

NEW JERSEY'S WILDEST RIVER

The case for designating the Mullica
as a National Wild and Scenic River.



Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

“It is...the policy of the United States that certain Selected rivers of the Nation which... possess outstandingly remarkable scenic...or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they...shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”



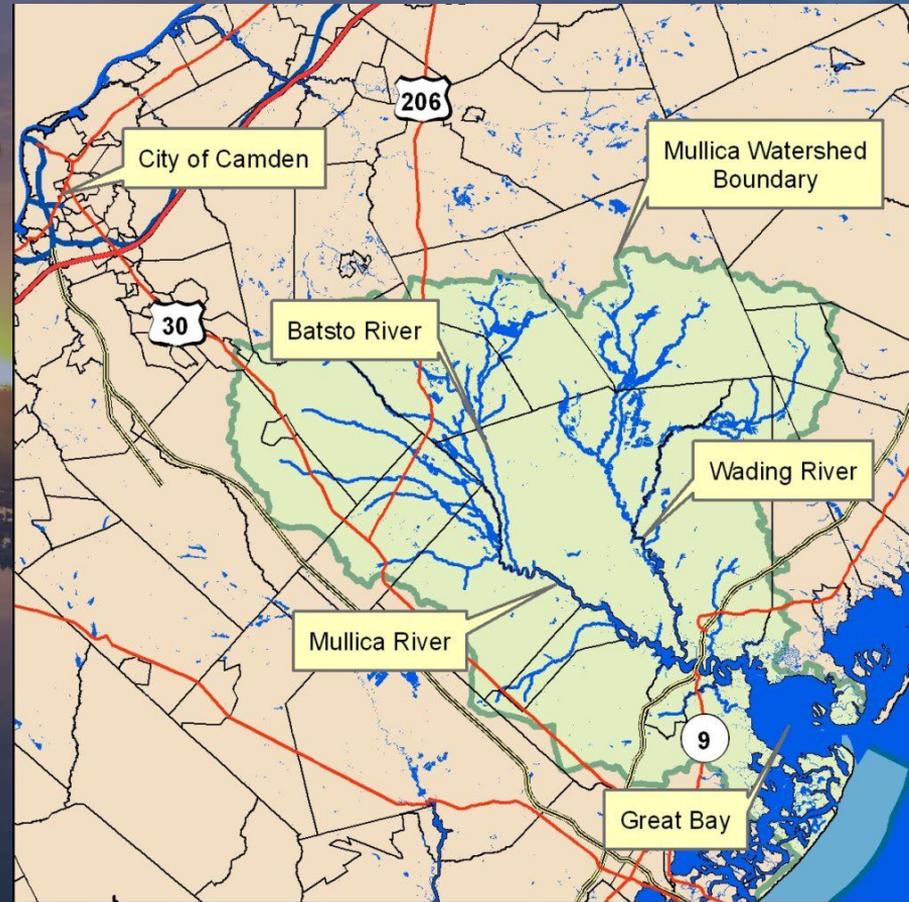
LBJ Signing the Act in 1968

The Mullica is one of the most pristine river systems in the USA

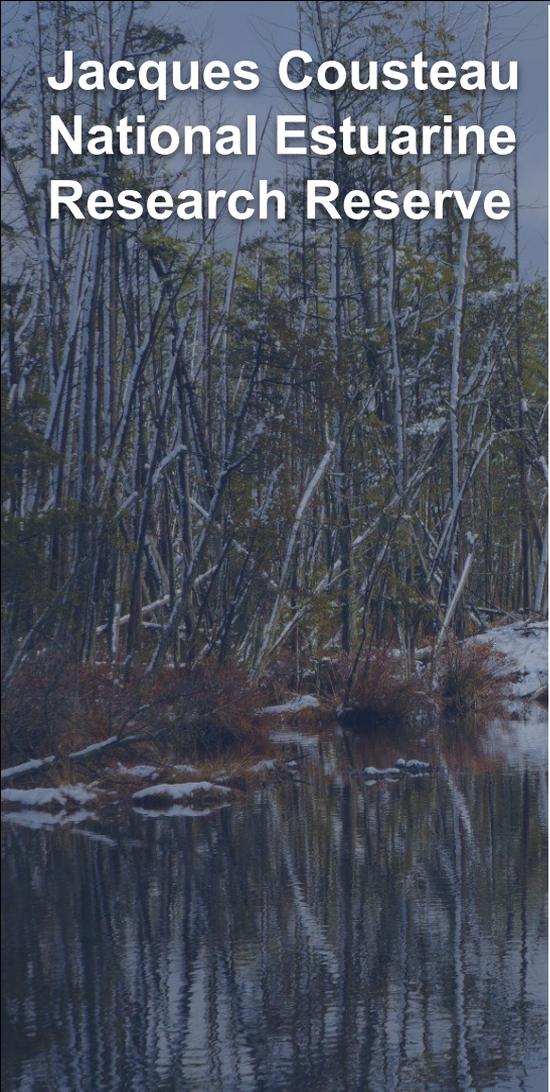
- The Mullica / Great Bay has the cleanest estuary in the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Region.
- Current protections are fragmented across various local and state agencies.
- Present Day Threats include: Increasing development pressure, aging infrastructure, and potential water diversions.

