

Blackstone Watershed Collaborative

Stefanie Covino
Program Manager
scovino@clarku.edu



Blackstone Watershed
Collaborative

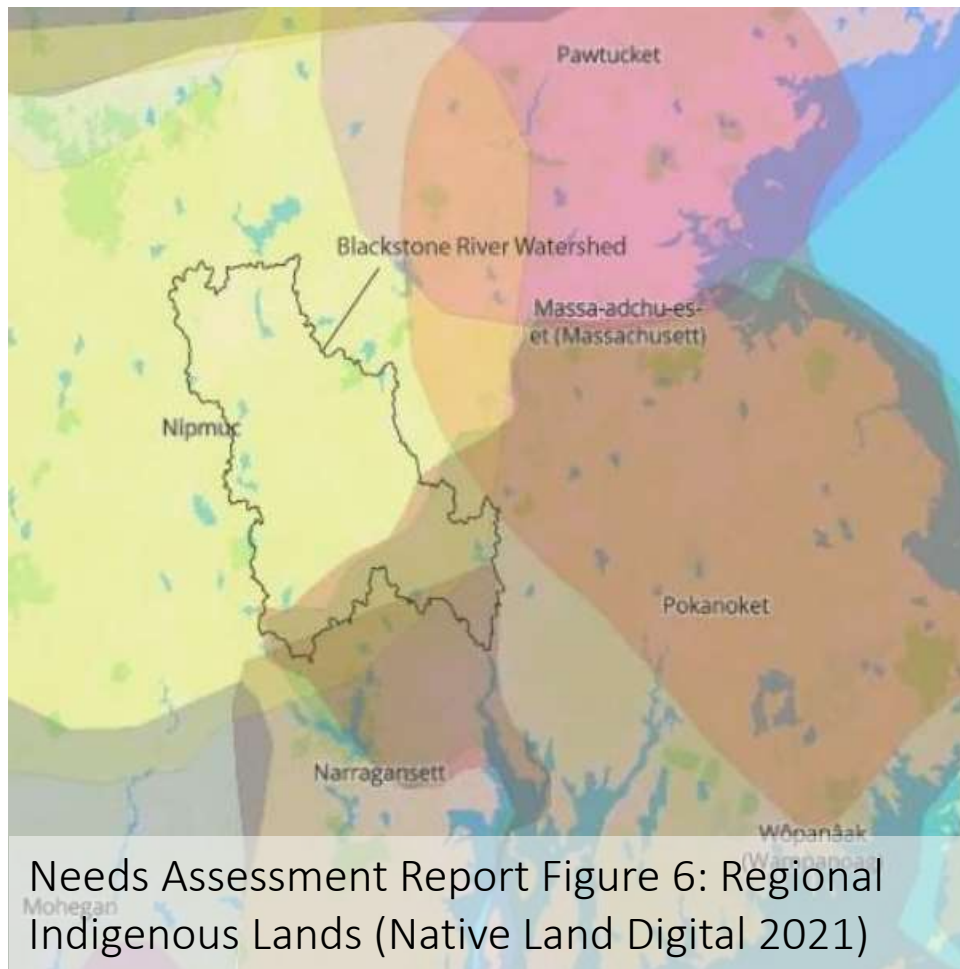
Blackstone Watershed


- 48 miles long
- Drops 438'
- 475 square miles
- 39 communities
- 2 states



Indigenous Land

- [Nipmuc Nation](#)
- [Pokanoket Nation](#)
- [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Narragansett Indian Tribe](#)



Linked! 



Centuries of careful land stewardship with close ties to the river

Industrial revolution & transformation

“America’s hardest working river”

“America’s most polluted river”

