

Town of Standish Conservation and Open Space Plan



An Overview of the 'Beginning with Habitat' Data & Maps

(For more information, go to www.beginningwithhabitat.org.)

January 24, 2008



Using the Maps to Conserve Habitat

The 3 primary maps--Water Resources & Riparian Habitats, High Value Plant & Animal Habitats, and Undeveloped Habitat Blocks--form the core of the Beginning with Habitat information.

Water Resources and Riparian Habitat (Map 1)

Conserve the wetlands and land around lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and the coast since up to 80% of Maine's terrestrial vertebrate animals use these areas for a part of their life cycle. Consider this the "backbone" of the plan.

High Value Plant and Animal Habitat (Map 2)

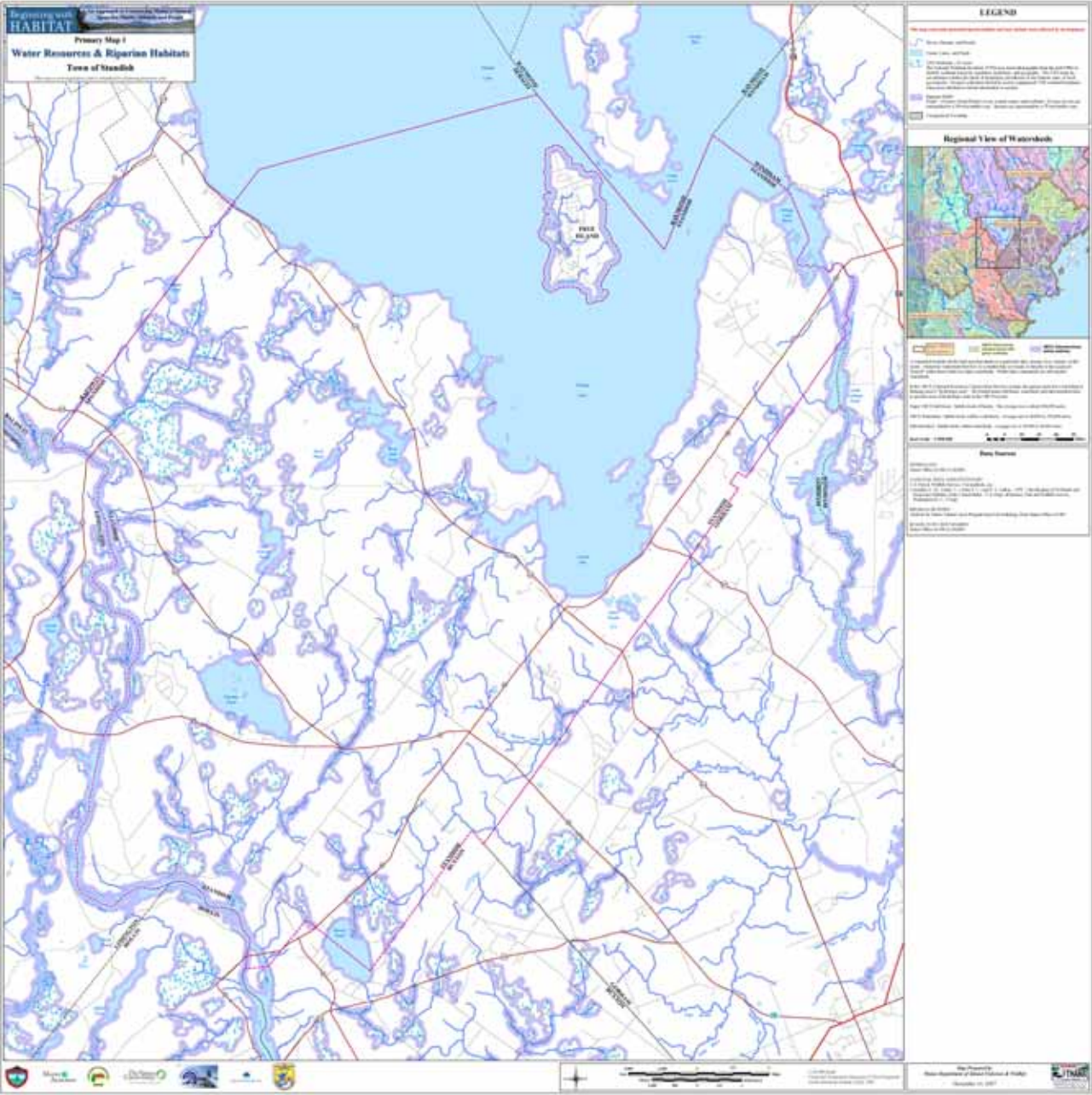
Conserve and direct development away from the most important and sensitive habitats. Data on this map includes locations of exemplary natural communities, rare plants, habitat for threatened and endangered species, species of special concern, Significant Wildlife Habitat, and habitat for federal trust species.

