

# Town of Berne, NY Wetland Inventory Update

Presented By:  
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# **Project Objectives**

- **Update the size and location of previously NYSDEC designated wetlands, mapping them based upon the GIS layers designed during the 2013 Erosion Hazard project while incorporating newly available data**
- **Hypothesize which wetlands in Berne are important to water quality, flooding, and erosion**
- **Integrate the updated information with the data and reports on the flooding and erosion consequent to Tropical Storm Irene**
- **Attempt to identify animal and plant species inhabiting specific wetland within the town, noting any invasive species**
- **Recommend techniques for mitigation and protection of NYSDEC designated wetlands, as well as identical recommendations for wetlands smaller than the NYSDEC designated wetland minimum size of 12.4 acres (5 hectares)**
- **Produce a final report detailing the results of our work and share our findings with the Town Board, Planning Board, and Conservation Board**

# Methodologies

- **Using NYSDEC Environmental Resource Mapper, National Wetlands Inventory Interactive Mapper, and NYS GIS Clearinghouse data I compiled all wetlands and provided GIS map products displaying those wetlands within the town**
- **Created a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which compiled the previous wetland inventory data and newly incorporated wetland characteristics and properties**
- **Walked wetlands on state lands (Partridge Run, Cole Hill) to understand the local wetlands, while looking for invasive species and attempting to delineate wetland borders**
- **Researched watershed management practices, wetland values and services, incorporated new findings with related information from the 2013 Erosion Hazard project**
- **Researched the local geology, flora and fauna to better understand the project area**
- **Researched and recommend watershed management and wetland mitigation techniques**
- **Provided other GIS map products which I deemed valuable to the project and to the Town in general**
- **Designed a report detailing the scope and findings of the wetland inventory project**



# Understanding Wetlands

- Wetland ecosystems generally possess three essential characteristics: (1) hydrophytic vegetation, (2) hydric soils, and (3) wetland hydrology
- “Wetlands are defined as lands and submerged lands commonly known as swamps, sloughs, bogs and flats which support wetland vegetation” (DEC Article 24, Fresh. Wet. Act)
- 1 acre of wetland storing 1 foot of water (an acre-foot) equals 326,000 gallons (or 43,650 cu. ft.) of water
- Over 1/3 of the 564 species listed as threatened or endangered in the US utilize wetland habitats for at least some portion of their life cycles
- Wetlands are hubs - transitional areas between upland and aquatic ecosystems

# Understanding Wetlands

## Wetland Functions, Values, and Ecosystem Services

- Provide valuable habitat for flora and fauna
- Flood water retention properties
- Sediment and nutrient retention
- Fish spawning areas
- Riverbank stabilization
- Groundwater recharge (particularly for seasonally flooded and riparian zone wetlands)
- Slows runoff by wetland vegetation and topography
- Trapping and filtering of pollutants (even converting some to less harmful forms by biochemical processes)
- Nitrogen and some phosphorus entering wetlands is taken up by wetland plant materials (ultimately deposited in sediments or converted into gases which escape into the atmosphere)

# Berne is a Unique Geographic Area

- Combination of forested, agricultural and residential areas
- Most wetlands on private lands, also on state lands (Partridge Run WMA, Cole Hill SF)
- Drastic elevation changes within the town (most residences in lower elevations)
- Proximity of major streams to roads, residences
- Already seen damage from major events like Irene, more frequent similar events expected in the future

## Karst Geology

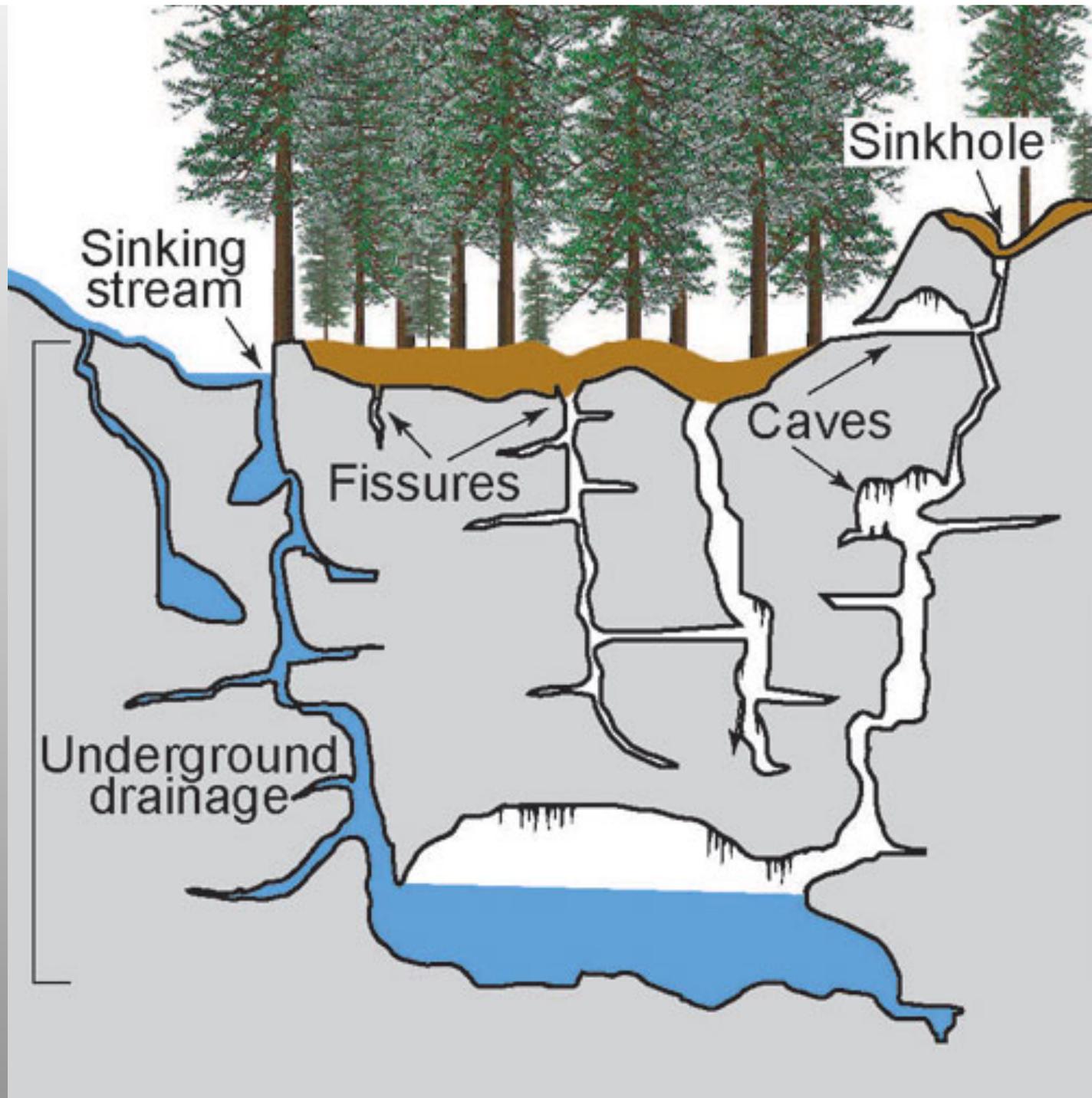
Karst formations are limestone rocks (bedrock) which underly surface soils; exist wherever bedrock is Helderberg group limestones or Onondaga limestones (majority of the town)