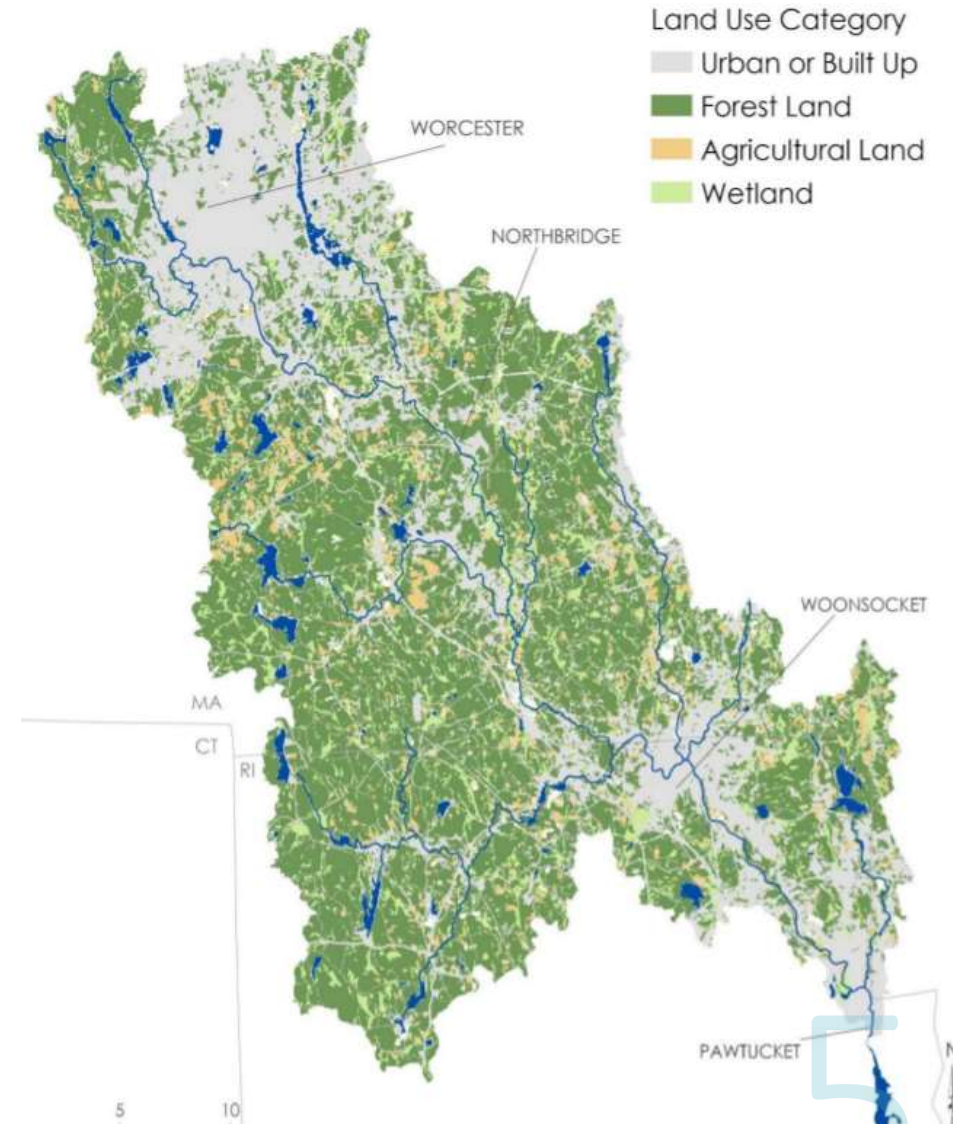
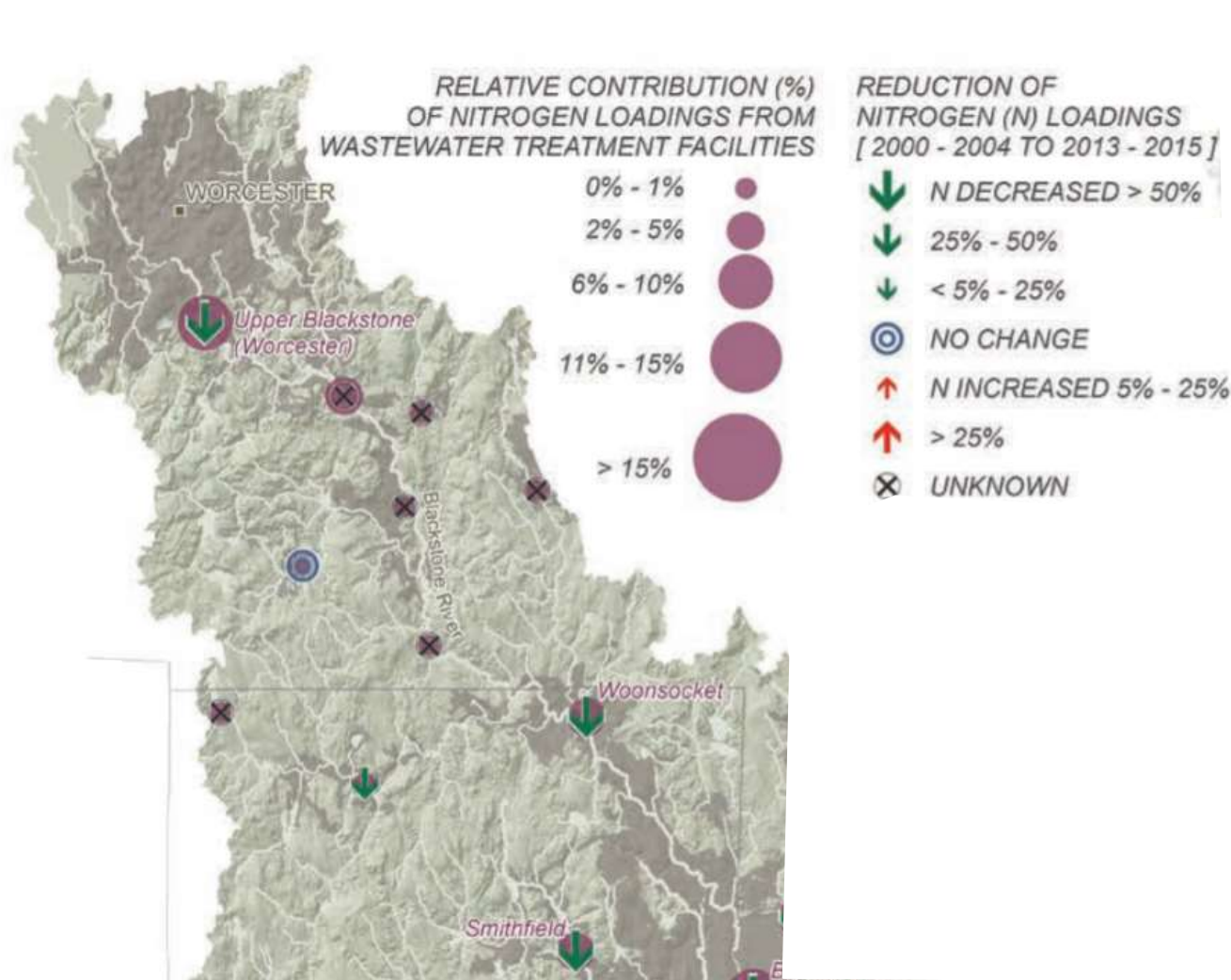


Slater Mill, America's first water-powered cotton-spinning mill in Pawtucket, RI (c.1790)



