

St. Lawrence Environment Trustee Council (SLETC)

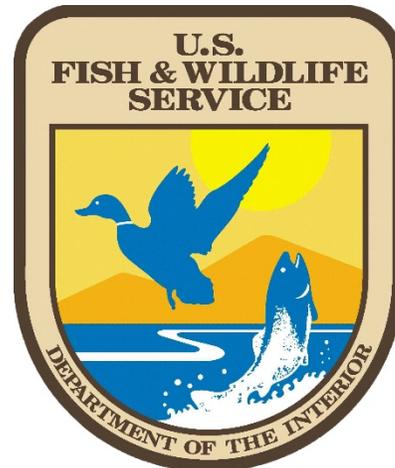
Restoring Natural Resource Injuries and Lost Uses in the St. Lawrence Environment

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Welcome and Thank You for Attending

Purpose of this Meeting

- Provide background on basis for injury restoration and relation to remediation
- Identify restoration project accomplishments to date, and planned future restoration
- Seek your feedback on completed, proposed or other restoration projects

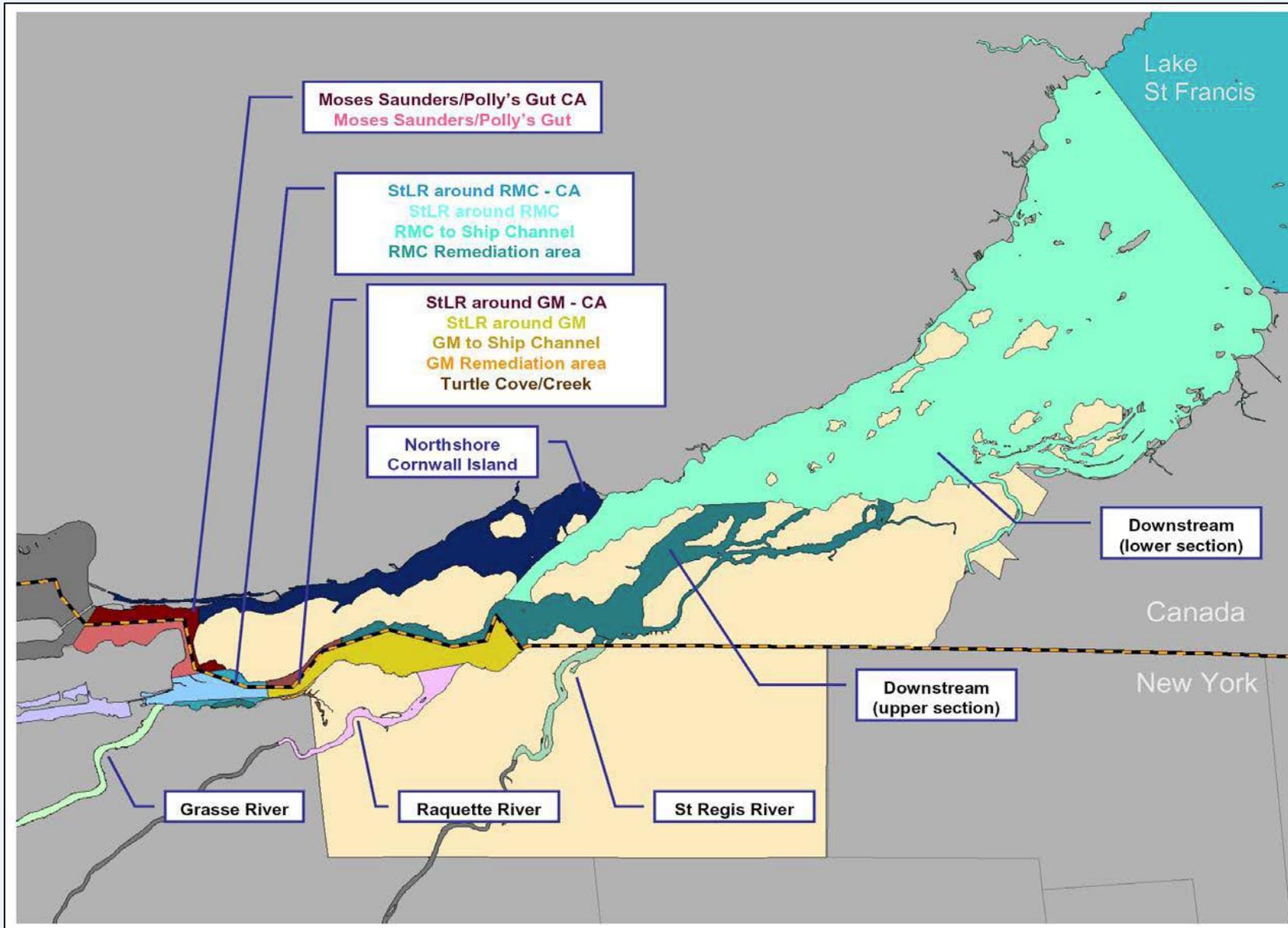


Natural Resources Damages Assessment (NRDA)

- Resources are held in trust for the benefit of the public by the Trustees
- NRDA determines the type and amount of restoration needed
- Goal is to restore, replace or acquire lost services
- Trustees designated by law to act on behalf of the public



Assessment Area



- Alcoa East (Reynolds)
- General Motors
- Alcoa West
- Multiple contaminants
- Multiple Injury Categories:
 - Ecological injuries
 - Recreational fishing losses, and
 - Cultural injuries

Differences Between Restoration & Remediation

NRD claims compensate the public for past, present & future injuries to natural resources

Remediation is USEPA's efforts to reduce risk to human health

Remediation/Clean-Up reduces environmental risk but does not restore natural resource losses.

