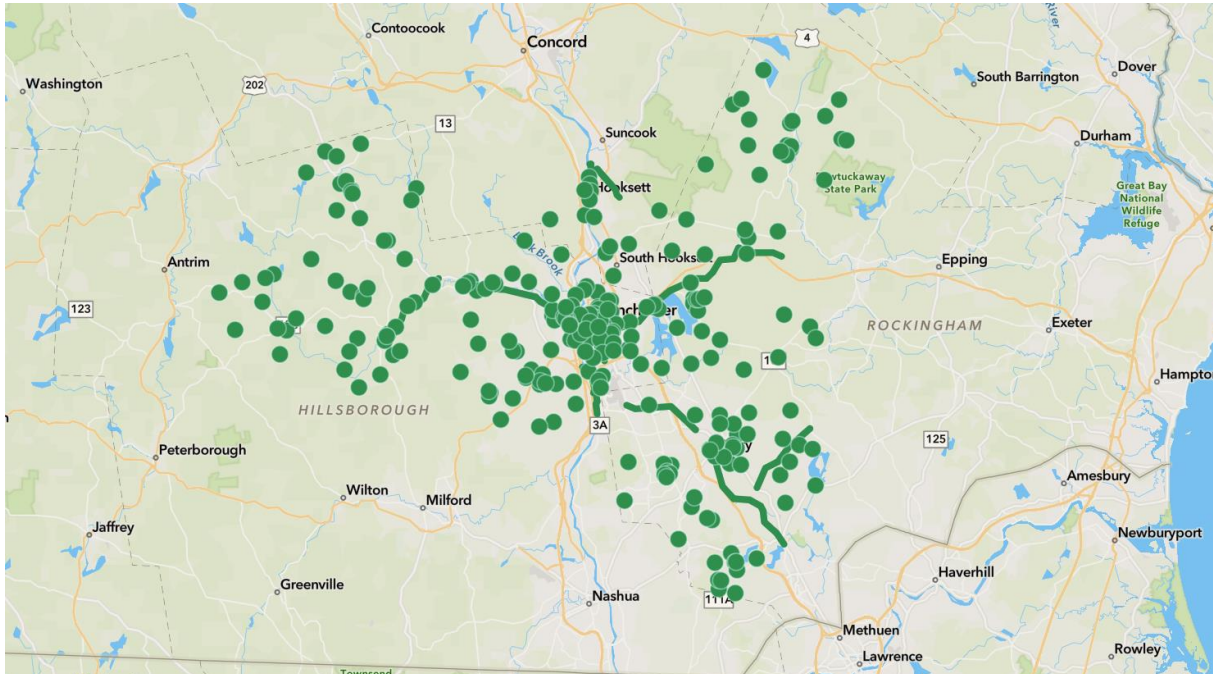
- Urban Ponds
- Cohas Brook
- Black Brook
- Bass Island
- Cemetery Brook
- Piscataquog River Park
- Valley Street Cemetery
- Arms Park
- Rock Rimmon Park
- Cullerot Park
- Sheehan Basquil Park
- Pine Island Park
- Heritage Trail
- Others???