A portion of the Blackstone Canal – created from and near the River to transport goods through 49 locks

While the water has gotten cleaner



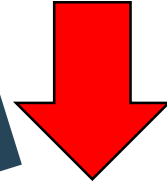
Reductions in Nitrogen Loading

...current challenges are growing

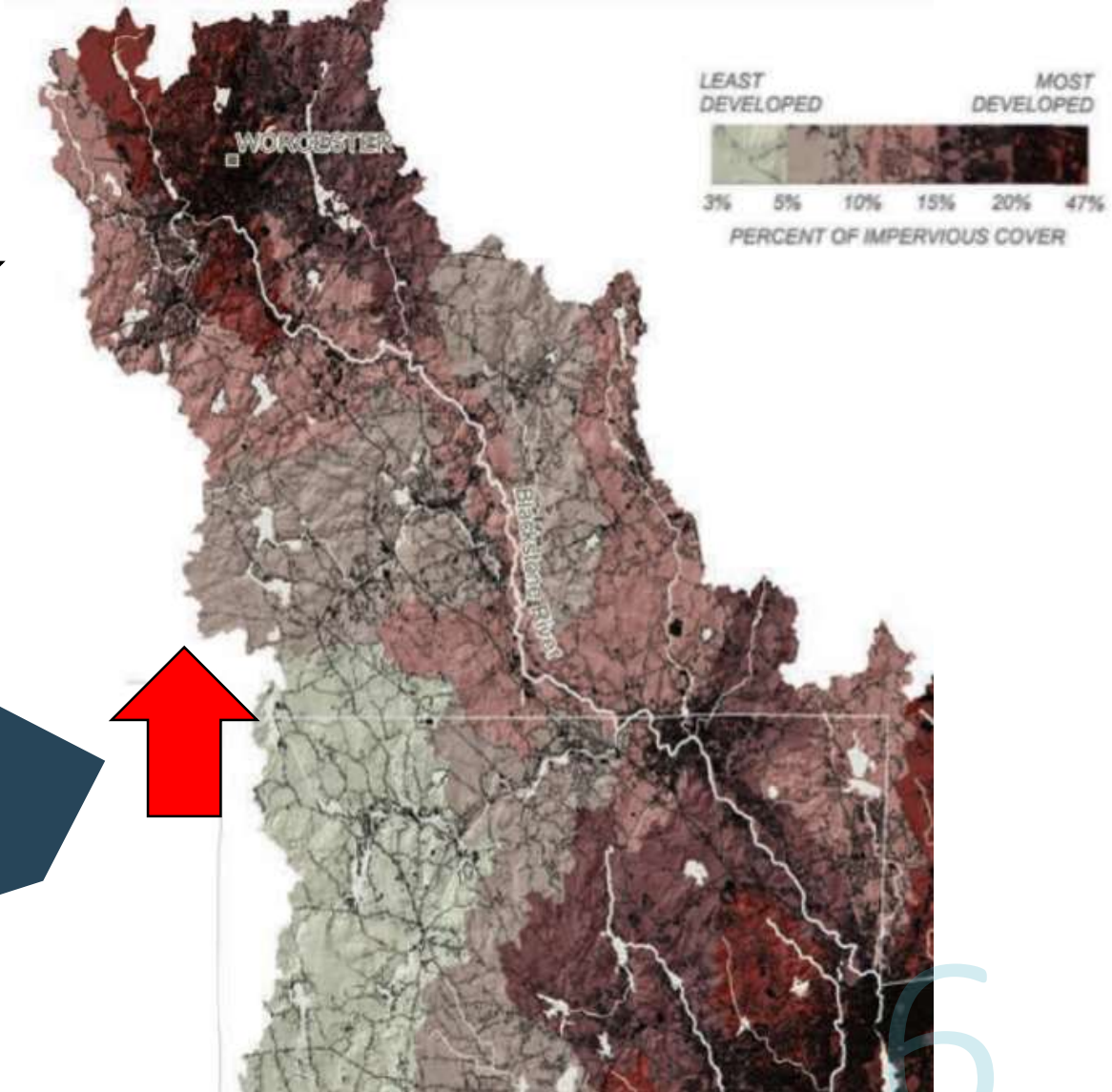