Undeveloped Habitat Blocks (Map 3)

Strive to maintain at least several 250-500 acre blocks of undeveloped land and, where they still exist, at least some 500-1000 and 1000+ blocks of habitat. Towns should work together with neighboring towns to conserve 5000 - 10,000 acre blocks of habitat in their region. Only in such blocks of land will many species find the home ranges they need to breed, travel, and protect themselves.



Map 1 - Water Resources & Riparian Habitats



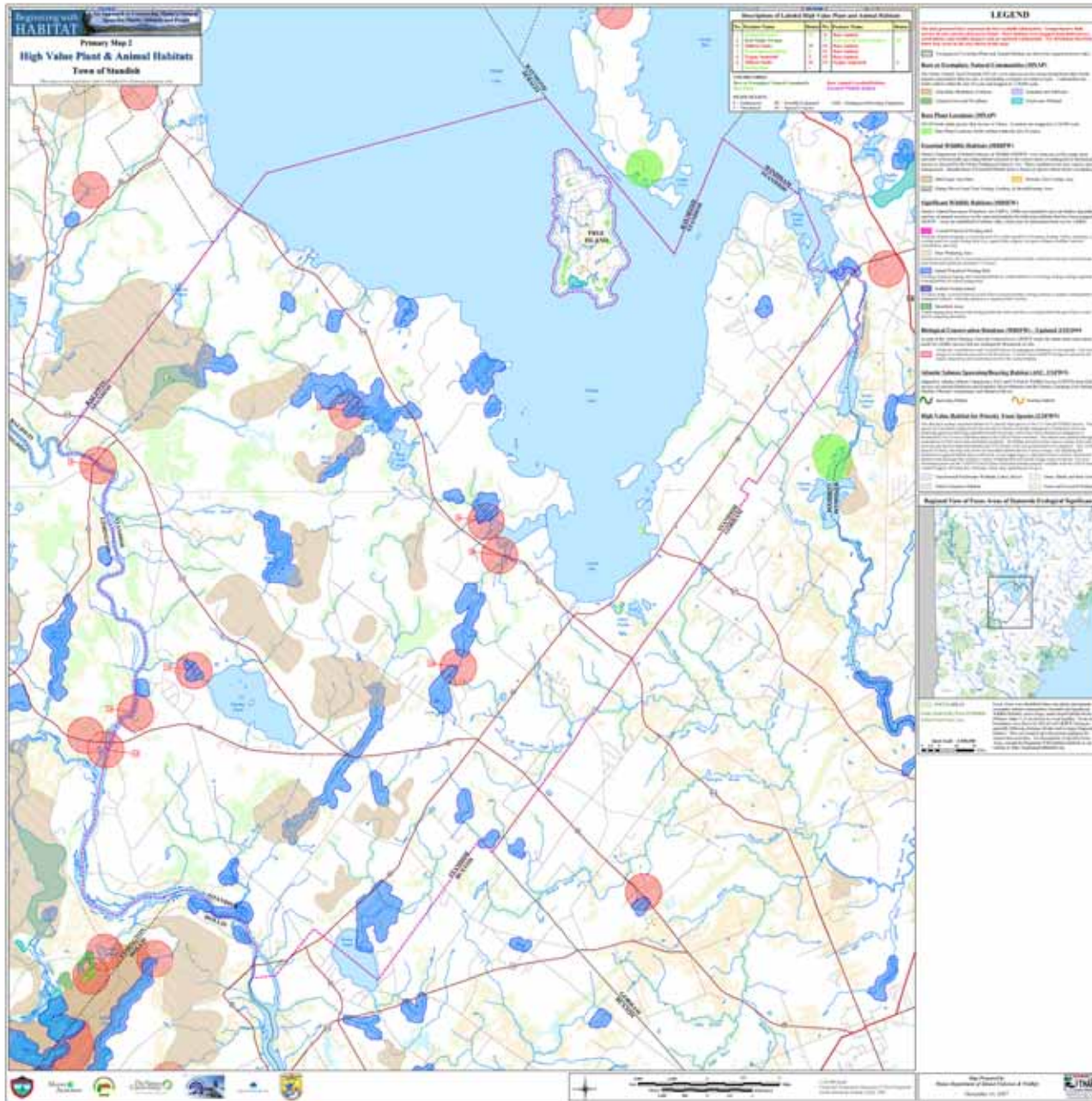
Wetlands include such familiar terms as bogs, marshes, swamps, and salt marshes, but also include lesser known and appreciated forested wetlands and vernal pools.