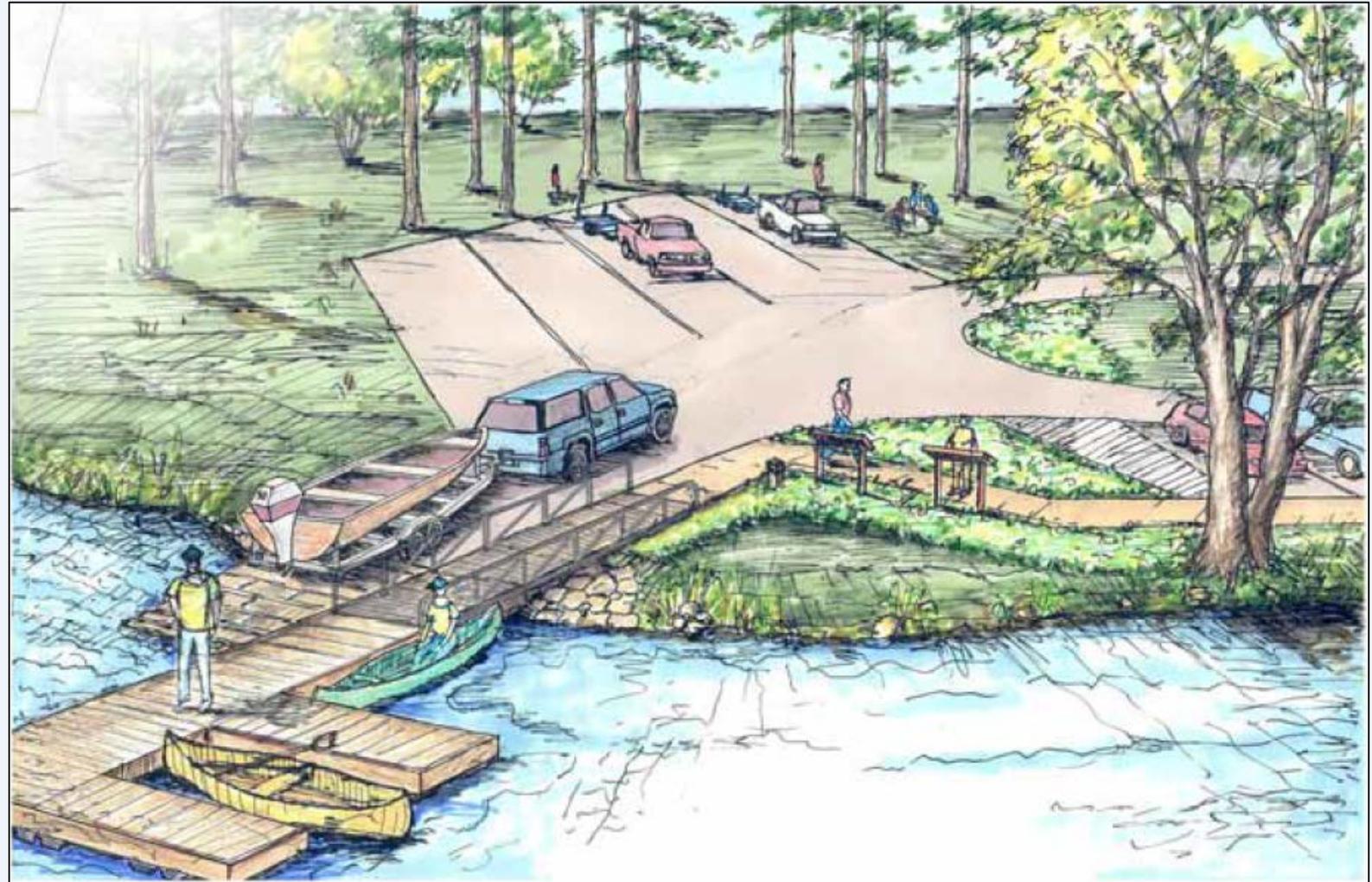
2013 NRD Case Settlement

- GM NRD claim – 2011 bankruptcy settlement
 - \$1.8M for restoration plus assessment costs.
- Alcoa NRD claim – 2013 settlement
 - \$8.3 M for ecological restoration projects
 - \$1.8 M for lost fishing/boating access
 - \$8.4 for cultural restoration projects
 - Trustee agency assessment costs
- Funds available for projects consistent with the Restoration Compensation and Determination Plan and Environmental Assessment (May, 2013).