WATER QUALITY CONDITIONS FOR AQUATIC LIFE



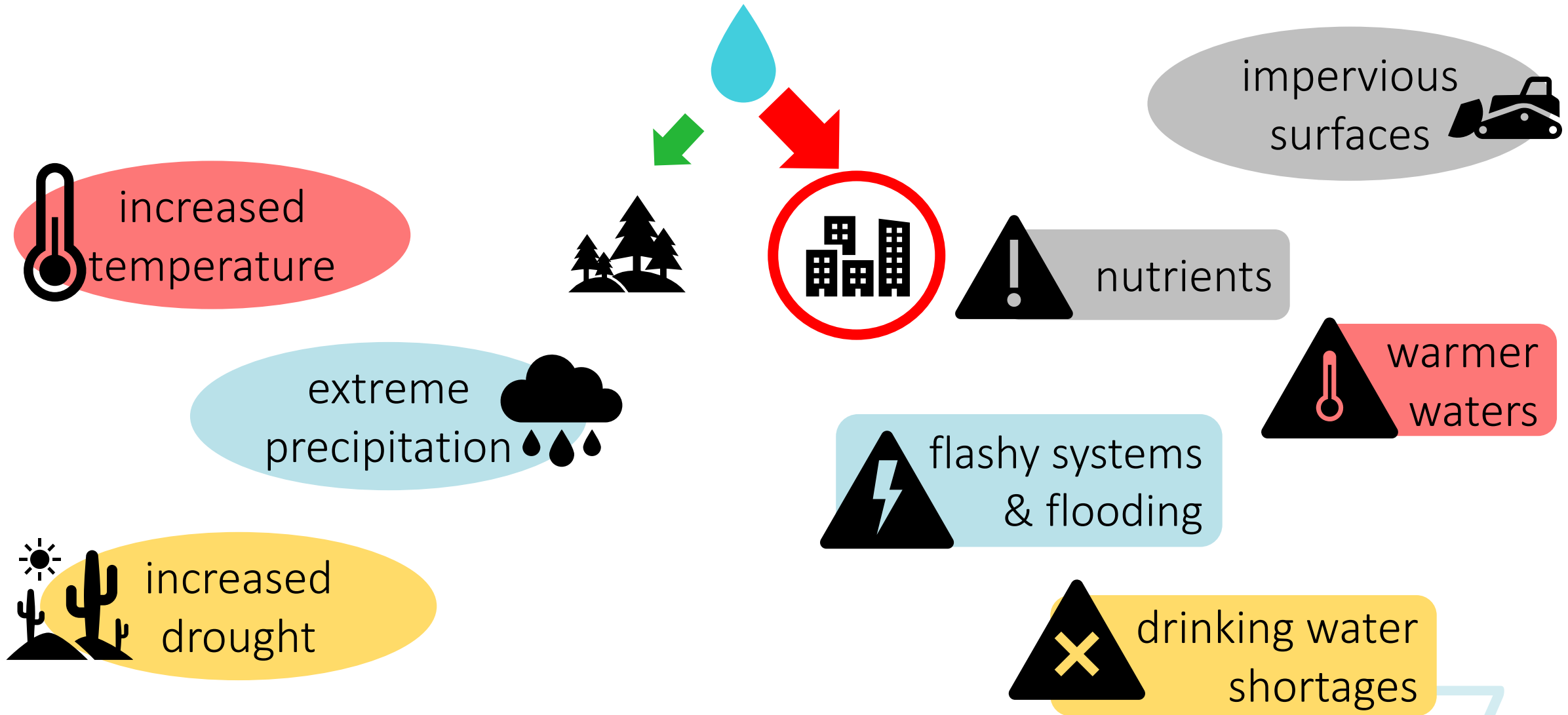
Water quality



Impervious surfaces

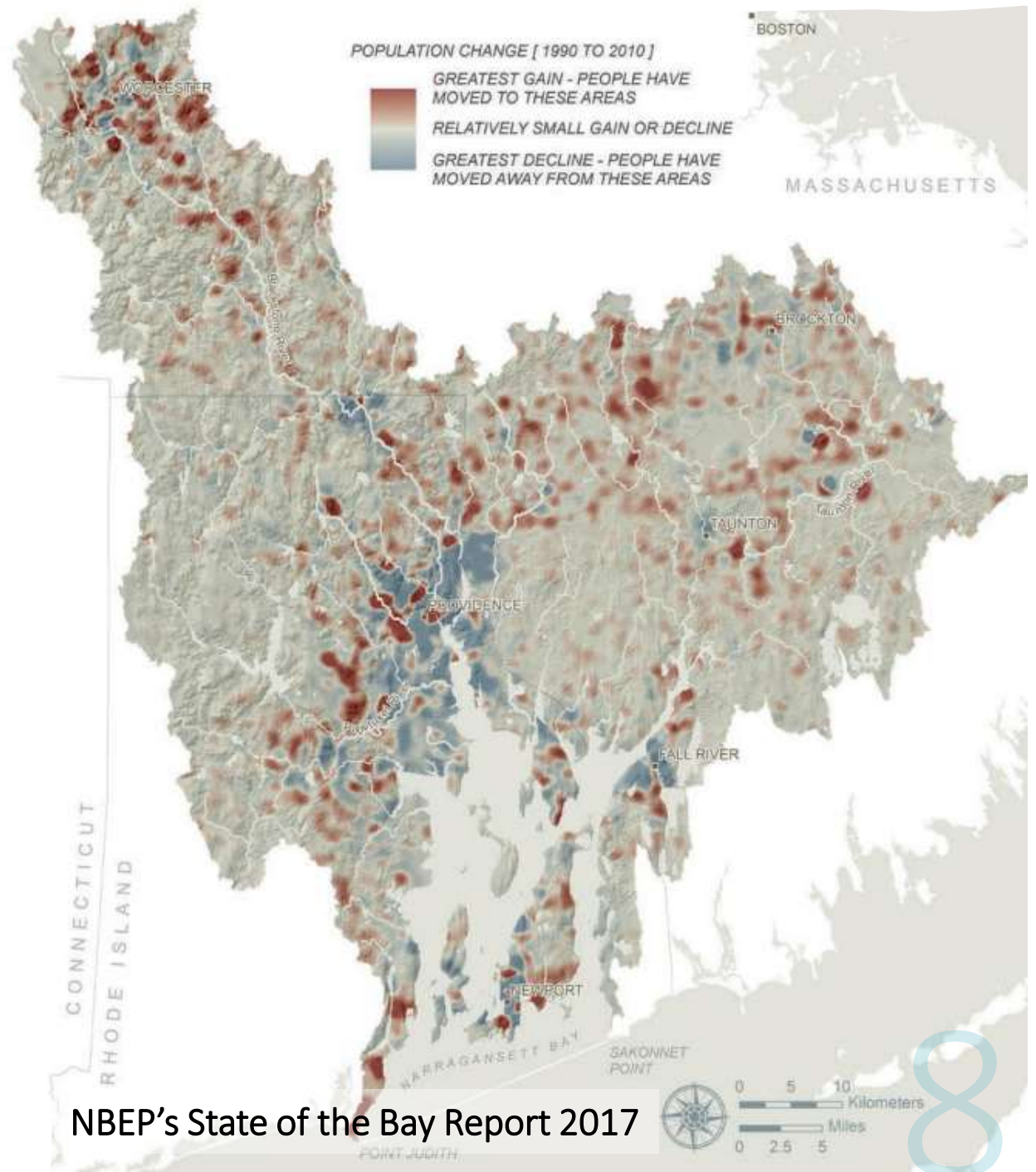


...climate change exacerbates impacts

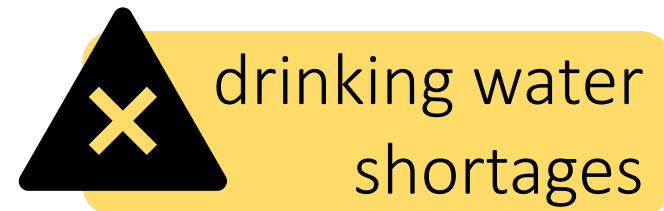
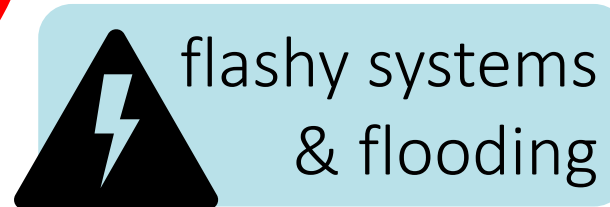