Riparian habitat is the transitional zone between open water or wetlands and dry or upland habitats. It includes the banks and shores of streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes, and the upland edge of wetlands.

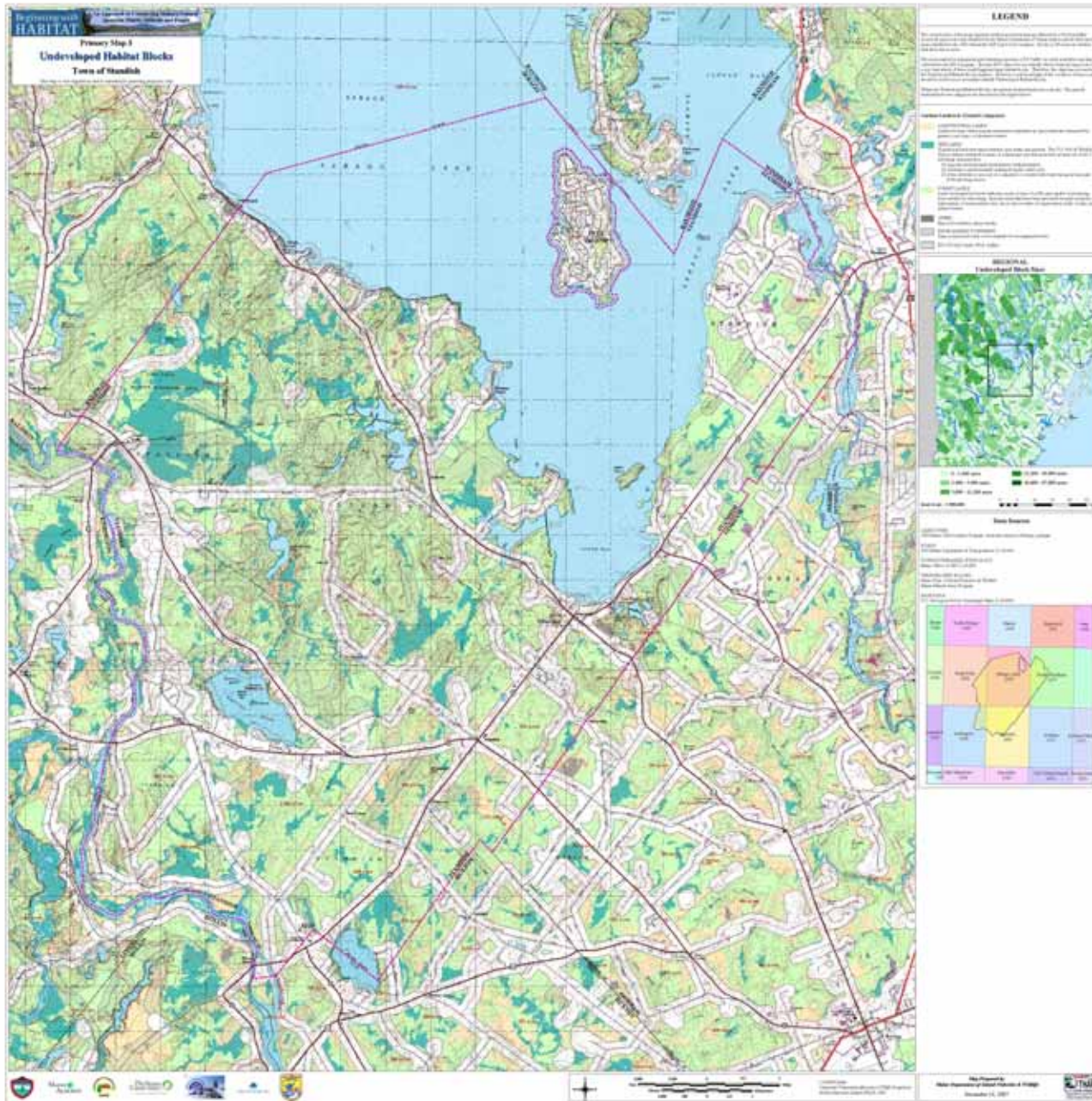
Map 2 - High Value Plant & Animal Habitats

Rare or Exemplary Natural Communities are two broad classes of natural communities recognized as important for conservation: those that are rare and those that are common but in exemplary condition. A **natural community** is a system of interacting plants and their common environment, recurring across the landscape, where the effects of human intervention are minimal.