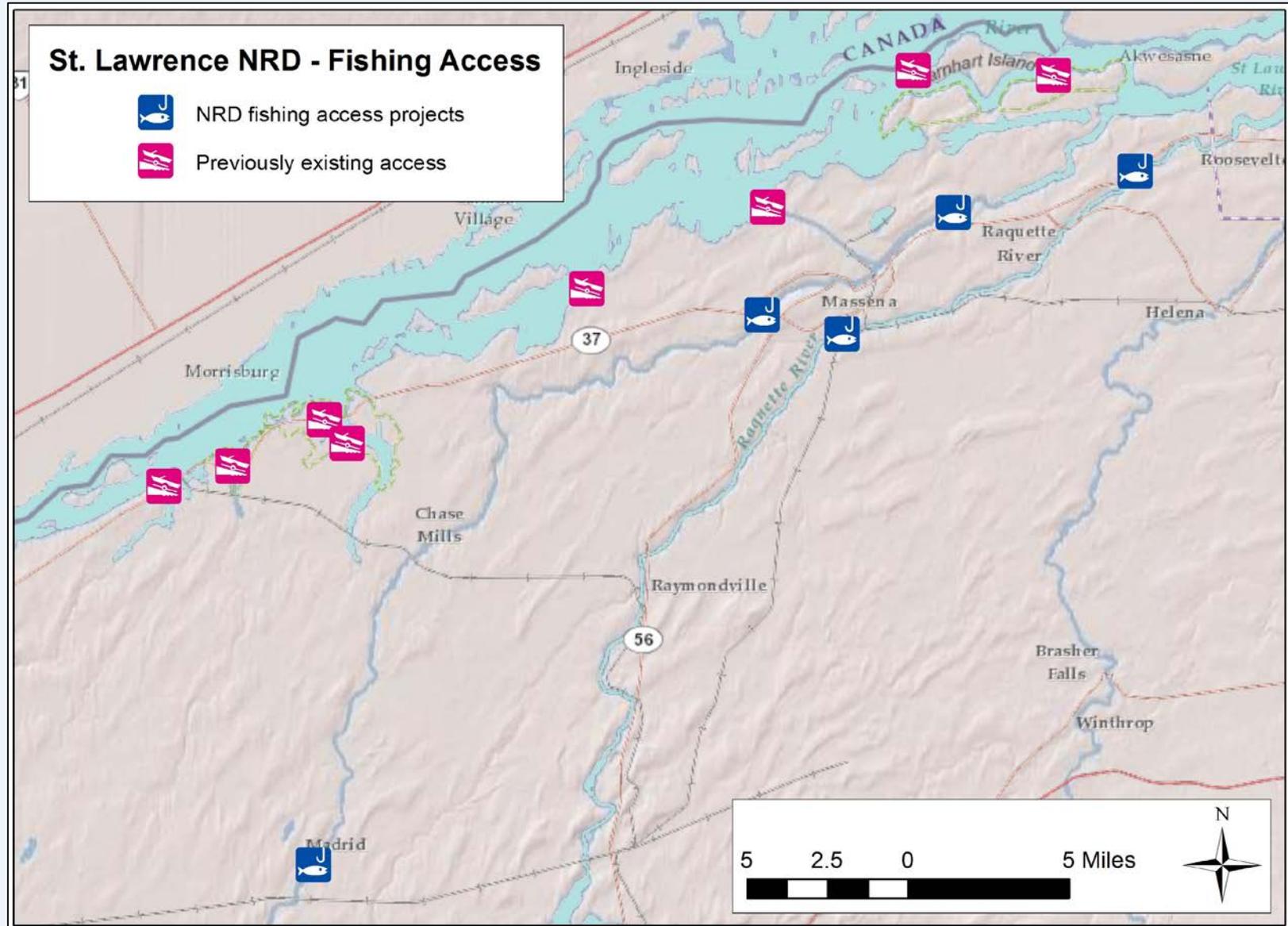
Recreational Fishing Restoration

- Fishing piers
- Boat ramps and docks



Recreational Fishing Restoration

- Five locations
 - 3 complete
 - 2 pending



Raquette River - Springs Park



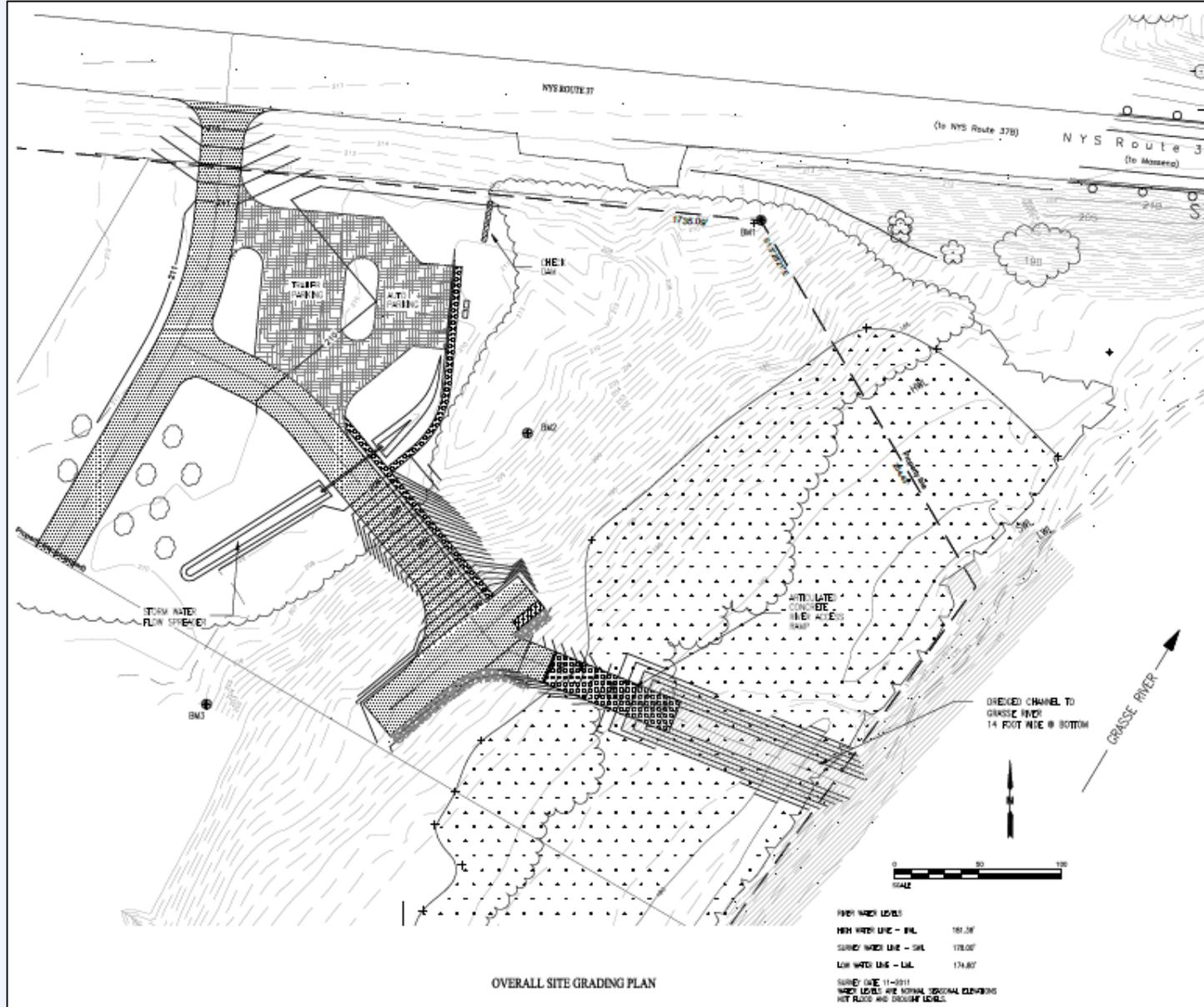
Raquette River – Lower Raquette



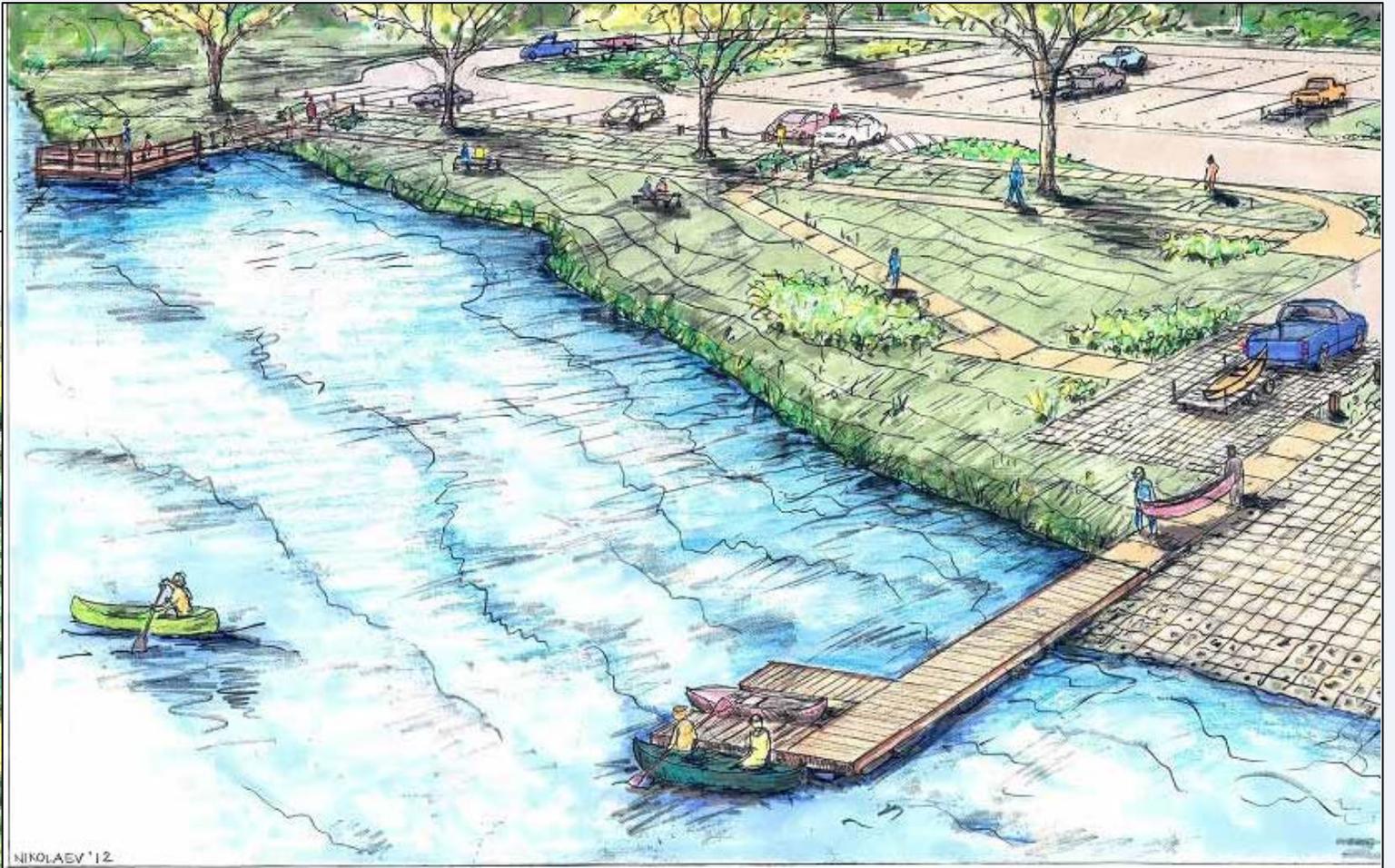
Grasse River - Madrid



Grasse River – Route 37 Bridge



Grasse River – Massena Center



Ecological Injury Restoration

Preferred alternatives –

Restoration and enhancement of:

- Wetland habitats
 - Riparian streambank habitats
 - Upland wildlife habitat
 - Freshwater mussels
 - Fisheries
 - Amphibians and reptiles
 - Birds
 - Mammals
-
- and - Land acquisition and conservation associated with these alternatives.