Caves, sinking streams, and sinkholes are created by the chemical interaction of acidic water and carbonate rocks

Poses significant development problems:

-Water flowing through karst does not have the advantage of being filtered or purified by soils

-Contaminant infiltration risks are greatest where little or no soil is present above karst





# Historical Berne Wetland Inventory

- Conducted in 1979/1980
- Very limited map product (technology of the time)
- Conflicting info within the report :
  - 40 shown on old map, 36 in discussion, 34 in acreage section  
(40 shown but really less since some are fragmented)
  - DEC Wetland Identification numbers not included (cannot identify)
  - Acreages are conflicting (some not even close) to current DEC numbers
- Had more manpower (and seemingly time) to conduct the inventory
- Actually conducted wetland flora/fauna inventory for all DEC wetlands with the help of a class of SUNY Cobleskill students (all records are now lost)



# Access to GIS resources

- There are numerous web-based GIS resources available to the public
  - Much more advanced than what I am capable of creating
    - County, regional and national “interactive mappers”
    - USGS Streamstats (very technical but can be very valuable)
- Verify DEC wetlands, check (buffer) zones, compare to NWI wetlands
  - NWI interactive mapper has detailed wetland classifications
    - Geology, Hyrdology, Contours, etc.

Search	Layers & Legend	Tell Me More...
Need a Permit?	Contacts	Help

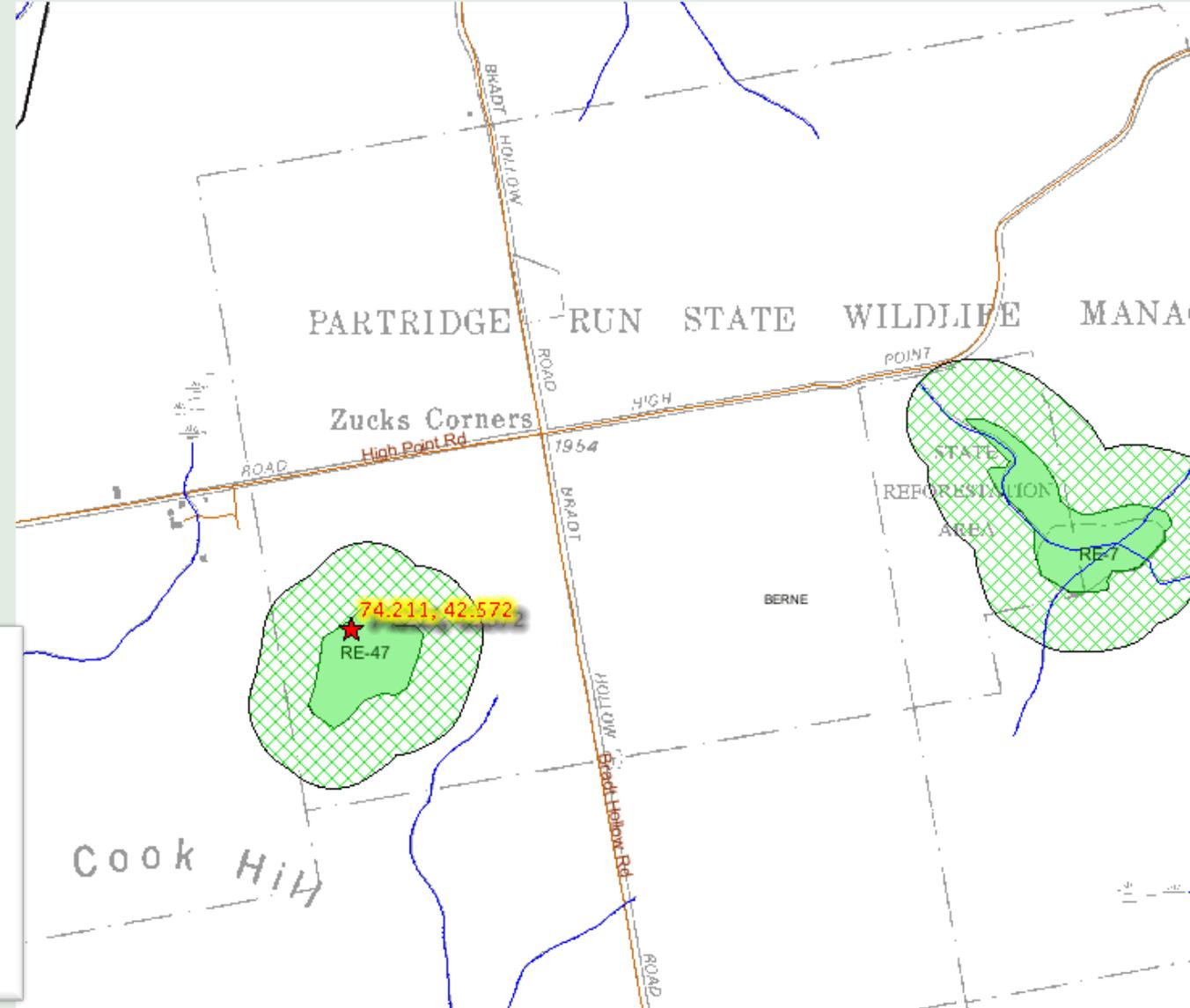
### Map Layers & Legend

More layers appear as you zoom in.