Rare Plant Locations designate specific points where populations of rare, threatened, and endangered plants have been documented and, for some species, habitat for the respective plants.



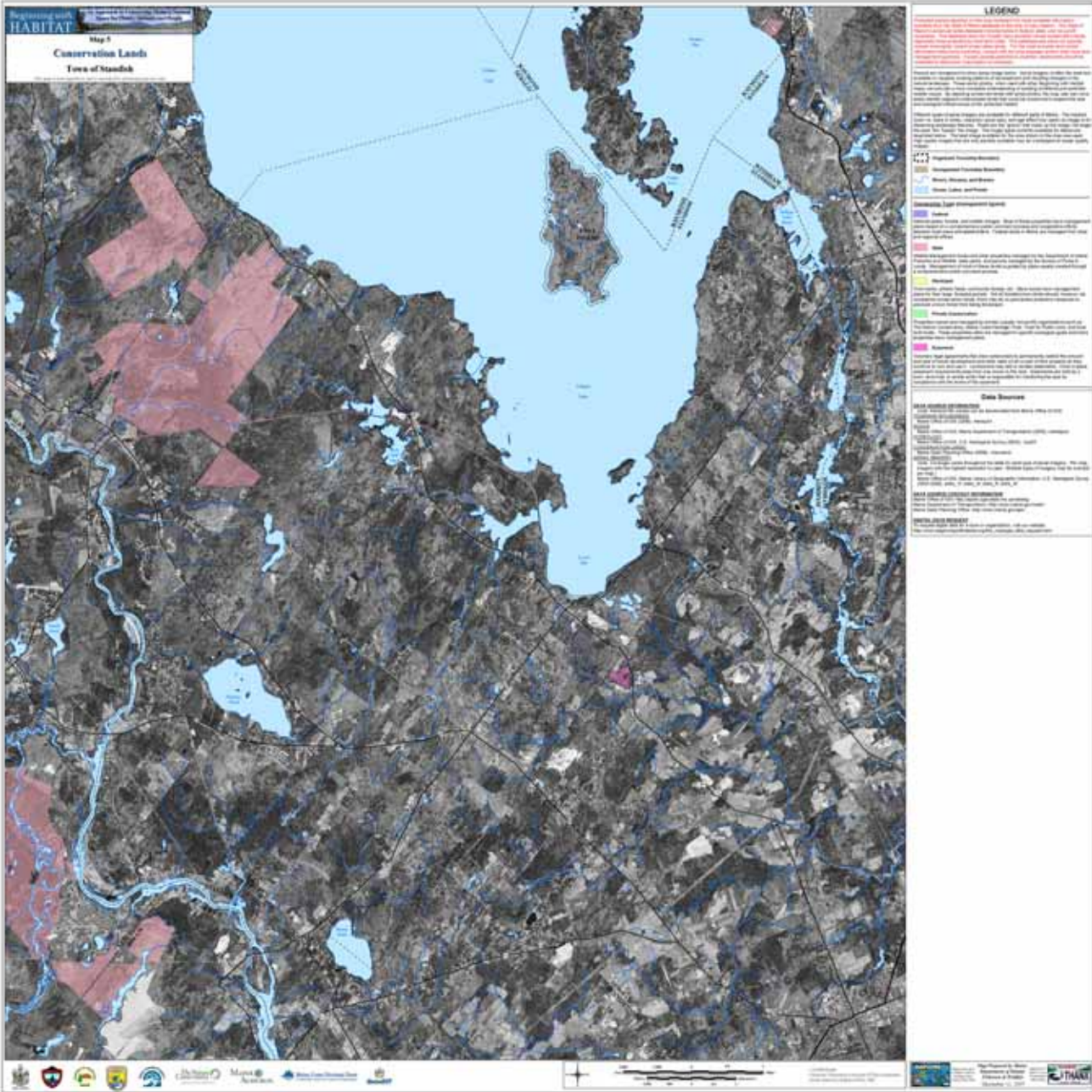
Map 3 - Undeveloped Habitat Blocks



"**Large blocks**" are relatively unbroken areas of habitat that include forest, grassland / agricultural land, and wetlands. "**Unbroken**" means that the habitat is crossed by few roads, and has relatively little development and human habitation.