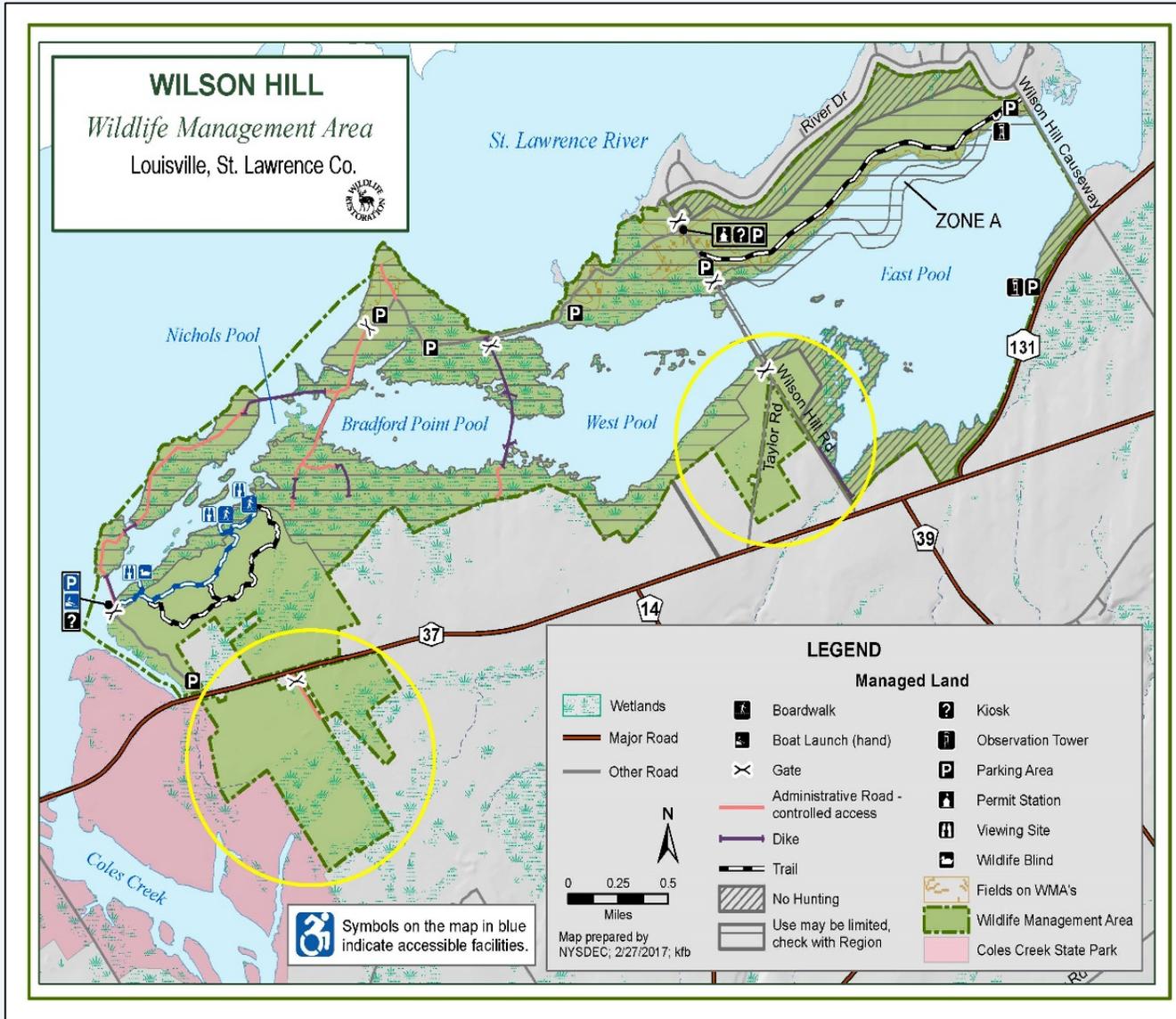


Wildlife Injury Restoration: Land Acquisition and Habitat Restoration

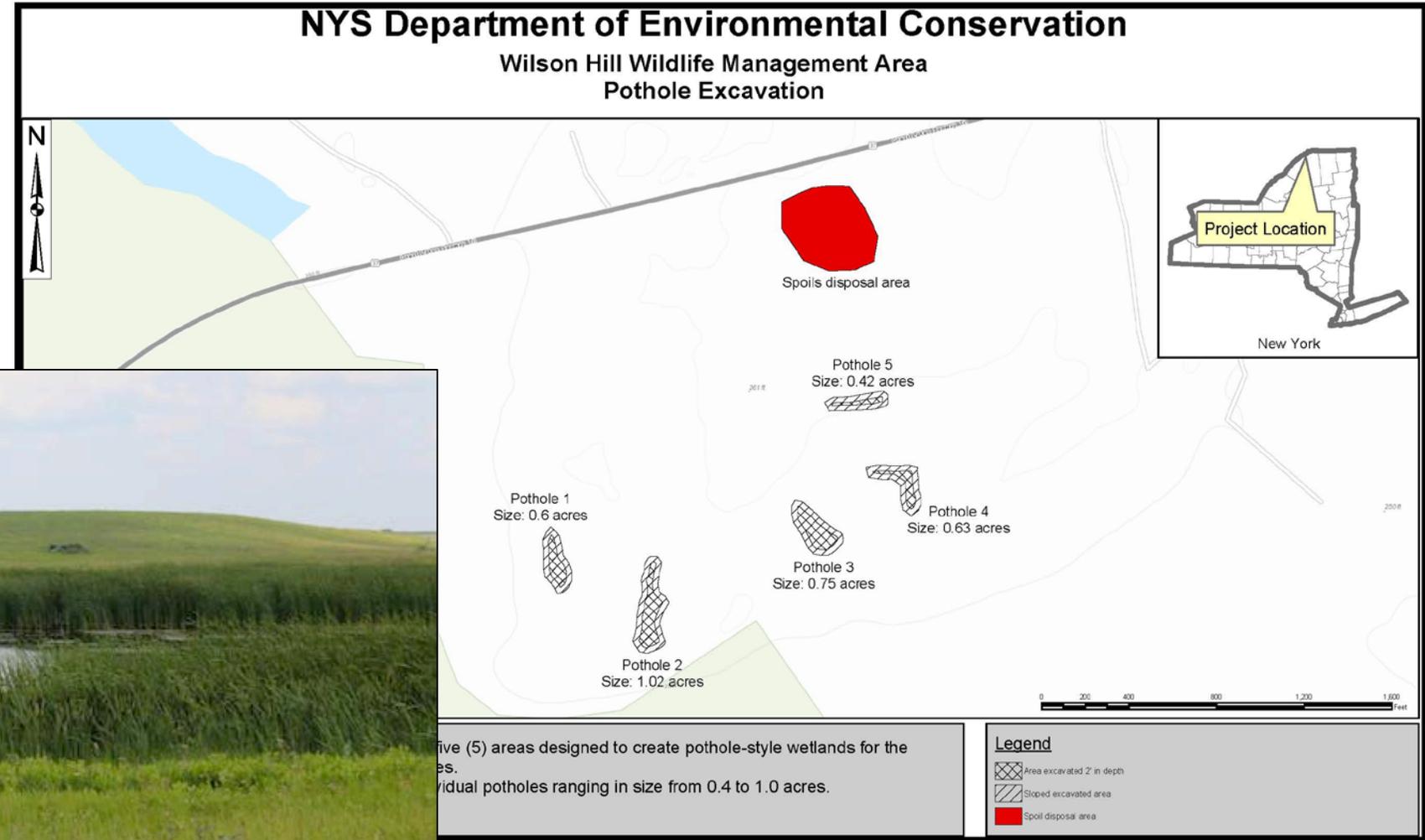


- Parcels acquired adjacent to the Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area in the vicinity of Coles Creek
- Parcels added to the state WMA area to maximize opportunities for contiguous habitat restoration and management
- includes wetlands, critical Blanding turtle habitat, and a Bald Eagle nesting area

Wildlife Injury Restoration: Land Acquisition and Habitat Restoration



Wildlife Injury Restoration: Land Acquisition and Habitat Restoration



Wildlife Injury Restoration: Land Acquisition and Habitat Restoration

- Murphy Islands – colonial waterbird restoration effort



Barriers to Fish Passage

- Fish migrate within rivers and streams to find habitat for feeding, spawning, rearing young and to survive heat, floods or drought.
- Barriers like dams and misaligned culverts prevent fish movement.
- Barriers in the St. Lawrence watershed reduce habitat for lake sturgeon, northern pike, walleye and other fish.