- Classified Water Bodies
- Unique Geological Features
- Classified Water Bodies
- State-Regulated Freshwater Wetlands
- Wetland Checkzone ?
- Rare Plants and Rare Animals
- Significant Natural Communities
- Natural Communities Vicinity ?
- Background Map
- Adirondack Park Boundary
- Counties

Click "Refresh Layers" to activate and deactivate layers.

[Refresh Layers](#)



The Coordinates of the point you clicked on are:

NYTM	E : 564722	Longitude/Latitude	W : 74.211
	N : 4713696		N : 42.572

**State-Regulated Freshwater Wetlands**

Wetland ID	Wetland Class	Wetland Size (Acres)
0		
RE-47	2	15.4

**USGS Quadrangle**

USGS Quadrangle Name
RENSSELAERVILLE

# NWI Interactive Mapper

The screenshot displays the NWI Interactive Mapper web application. The browser address bar shows the URL [www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html](http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html). The application header includes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service logo and the text "National Wetlands Inventory".

The main map area shows a topographic map with various wetland features highlighted in different colors. A specific wetland feature is highlighted in yellow and labeled "PFO1Ph".

On the right side, there is an "Available Layers" panel with the following items:

- Wetlands
- Riparian
- Riparian Mapping Areas
- Data Source
  - Source Type
  - Image Scale
  - Image Year
- Areas of Interest
- FWS Refuges
- Historic Wetland Data

Below the "Available Layers" panel is a legend titled "Wetlands" with the following categories and colors:

- Estuarine and Marine Deepwater (Light Blue)
- Estuarine and Marine Wetland (Light Green)
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland (Yellow-Green)
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland (Dark Green)
- Freshwater Pond (Blue)
- Lake (Dark Blue)
- Other (Brown)
- Riverine (Light Blue)

In the bottom right, a "Wetland" popup window provides detailed information for the selected feature:

- Zoom To Feature:  (Quality: )
- Classification Code: PFO1Ph ([decode](#))
- Wetland Type: Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Acres: 9.55
- Status: Digital
- Image Date(s): xxx/xx/xx
- Source Type: CIR
- Image Scale: 1
- 24k Quad Name: Rensselaerville
- 100k Quad Name: AMSTERDAM
- Project Metadata: [click here](#)
- Historic Map Info:
- FGDC Metadata: [click here](#)

# Albany County GIS Viewer

Albany County Interactive x

gismap.albanycounty.com/gisviewer/

Erosion Hazard Proj... Home & Garden 2014 Internship Berne Flooding / Climate P... UAlbany GIS Wetlands Account Settings Space Employment New folder

Expand Collapse Metadata

Open In Zoom to municipality Tax Parcel Search Owner Address

Contours 20ft

Contours-2Ft

Background Maps

- None
- Historic Aerial Imagery
- Bing
- Google
- Google Streets
- Google Imagery
- Google Imagery With Labels
- Google Physical
- MapQuest

Transparency: [Slider]

Municipal Boundaries

- City
- Village
- Town

Parks & Preserves

DEC Wetlands

NWI Wetlands

FEMA Flood Zones

- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- A
- AE
- AO

The map displays a geographic area in Albany County, New York, centered on the town of Berne. It features several layers of information: roads (e.g., 443, 254, 157, 311, 303, 145, 10, 6, 1, 14, 85, 412, 408, 109), parks and preserves (Dutch Settlement State Forest, Partridge Run State Forest, Partridge Run Wildlife Management Area, John Boyd Thacher State Park, Lawsons Lake County Park), wetlands (DEC and NWI), and FEMA Flood Zones (0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, A, AE, AO). Municipal boundaries are shown as thick black lines. The map is overlaid on a Google Streets background. The interface includes a search bar, a legend, and navigation controls.