...and populations are still expanding

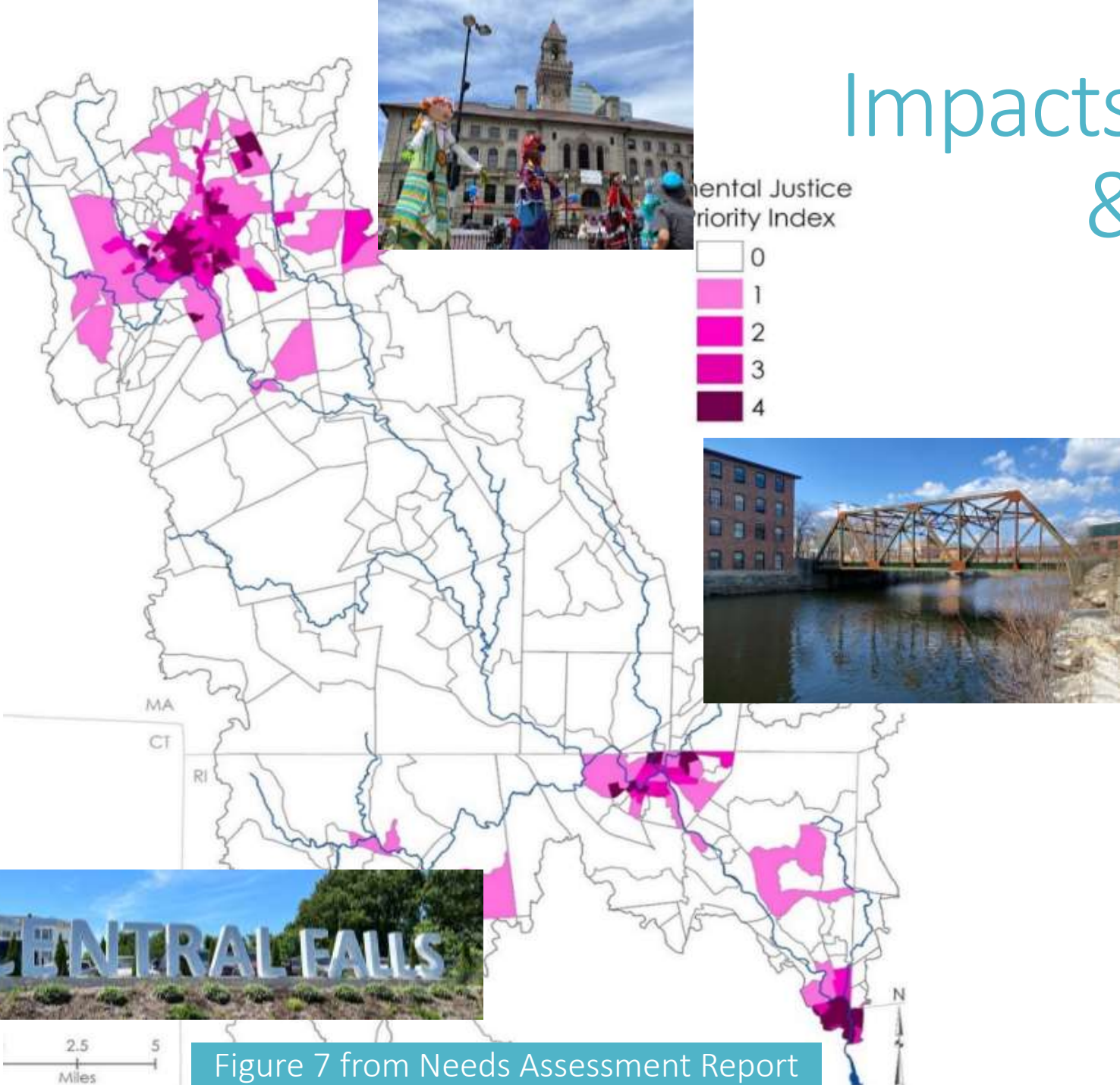
- ▶ 2020 Census: Worcester is fastest growing city in New England
- ▶ Watershed is in the sprawl frontier ([Losing Ground](#))
- ▶ Population gains throughout urban and rural