Fish Passage Success Story – brook trout passage achieved

- Before



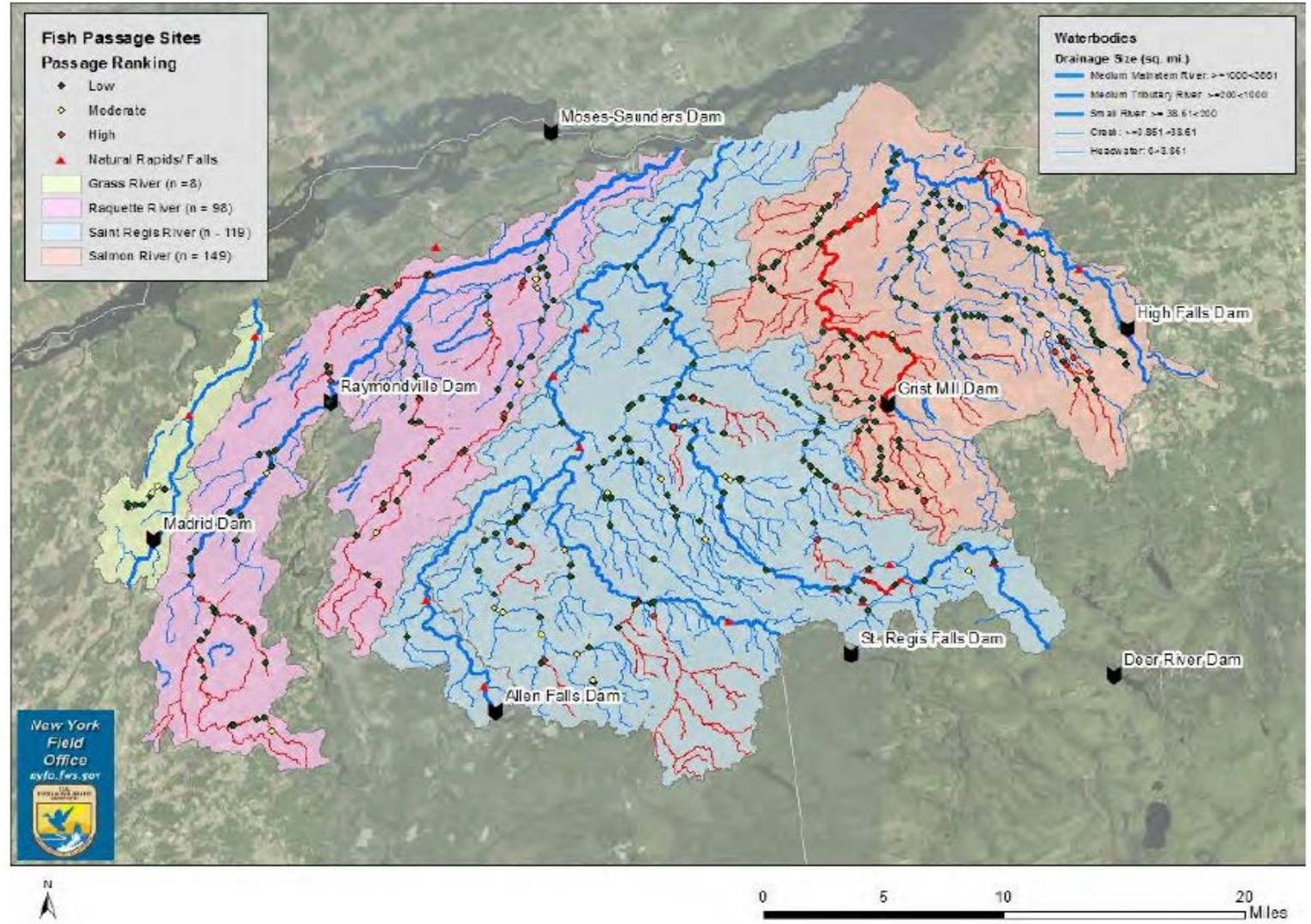
- After



Fish Passage

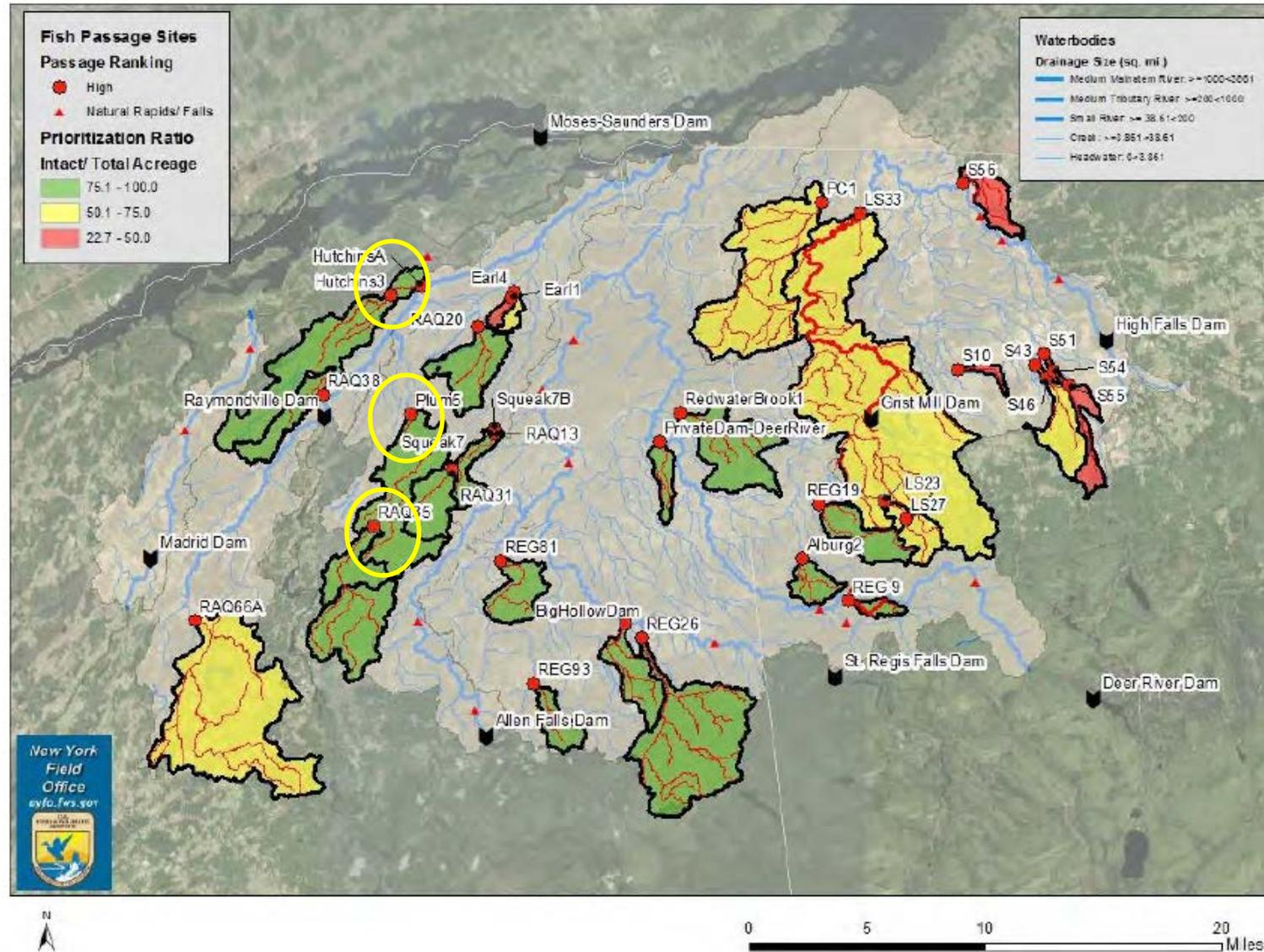
Funding from NRDAR and FEMRF (Fisheries Enhancement, Management and Research Fund) was used to evaluate barriers in the St. Lawrence watershed.