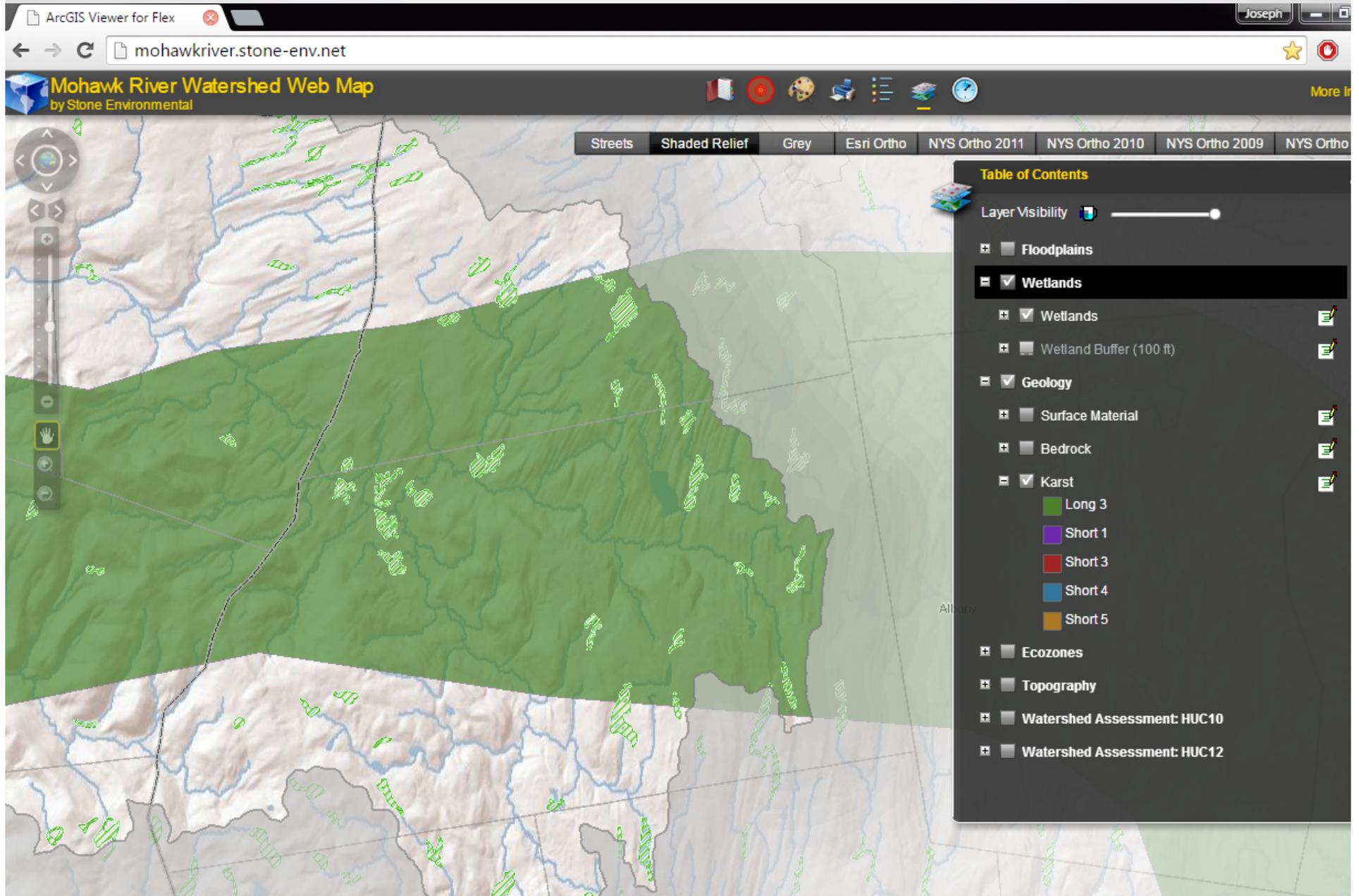
Map data ©2015 Google

Developed by CHA

Get Map Link Map Scale: Scale = 1 : 108K Decimal Degrees: -74.21274, 42.65162

Full

# Mohawk River Watershed Web Map





# New York StreamStats

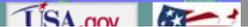
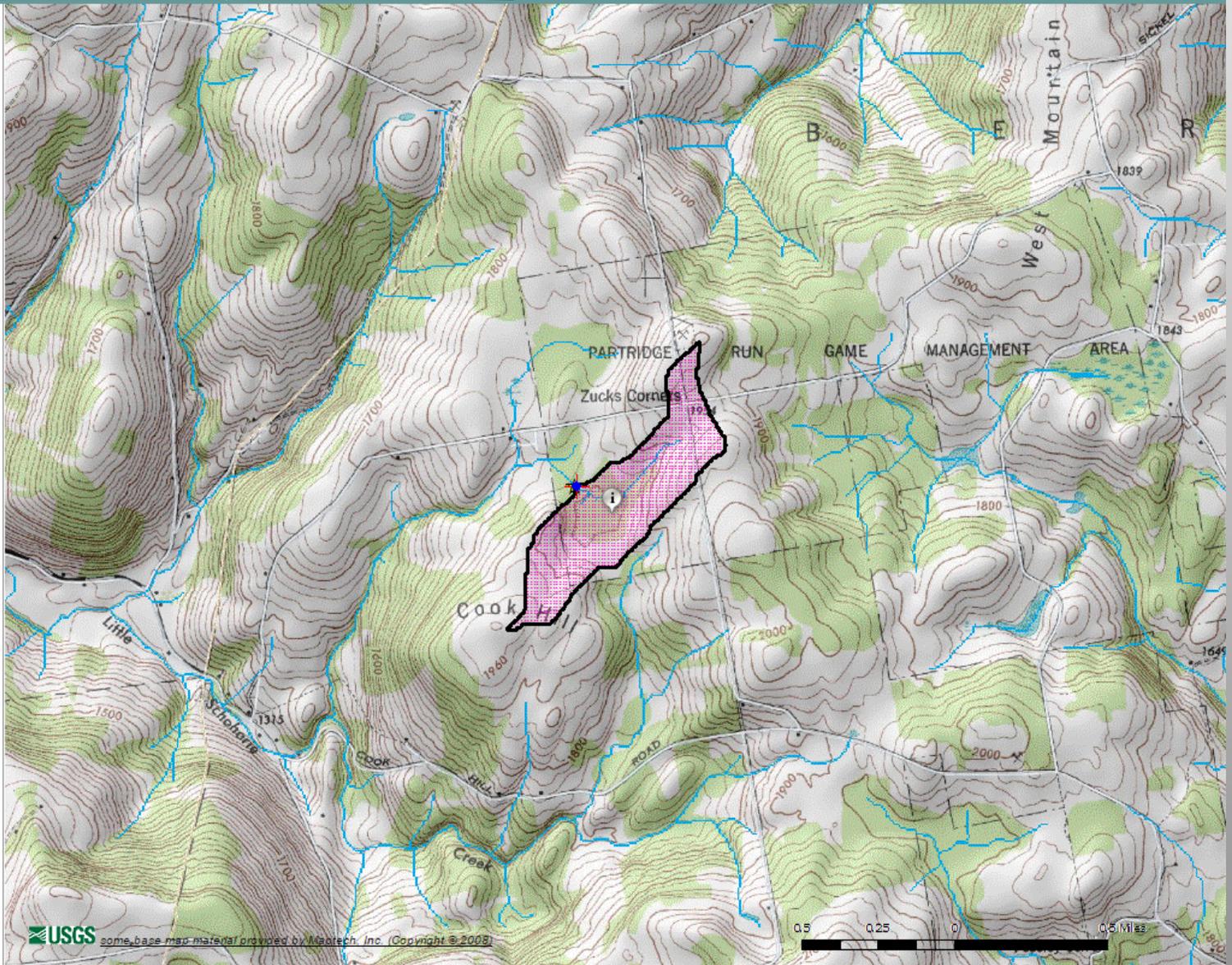
Close

Map navigation toolbar including icons for search, pan, zoom, and print. Zoom To: 1:24,000

## Results

NY@ny\_ss (564827.775, 4713604.899)