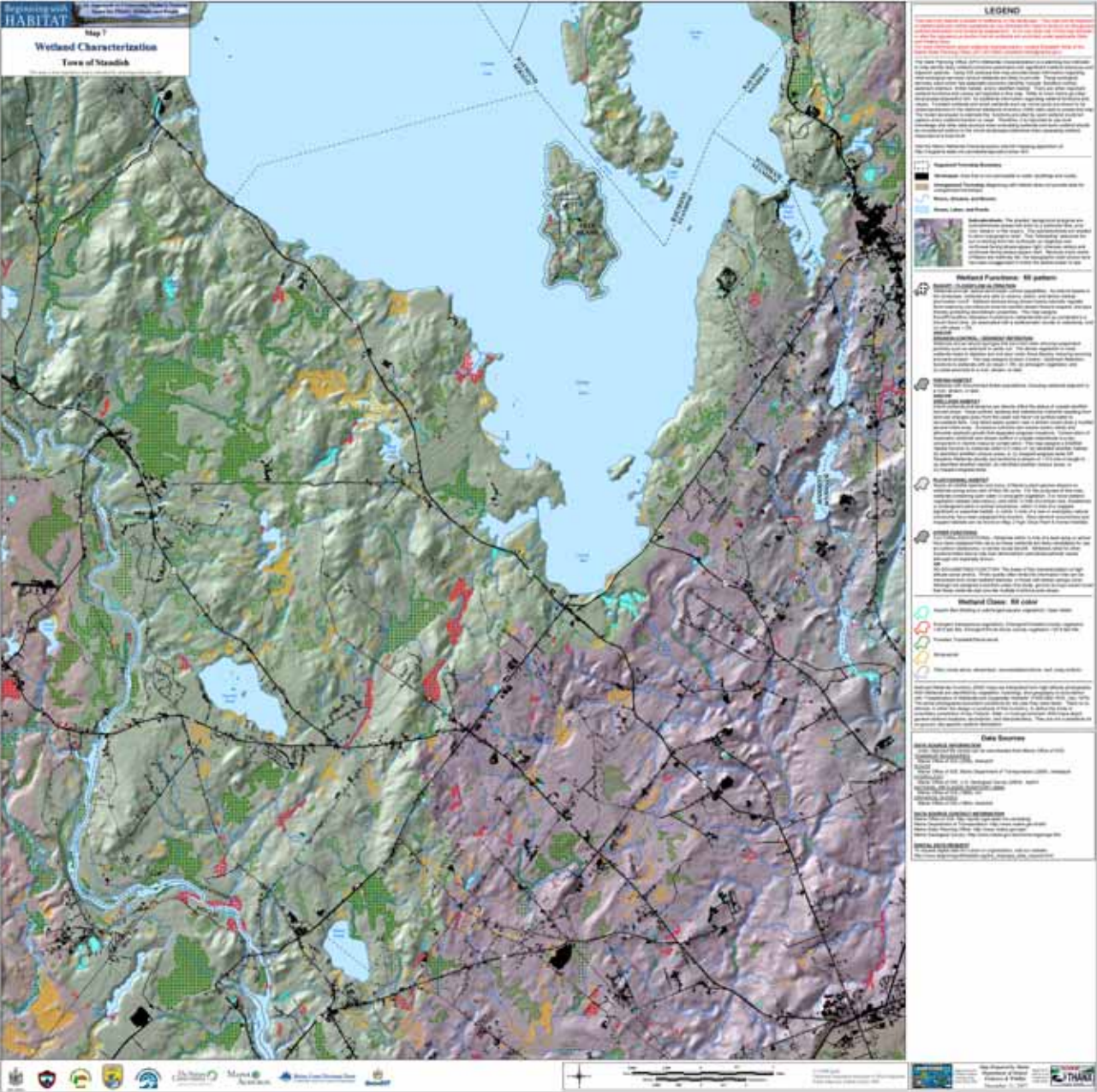
Riparian

Map 5 - Public & Conservation Lands



Town lands may include parks, athletic fields, and town forests. Parcels in **Tree Growth Programs** are privately owned by people who have made a commitment to maintain their forestlands according to approved harvesting and management plans. Parcels in **Farmland and Open Space Incentive Programs**. **Private conservation lands** include land trust holdings and properties owned and managed by private organizations. **Easements** are voluntary legal agreements. **State and Federal Conservation Lands**.