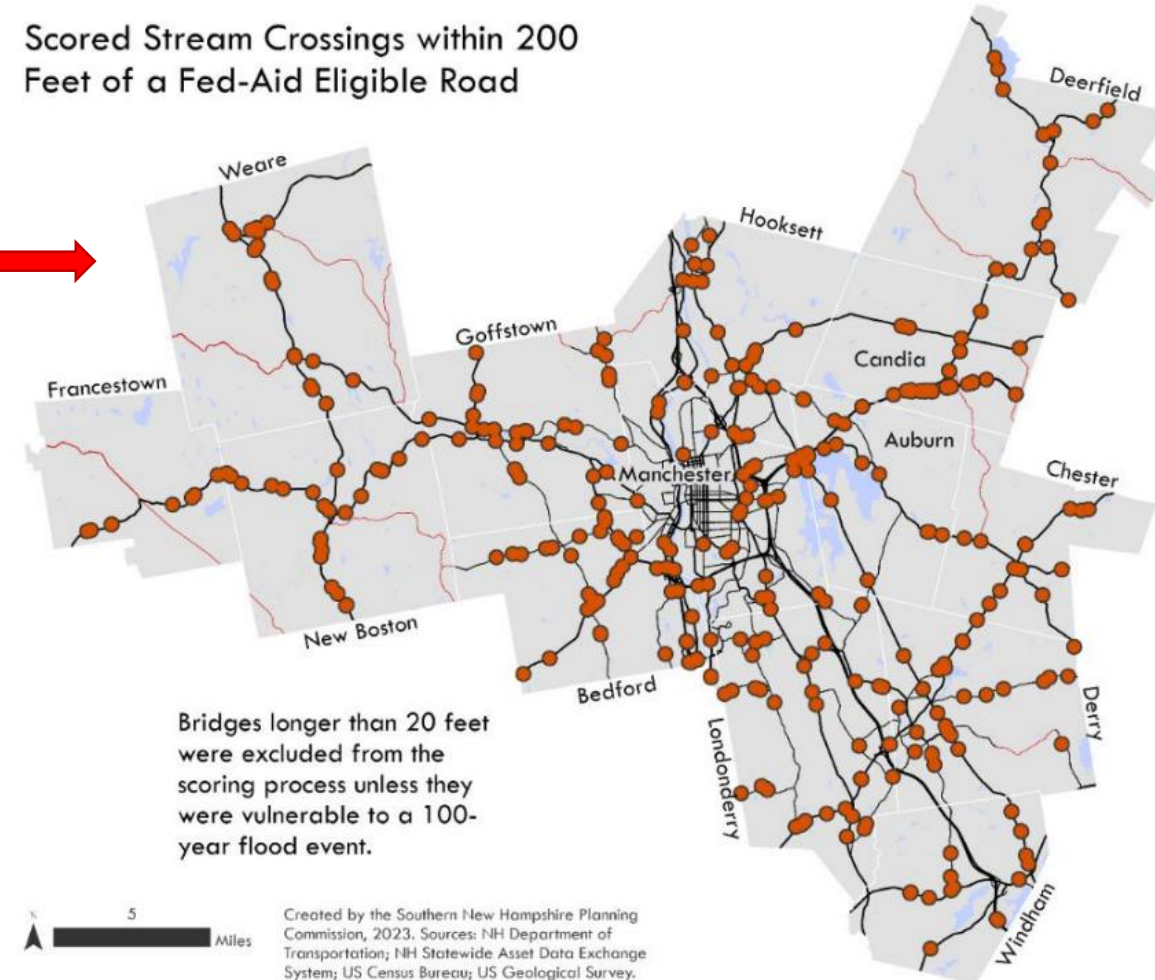
# Learning from Communities: Manchester

## Resources Identified

- Master Plan (2021)
- Natural Resources Inventory (2021)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (2018)
- Climate Action Toolkit – Roadway Adaptations (2023)
- Pathways to Play – Recreation Map (2023)



Scored Stream Crossings within 200 Feet of a Fed-Aid Eligible Road





# What's Next?



Winter

## Spatial Methodologies

"How do these priorities fit together? What's missing?"



Spring

## Draft spatial plan

"How do these maps land in communities?"



Summer

## Updated spatial plans

"How can these maps create change in communities?"

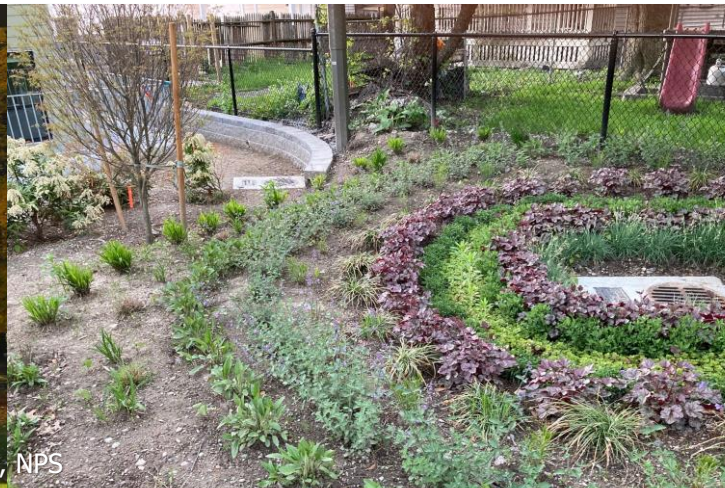
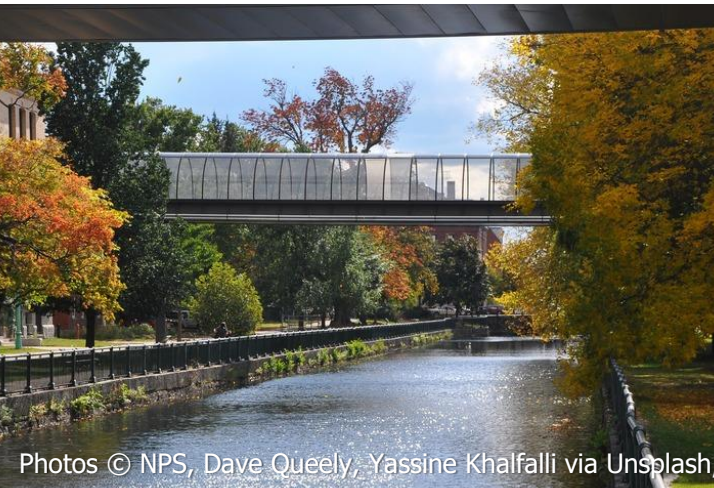


Fall & Beyond

## Implement

"How do we turn this plan into reality?"

## Vision for the Merrimack Watershed:



# Thank you! Questions?

## Contact information

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# Discussion Questions

- What questions or comments do you have about this plan and our approach?
- What existing planning resources should we know about – we want to BUILD on existing work!
- How might communities in this region use the plan? What would make it more useful to them?