- Map Contents
- Navigation
- Overview



**Compute Parameters - Google Chrome**  
 streamstatsags.cr.usgs.gov/ny\_ss/ComputeParams.aspx?st

**Basin Characteristics Report - Google Chrome**  
 streamstatsags.cr.usgs.gov/gisimg/Reports/BasinCharsReport200672

**USGS New York StreamStats**

**Parameters**

- All
- Area that drains to a point on a stream in square miles.
- Main-channel 10-85 slope, in feet per mile
- Main-channel stream length, in miles
- 10-85 slope of lower half of main channel in feet per mile.
- 10-85 slope of upper half of main channel in feet per mile.
- Total length of all elevation contours in drainage area in miles
- Average basin slope, in feet per mile.
- Slope ratio. Ratio of main channel slope to basin slope
- Basin Lag factor.
- Percentage of basin at or above 1200 ft elevation
- Basin storage. Percentage of total drainage area shown as lakes, ponds and swamps
- Percent of area covered by forest
- Mean annual runoff in inches.
- Seasonal maximum snow depth, 50th percentile, in inches

**Basin Characteristics Report**

**Date: Wed Mar 25 2015 15:45:44 Mountain Daylight Time**  
**NAD27 Latitude: 42.5735 (42 34 25)**  
**NAD27 Longitude: -74.2129 (-74 12 46)**  
**NAD83 Latitude: 42.5736 (42 34 25)**  
**NAD83 Longitude: -74.2124 (-74 12 45)**  
**ReachCode: 02020005000423**  
**Measure: 85.10**

Parameter	Value
Area that drains to a point on a stream in square miles.	0.21
Average basin slope, in feet per mile.	322
Percentage of basin at or above 1200 ft elevation	100
Basin storage. Percentage of total drainage area shown as lakes, ponds and swamps	10.6
Mean annual runoff in inches.	17.1
Seasonal maximum snow depth, 50th percentile, in inches	16.2
Mean annual precipitation in inches.	37.3

Compute Parameters Close

## Parameters

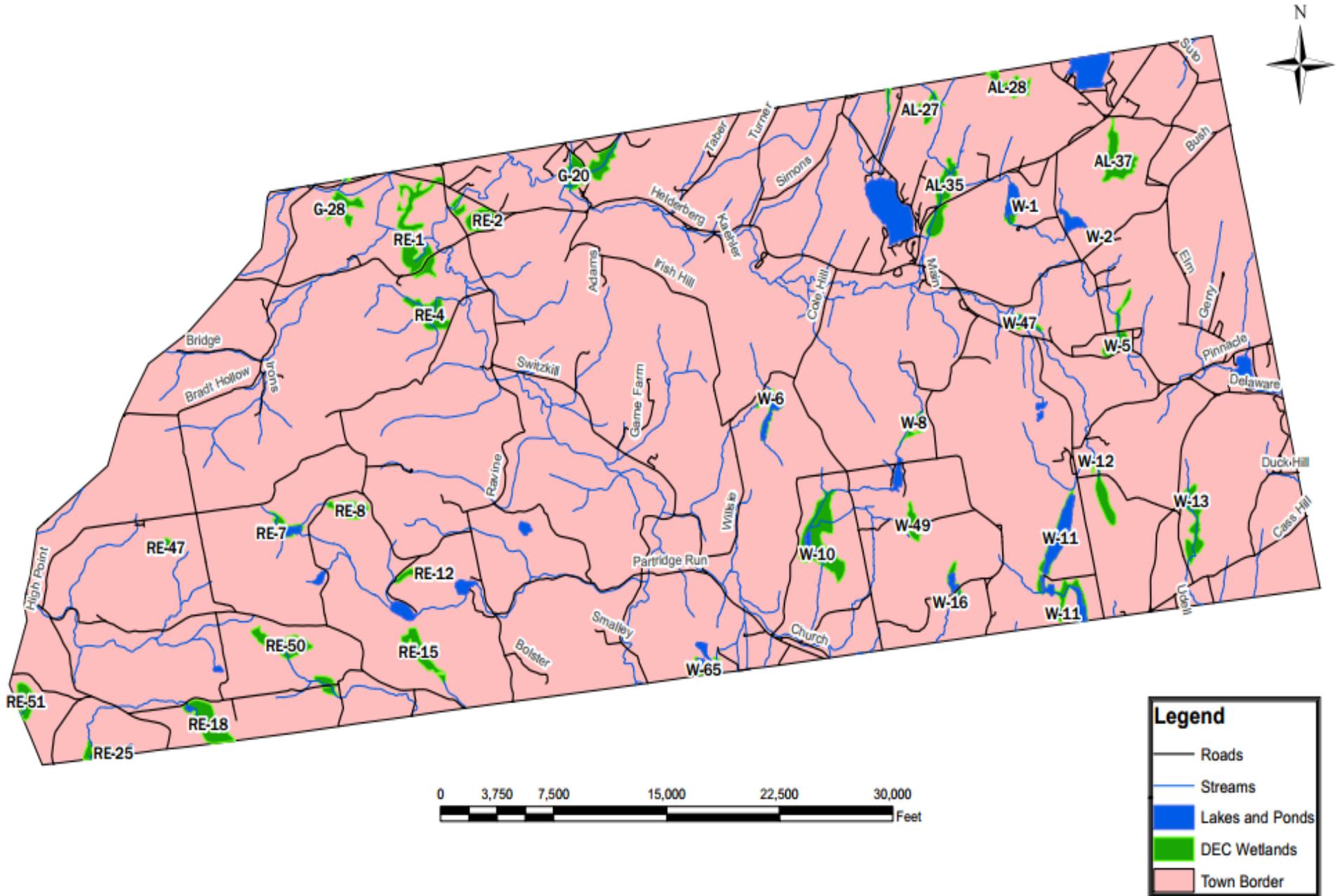
- Basin Characteristics Report provides a multitude of basin (watershed, or wetland) parameters
- Results can be used to understand shape, size, and capacity of each wetland

# Updated Wetland Inventory

- Spreadsheet design for easy updating
- GPS Coordinates, elevation, NWI Classifications, area above outlet, etc.
- Attempt to identify areas of special concern or greater value (subjective, Ralph Tiner @ NWI)
- GIS maps of just DEC, DEC and NWI, hydric soils, geology (attempted), watersheds