Map 7 - SPO Wetland Characterization

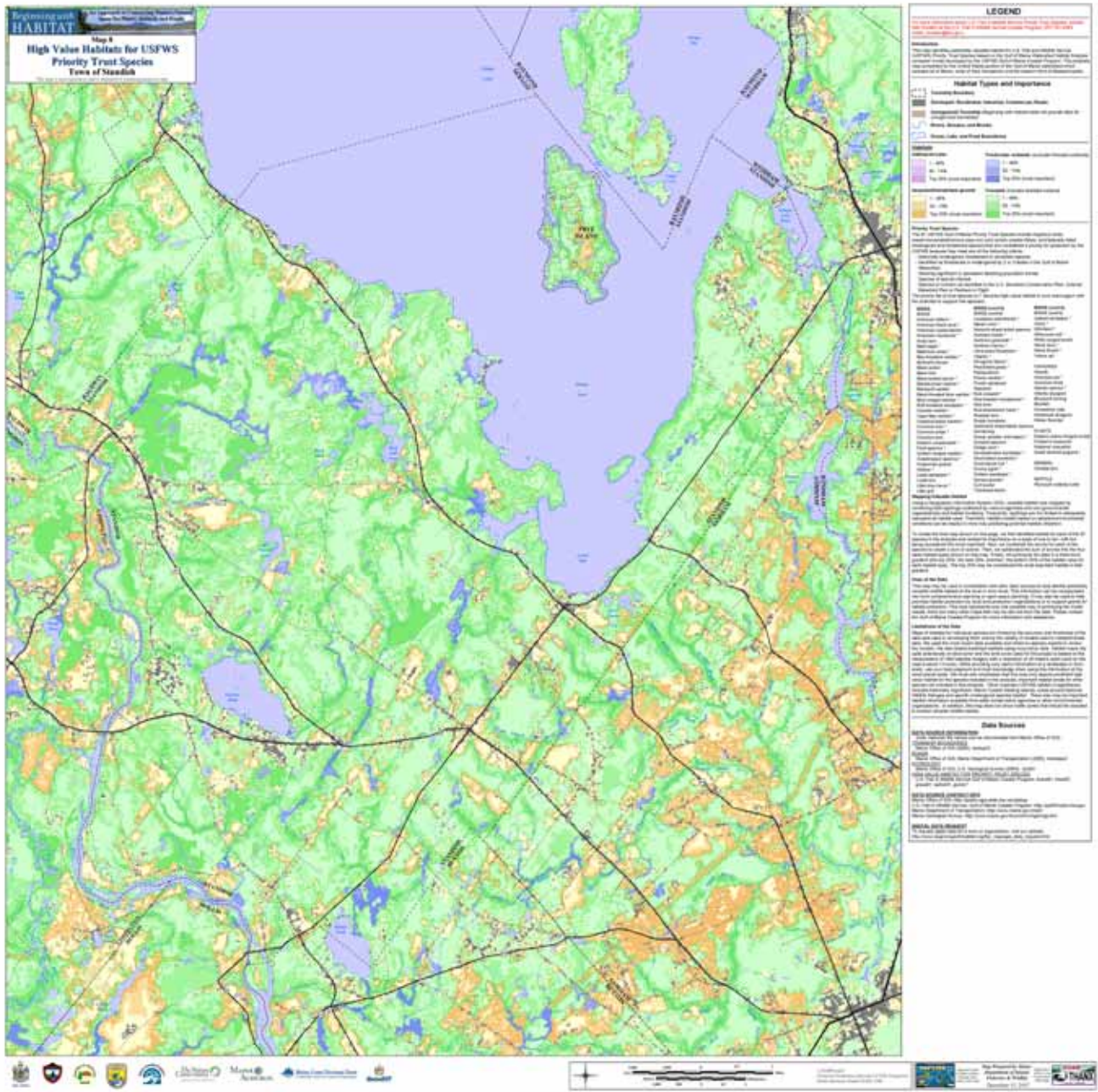


The functions and values assessed by the characterization include a **hydrologic function** (floodflow alteration), a **biogeochemical function** (sediment retention), a **biological function** (plant and animal habitat, finfish habitat and shellfish habitat) and a **cultural value** (education and research).

A wetland that was found to provide **multiple functions** by the characterization may contribute more ecologically than a wetland characterized as providing fewer of the target functions. However, ..., it is important to look beyond the total number of functions identified and consider which individual functions are predicted

...

Source: Beginning with Habitat Website.