Healthy communities depend on a healthy watershed



Impacts are compounded & not felt equitably

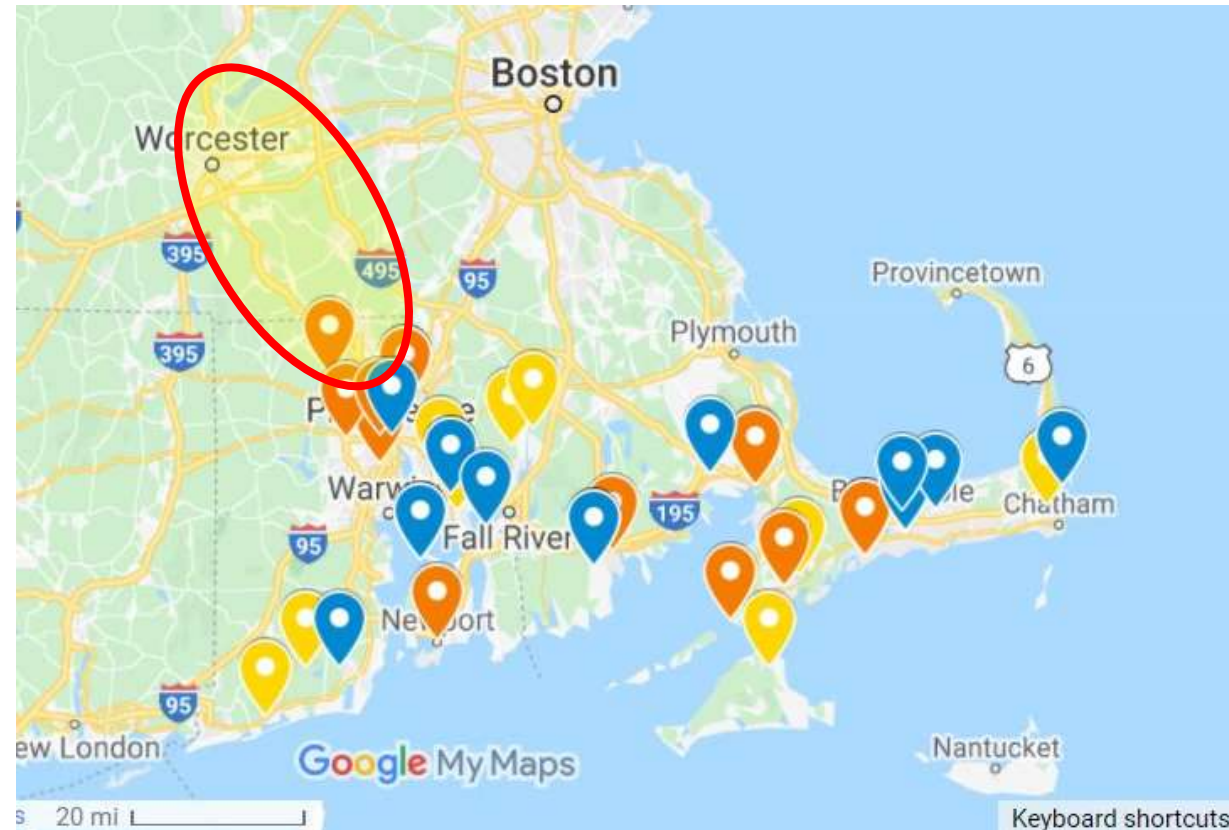


- ▶ Heat islands
- ▶ Tree cover
- ▶ Asthma rates
- ▶ Flooding impacts
- ▶ Water quality