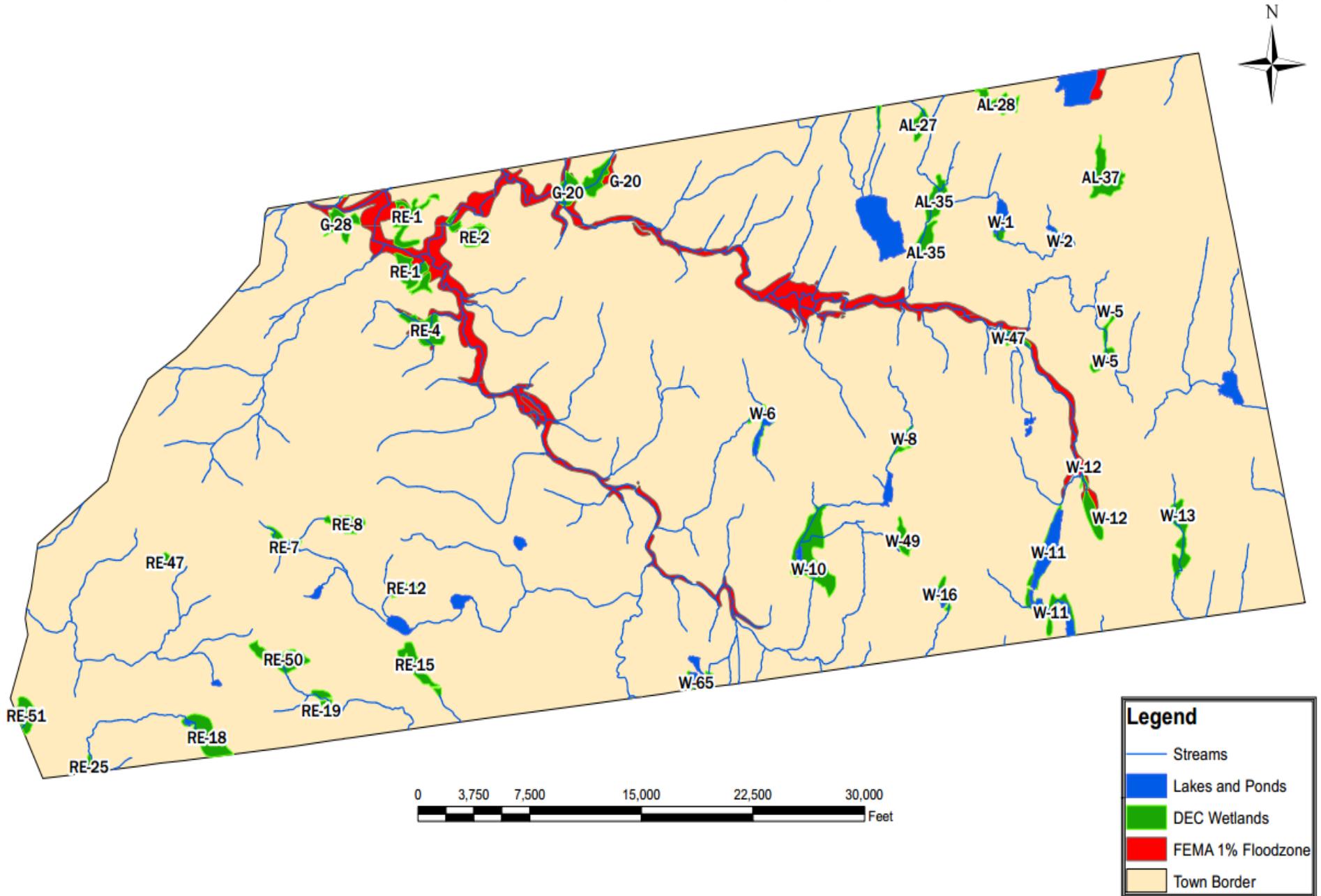


# Berne, NY DEC Wetlands



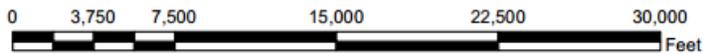
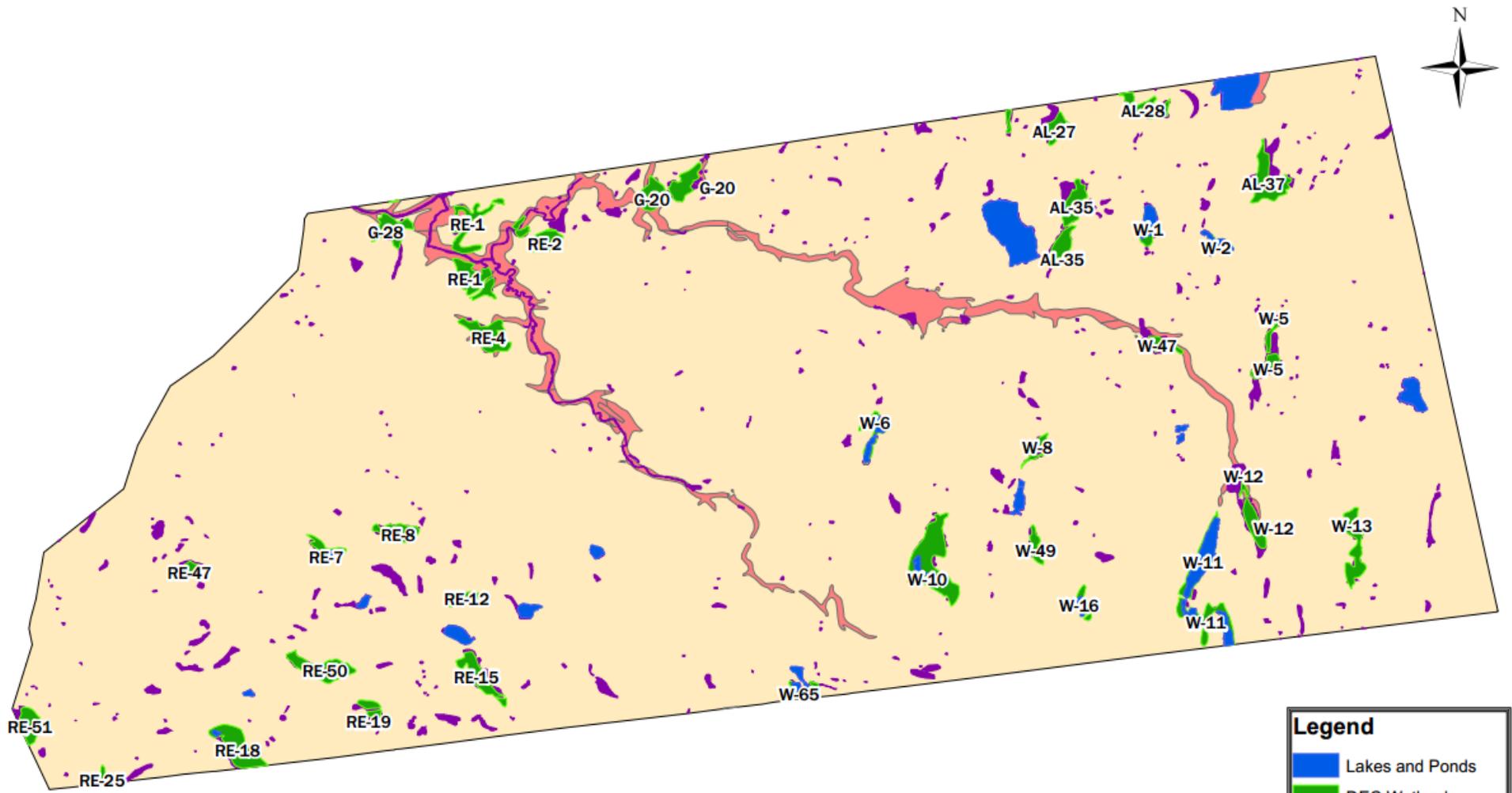
# Berne, NY