Map 8 - High Value Habitats for USFWS Trust Species

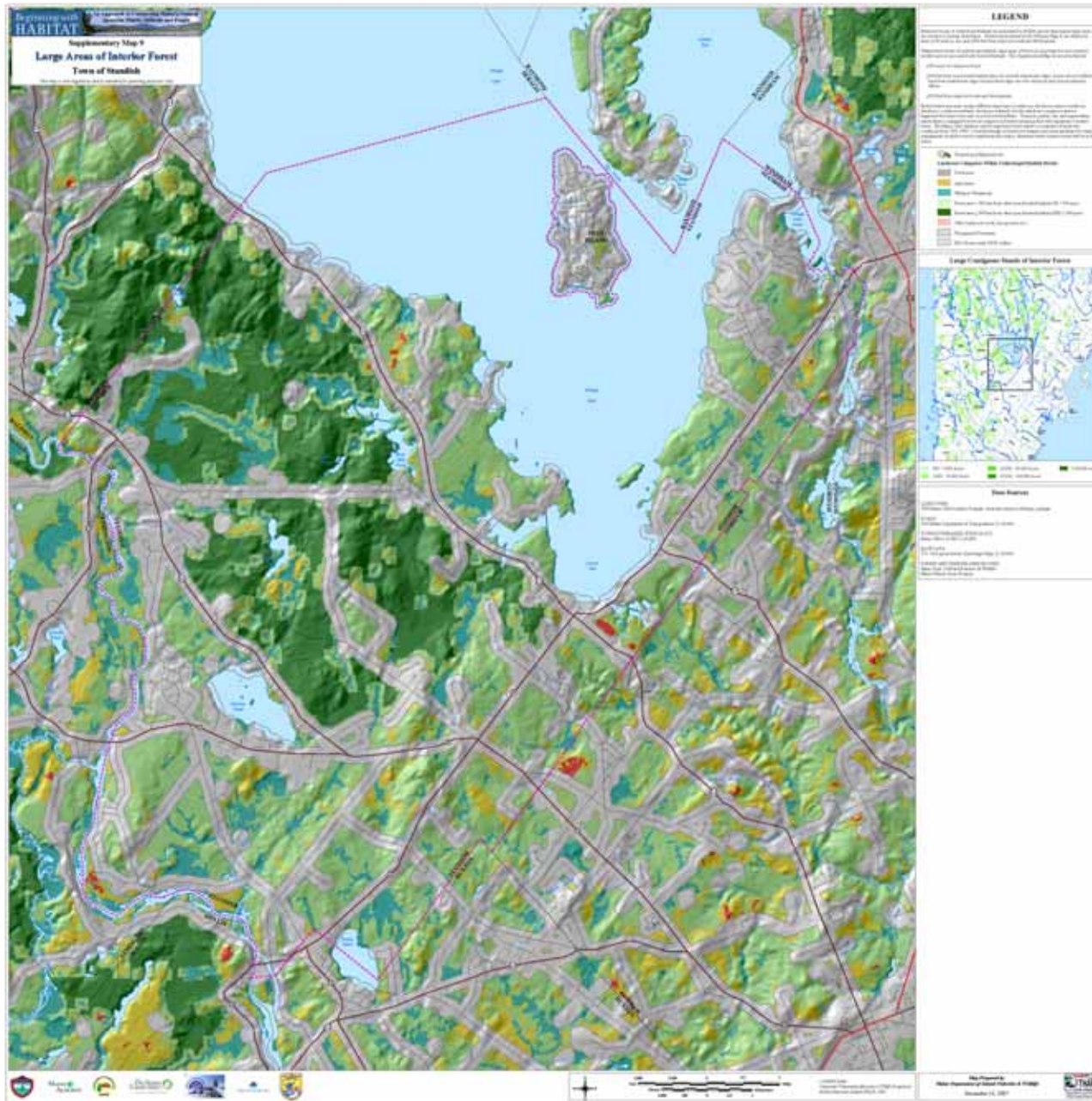
USFWS biologists selected 64 species that regularly inhabit the Gulf of Maine watershed that meet the following criteria: federally **endangered, threatened and candidate species**; migratory birds, anadromous and estuarine fish that are **significantly declining nationwide**; migratory birds, anadromous and estuarine fish that have been **identified as threatened or endangered by two of the three states** ... This ... Map displays important habitat in each of the four basic habitat types: forested habitat, grassland habitat, freshwater wetlands and saltwater wetlands. The **top 25% in each habitat type is considered the most important habitat** ...