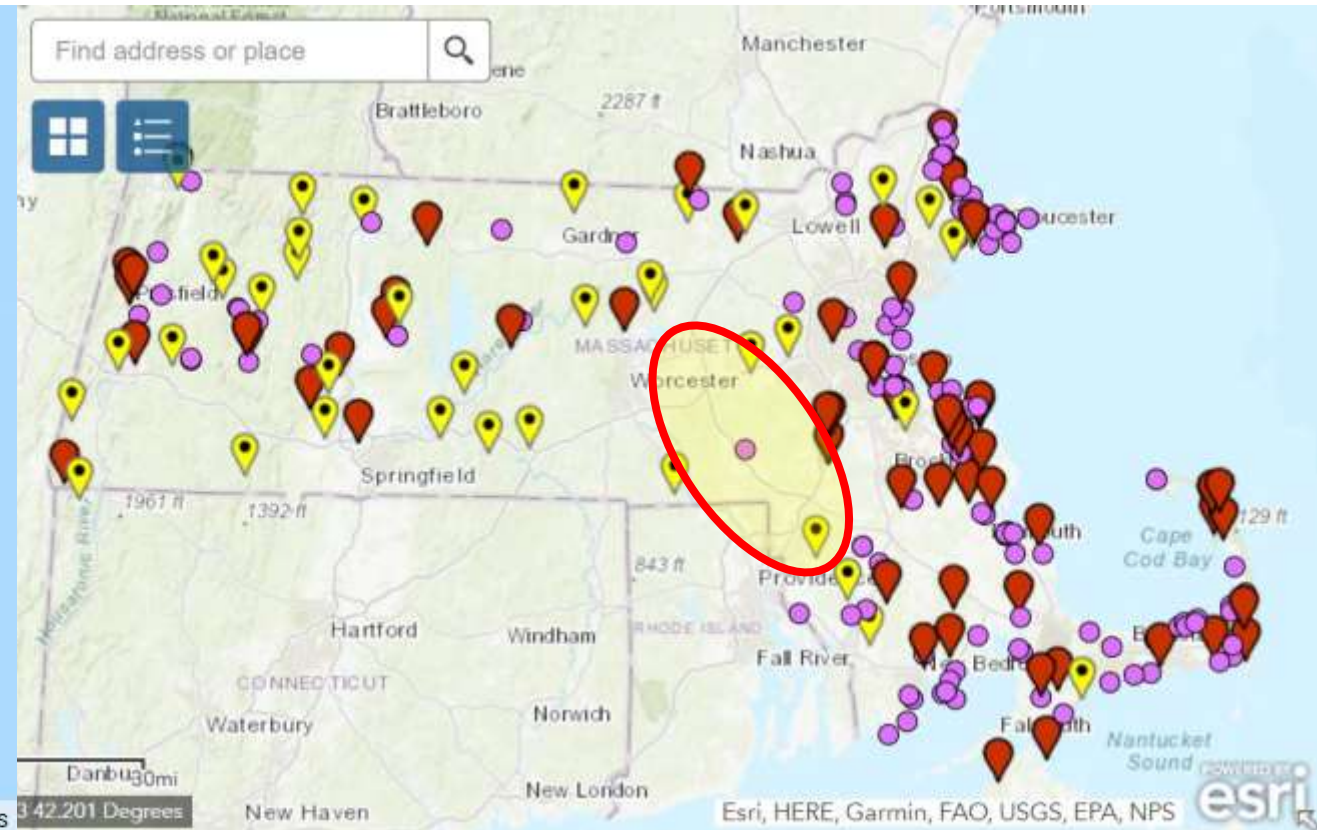
Figure 7 from Needs Assessment Report

EJ Mapping tool: <https://tinyurl.com/4mb7mfkz>

Historic lack of participation/representation in funding and projects

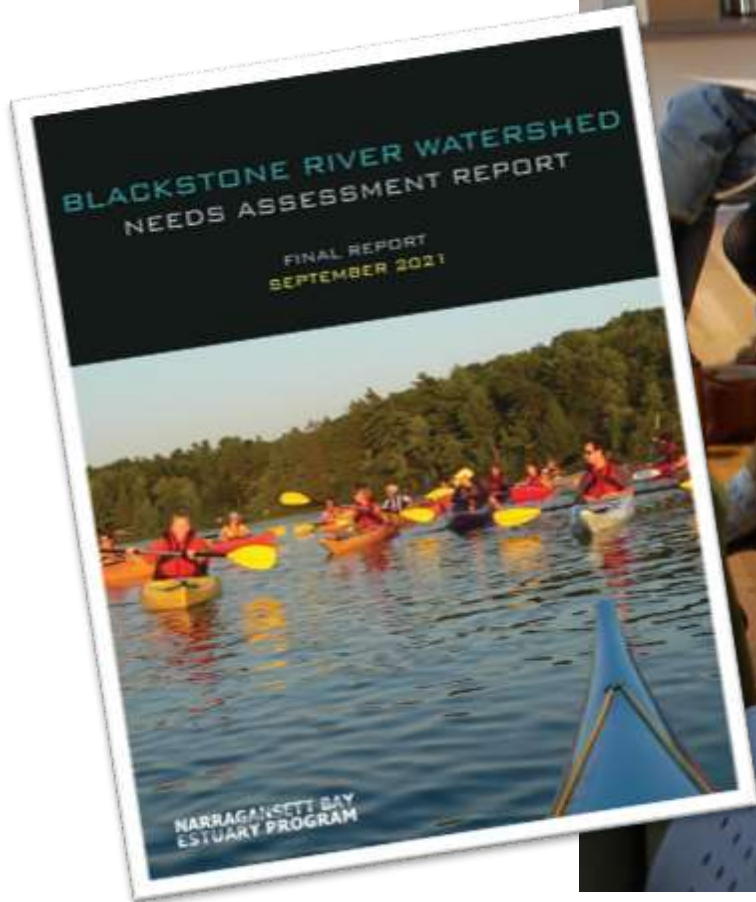


<https://estuaries.org/snepgrantprogram/map/>



<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/the-division-of-ecological-restoration-project-map>

“How can we help?”



NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

- 2 years
- 8 meetings
- 140 people
- 40 organizations
- 11 govt agencies

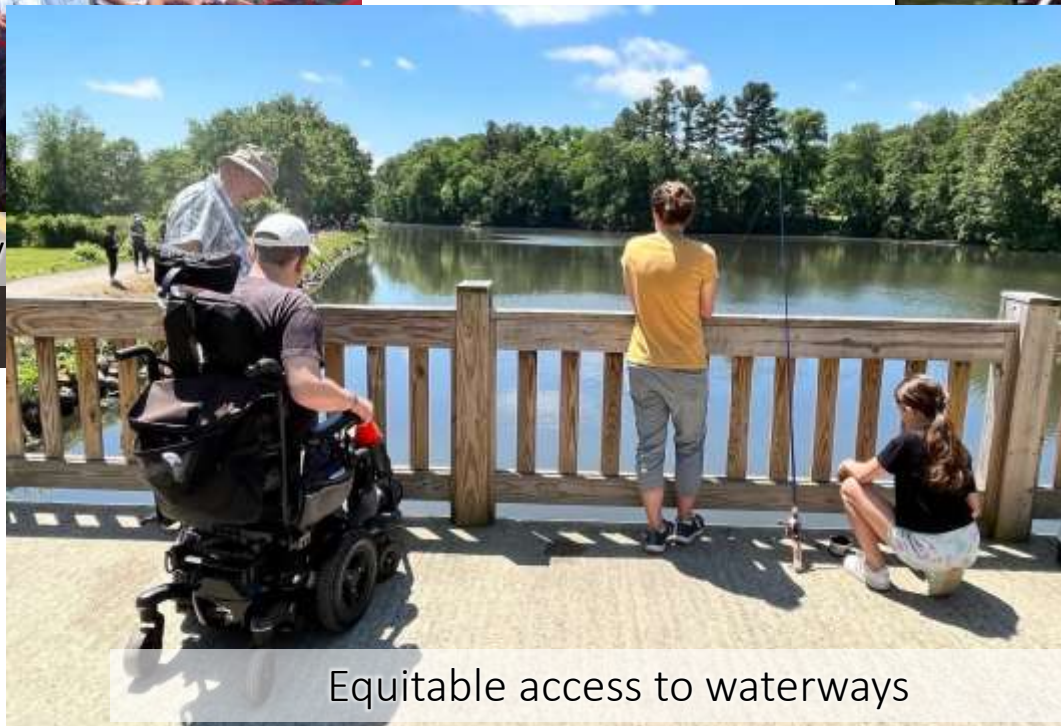
A Shared Watershed with Shared Goals



Expanding the bike/greenway



Water chestnut management



Equitable access to waterways

A Shared Watershed with Shared Goals



Green jobs program for maintenance



Maximizing effectiveness of long-term monitoring programs



Culvert replacement

Working together to achieve more



Blackstone Canal, looking toward the Stanley Woolen Mill

- Fill in **capacity** gaps
- **Prioritize** projects
- Provide technical **assistance**
- Regional **funding** & grant mgmt
- Unified **messaging**
- **Centralized** place to meet & share
- Celebrating **successes**

Blackstone Commons

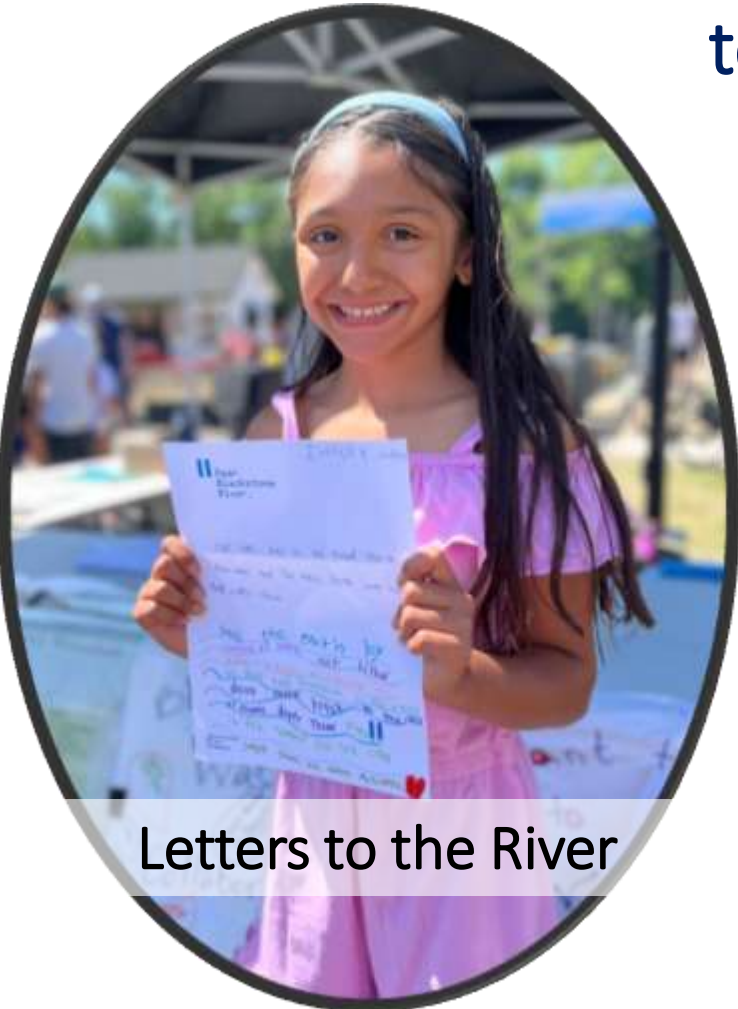
The Blackstone River is a commons - a resource shared by the community, to be kept open and protected for future generations.



BLACKSTONE RIVER
WATERSHED COUNCIL
Friends of the Blackstone



16



Letters to the River



Paddle: August 11-14, 2022

Representing our watershed

▶ CMRPC [Imagine 2050](#) Steering Committee



▶ [MassECAN](#) Nature Based Solutions



▶ MA Statewide [Climate Change Assessment](#) Working Group

▶ [NBEP](#) Steering Committee

**NARRAGANSETT BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**





- Started 2014
- Formed after grant brought groups together
- 42 muni & 560 sq mi
- Hosted by RPA
- Meets monthly
- 0-1 staff
- Comprised of NGO, muni, FP
- No formal board



- Started 2018
- Formed when munis needed to work x-boundary
- 21 munis & 76 sq mi
- 600,000 people
- Hosted by NGO
- Several FT staff
- Munis only
- Formal structure



- Started 2021
- Formed after Report ID'ed minimal capacity
- 39 munis & 475 sq mi (2 states)
- Hosted by uni
- 1 FT staff
- 100+ partners
- No formal structure

blackstonecollaborative.org

Thank you!

Stefanie Covino
Blackstone Watershed Collaborative
Program Manager/Research Scientist
scovino@clarku.edu