## DEC Wetlands and FEMA 100 Year (1%) Floodzone



# Berne, NY

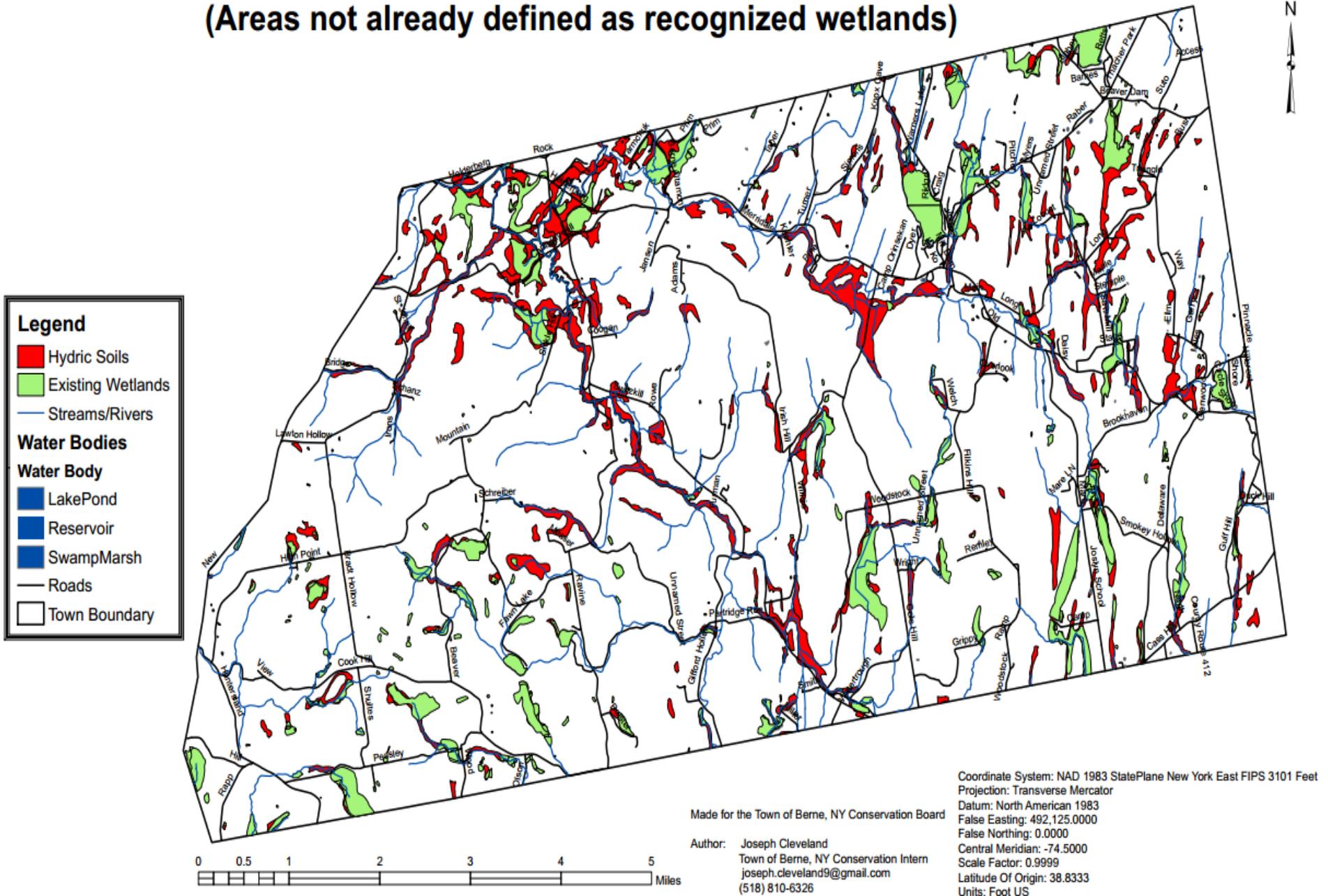
## DEC Wetlands and NWI Wetlands



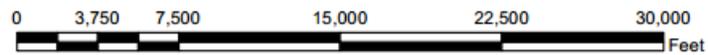
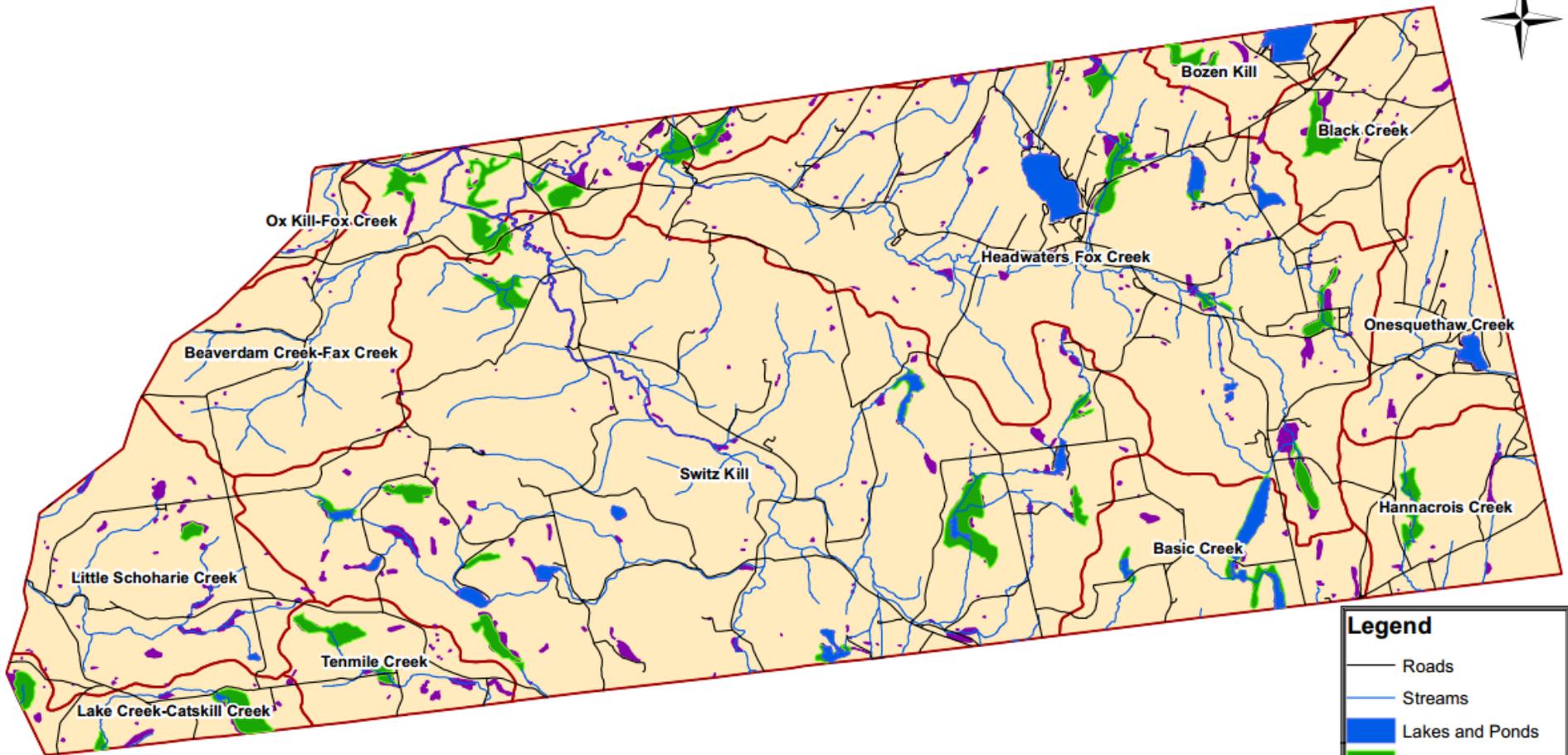
**Legend**

- Lakes and Ponds
- DEC Wetlands
- NWI Wetlands
- FEMA 1% Floodzone
- Town Border

# Potential Detention Areas within Berne, NY (Areas not already defined as recognized wetlands)



# Berne, NY DEC and NWI Wetlands HUC 12 Watershed



**Legend**

- Roads
- Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- DEC Wetlands
- NWI Wetlands
- Town Border
- HUC 12 Watersheds

# Recommendations and Mitigation

- Consider wetland management to be integrated with flood control, allocation of water supply, protection of habitat and plant and animal species, and stormwater and nonpoint source pollution (ag. runoff in Berne)
- Treat wetlands as a necessary means for protecting against repeated and serious flood damages
- Re-inventory flora and fauna of each DEC wetland (as done in 1980) to better understand each individual wetland
- Invasive species inventories of wetlands
- Study and treat wetlands in a watershed context, at different scales, to make valuable comparisons and to better understand the value of each individual wetland to the Town
- Continue to identify wetlands which provide the most benefit to the Town (next slide)

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- Those wetlands found in upper watersheds, along main -stem streams, within 100 –year flood zones, those overlying Karst geology, and those containing rare or special concern plant and animal species should be regarded as most valuable to the town. ALL Wetlands are valuable, and should be treated as such (even those smaller than DEC designation)
- Consider including the NWI wetlands (down to a certain manageable size) in inventory
- Consider doing individual parcel analyses for those properties which contain wetlands
- Ensure wetland assessments are incorporated in development planning, open-space inventory
- Educate residents on the importance of wetlands and encourage them to allow the creation of new wetlands in place of old, unused agricultural land (and discuss the benefits to them from doing so) – NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (next slide)

# **NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

**Title 440 – Conservation Programs Manual**

**Part 528 – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

- **Restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on eligible land**
- **NRCS provides cost-share assistance to eligible entities to purchase agricultural land easements from eligible landowner**
- **Private landowners who are seeking to conserve agricultural lands and grasslands and protect, restore and enhance critical wetlands and their related benefits.**
- **Available to all 50 States**
- **Landowners who are interested in participating in ACEP-WRE must apply by submitting a completed application**
- **Landowners “must be willing and able to grant ...sufficient physical and legal access [to] right of way to the entire enrolled area for the term of the enrollment for restoration, management, maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement purposes.**
- **Ineligible owners: Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance**

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the middle ground, surrounded by a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The foreground is dominated by a lush, green field of tall grasses. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The text "The End" is centered over the grassy field.

**The End**

Thanks for the opportunity and thanks for your time!