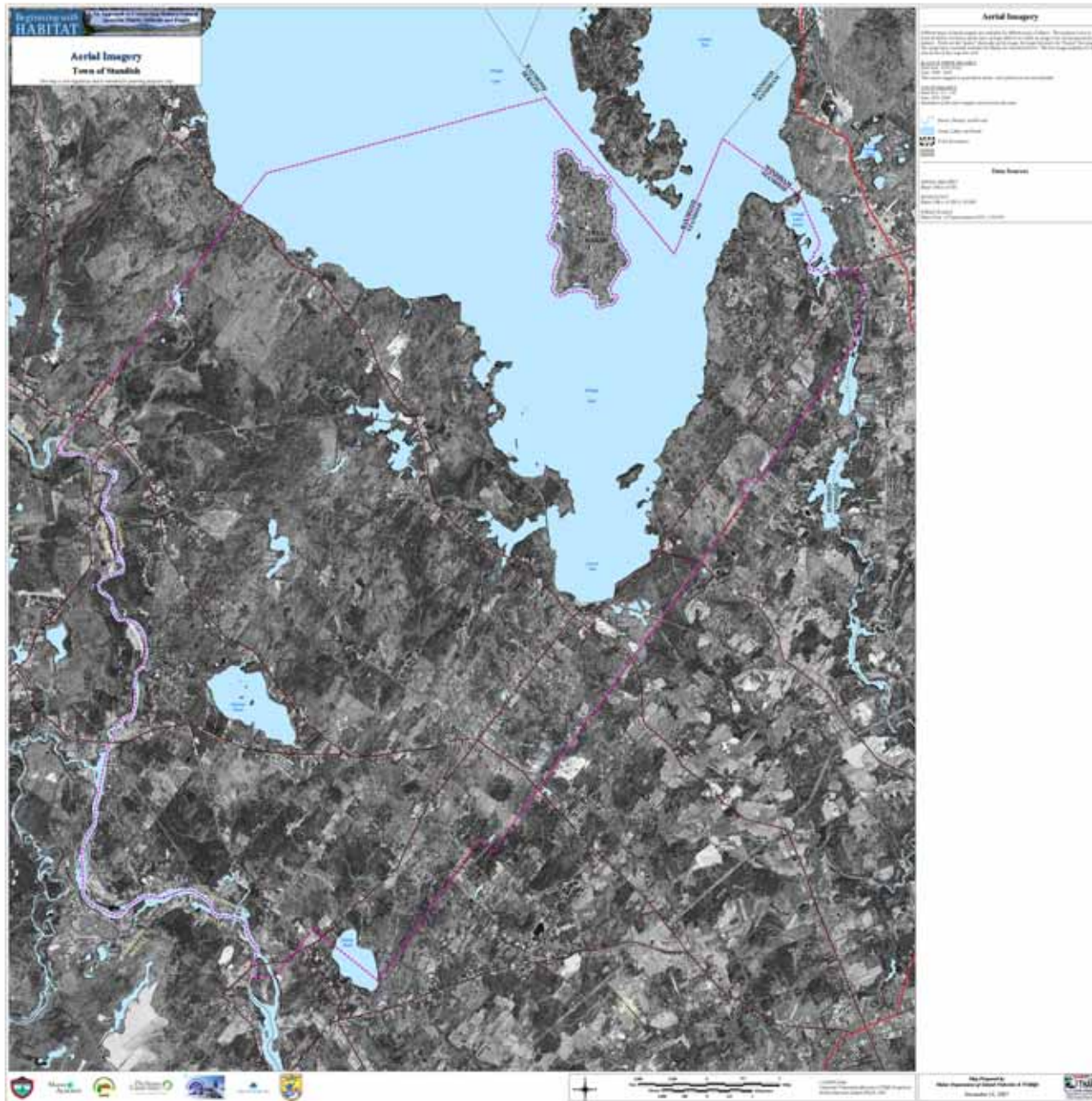
Source: Beginning with Habitat Website.



Map 9 - Large Areas of Interior Forest

The **Large Areas of Interior Forestland** map is intended to supplement the Undeveloped Habitat Blocks map (Primary Map 3). Specifically, this map provides additional information about forestland areas within undeveloped habitat blocks that may be useful for prioritizing conservation efforts. The presence of large areas of interior forest within an undeveloped habitat block enhances its value relative to other undeveloped blocks **for conserving wildlife species that require large areas of forest as part of their home range and for species that are forest interior specialists.**





Aerial Imagery 1998 - 2001

A picture is worth a thousand words - Beginning with Habitat provides a map of aerial imagery to help users relate the points and polygons used to depict observations, habitat patches, and landscape features to the landcover and objects on the ground.