374 Fish Barriers in the Grasse, Raquette, St. Regis and Salmon River Watersheds were ranked (2015-2017 Field Surveys)



Fish Passage

- 33 were identified as high-ranking fish barriers
- Four barriers selected for removal in 2018



Fish Passage: Hutchins Brook

- Two barriers on Hutchins Brook - opens up 12.8 miles for fish passage, reconnecting creek to the Raquette River



Fish passage barrier, Hutchins Brook A



Fish passage barrier – Hutchins Brook 3

Fish Passage: Plum Brook

- Two barriers on Plum Brook scheduled to be removed in 2018
- Opens up 32 miles of stream habitat



Plum Brook dam mitigation



Plum Brook culvert replacement

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Cultural Restoration

Traditional uses of natural resources were significantly impacted by releases of hazardous substances.

Restoration: The revitalization of our land-based cultural practices including the language. Four areas of traditional cultural practice include:



- Water, fishing, use of the river
- Medicines and healing
- Hunting and trapping
- Horticulture and traditional foods

Preferred Restoration Projects:

- Institutional Funding
- Apprenticeship Program
- Language Immersion

Cultural Restoration: Research & Outreach

Community-driven approach 2001-2013

- Collection of materials
- Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, consultant
- Community Advisory Committee established
- Oral History Project
- Summary Report “The Effects of Environmental Contamination on the Mohawks of Akwesasne”
- 2007 Tri-Council MOU
- Radio Announcements, community meetings, newspaper articles and mass mailing of Cultural Impacts DVD.
- Public meetings on settlement
- Established Commission- a non-governmental authoritative body, accountability structure to oversee implementation



Institutional Funding

- Funds leverage existing programs and institutions to stabilize operations
- Call-out to community, proposals reviewed, ranked, scored based on criteria & evaluation tool.
- 6 Projects funded 2014-2018
 - Ionkwanikonri:io Youth Cultural camp
 - Healthy Heart Raised Garden Beds
 - Kana'tsiohare:ke Mohawk Community
 - Akwesasne Freedom School
 - Akwesasne Cultural Center
 - Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment

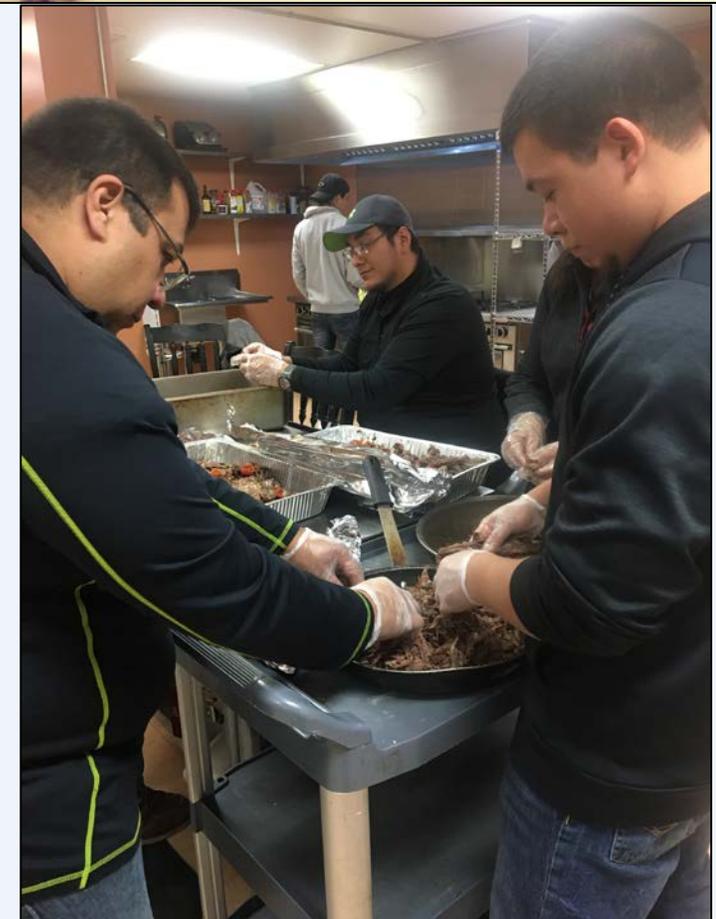


Apprenticeship Program

- Learning through direct experience : Listening, watching, and doing
- Goal: Apprentices become skilled to then teach others
- Benefits to Community: Elders Dinner, workshops, graduation.



Elders Appreciation Dinner



Traditional Workshop Series
Alternative Medicines:
Salve for Poison Parsnip

Thursday,
Seskéha/August 18, 2016
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

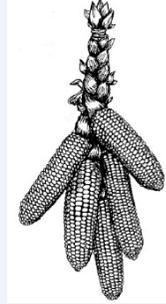
Á:se T sí Tewá:ton Office,
82 Indian Village Road, Raquette Point.

Participants will learn how to make infused nutritional teas for tasting and also salve for poison parsnip rashes, which they can take home. Open to 20 participants. Call (613)937-4322 to register.



Hosted by the Akwesasne Family Wellness Program and sponsored by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Á:se T sí Tewá:ton Program.





Traditional Workshop Series
Ha'oki' Tewatatenenhateweicentónion
(Let's Put Away Our Seeds)

Kiaeríhaton/Thursday,
Kentenhkó:wa/November 17, 2016
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

ACR Office
82 Indian Village Road, Raquette

Participants will learn about selecting, drying, saving, and putting away seeds from traditional Rotinonhsón:ni corn, beans, squash, tobacco, potatoes, and sunflowers. The workshop will be predominately given in the Mohawk language. Open to 15 participants aged 16+ or with a parent/teacher. Call (613)937-4322 to register.



Hosted by the Akwesasne Family Wellness Program
and sponsored by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's A:se Tsi
Tewá:ton Program.



Fishing & River Use

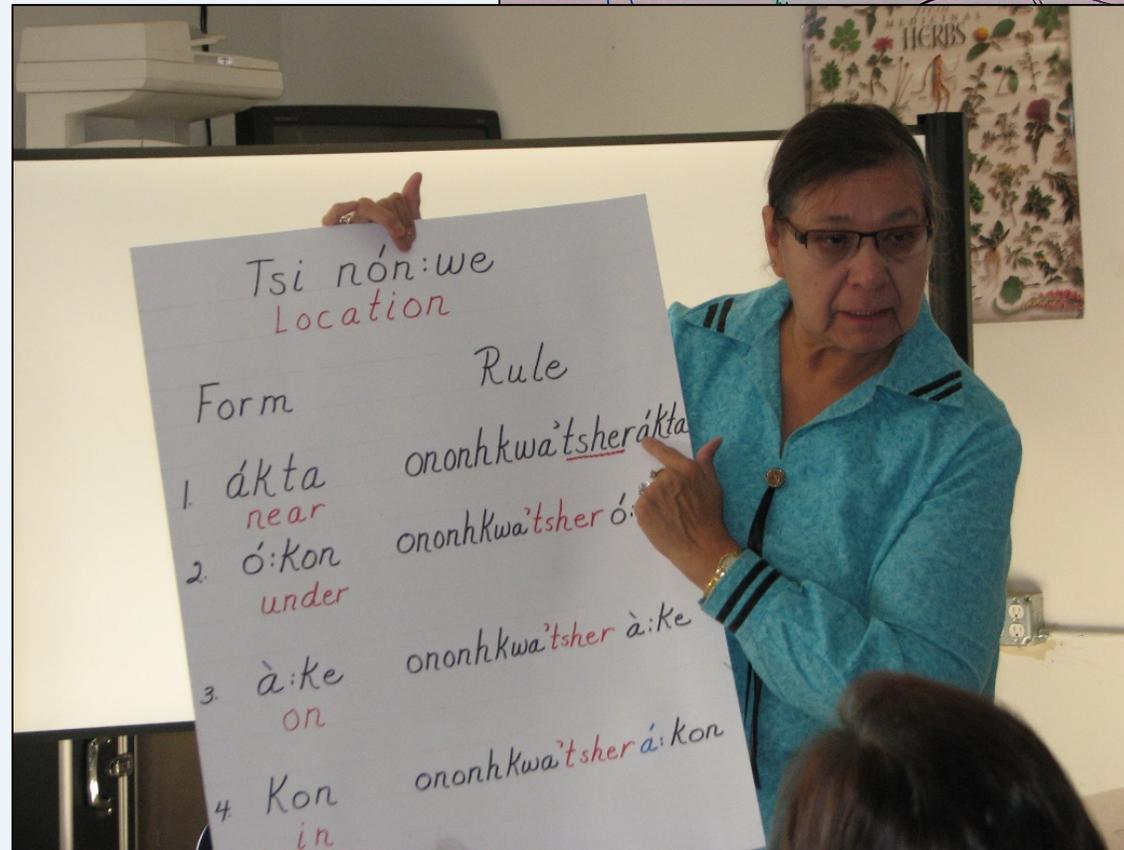
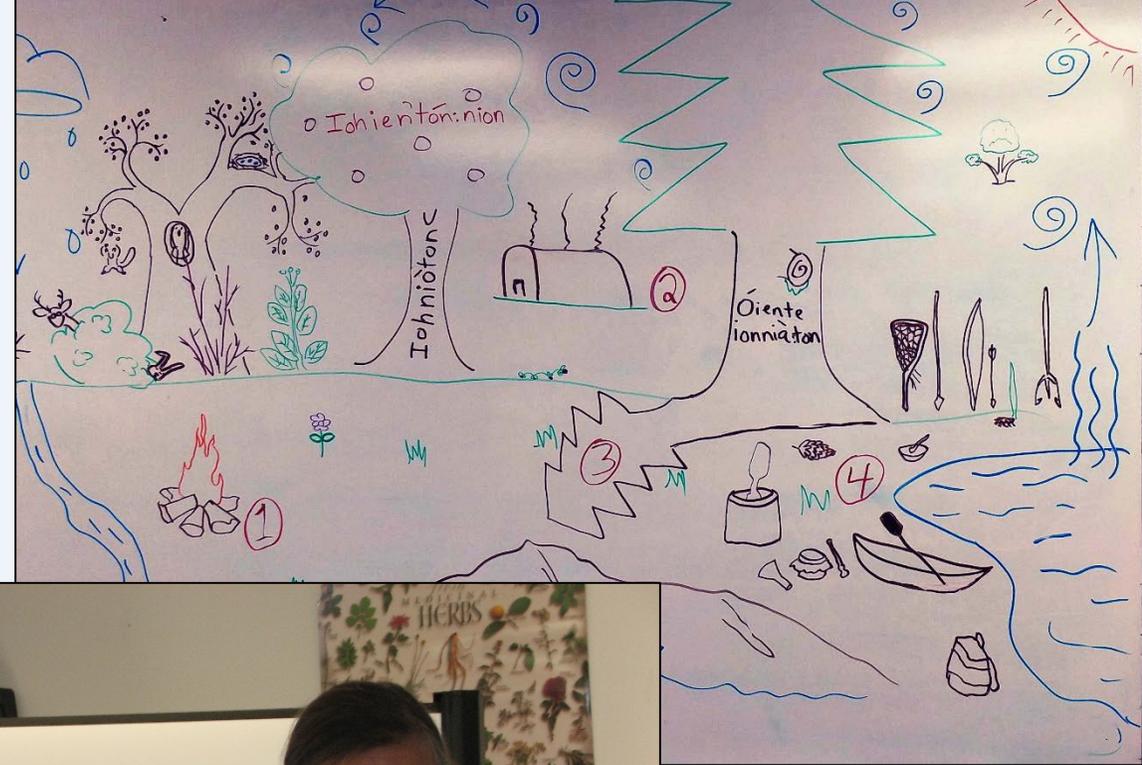


Hunting & Trapping



Kanien'ke:ha

- Promote everyday use and fluency of Mohawk Language
- Increase number of speakers
- Language Assessments (OPI)
- Workshops in the language





Current Status

- Completed 4 year Apprenticeship Dec. 2017: graduated 13
- Conducted over 100 community workshops since 2014
- Downsized staff
- Seeking Grant \$
- Program evaluation: curriculum review, stakeholder feedback, benefits to community
- Community meeting July 9, 2018 @6pm.



Future Efforts: Fish Passage Restoration

- Complete feasibility studies on potential dam removal or other alternatives such as nature-like fishways
- Determine best approach for affording effective passage of target fish species
- Determine ecological benefits and impacts, project cost estimates



Discussing dam removal outcomes

Dam removal (left)

River-wide nature-like fishway (right)

Future Efforts: Wetland and Riparian Buffer Restoration

- Conduct watershed-wide assessments to identify priority aquatic resource restoration sites
- Implement high priority sites to restore wetlands, streambank and stream habitats
- Install native trees and shrubs, large wood
- Improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitats



Restoration opportunities,
Raquette River watershed

Future Efforts: Wetland Protection Land Acquisition and Conservation Easements

- Identify potential priority sites along the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries
- Identify existing wetlands and areas contiguous to protected areas that could be restored
- Purchase properties or secure conservation easements with owners for riparian buffer areas and/or large contiguous wetland areas



Allens Brook



Trustee Wetland Site Visit

Thank You for Participating! Comments or Questions?

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Anne Secord, USFWS

James Turek, NOAA



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