A 568 Square-mile Watershed

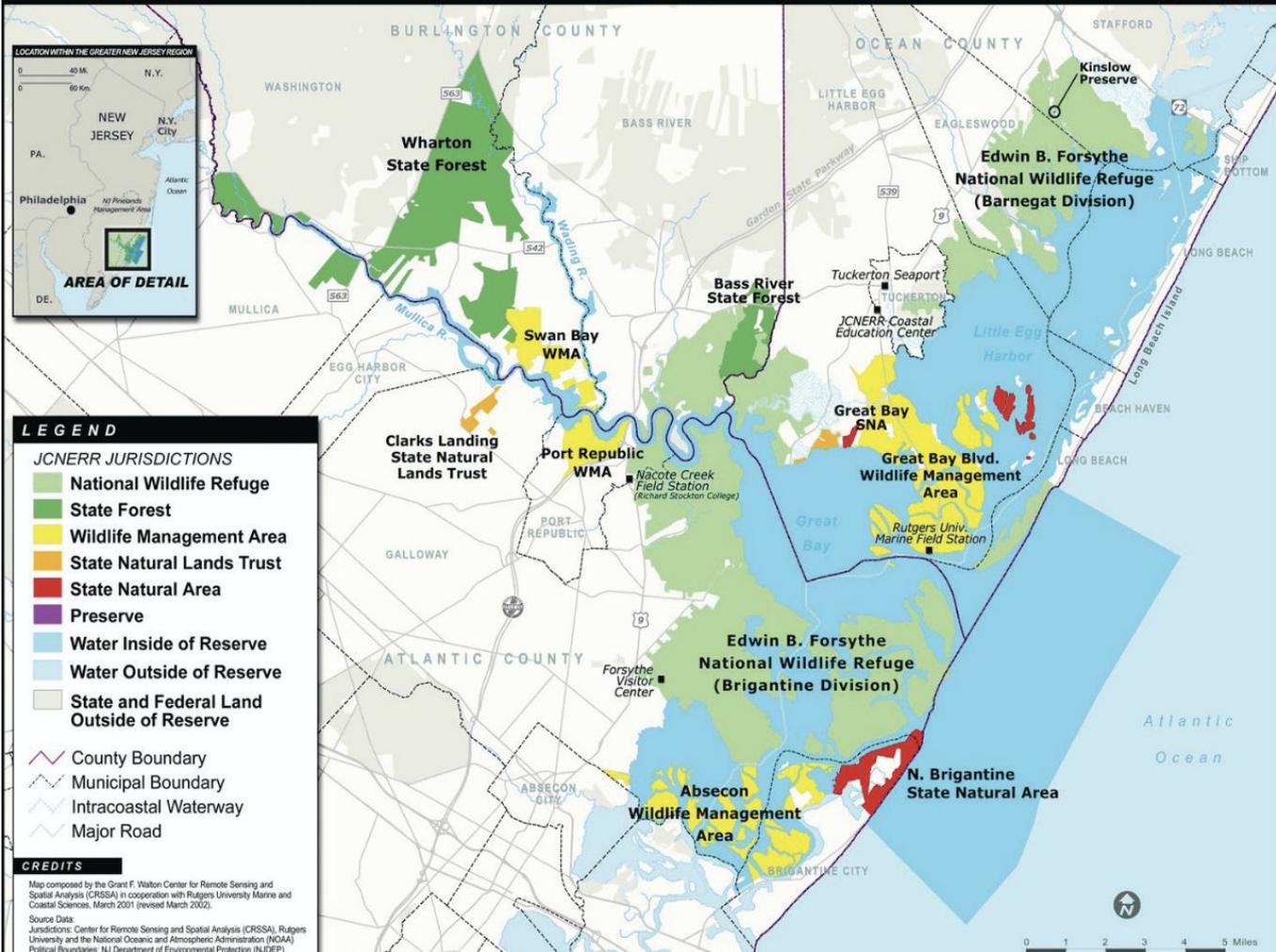
The Mullica River system has numerous branches and tributaries like the Wading, the Batsto, the Oswego, and the Landing Creek that combine and feed the main stem.



Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve



AT MULLICA RIVER - GREAT BAY, NEW JERSEY



The Proposal: National Wild & Scenic Designation

Goal: Designate the Mullica as a "Partnership" River

Purpose: To protect the scenic beauty, water quality, and recreational assets of the Mullica River against potentially harmful federal projects.

Precedents: The Great Egg Harbor and Maurice Rivers are both designated as Partnership National Wild and Scenic Rivers. The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association and CU Maurice River have both garnered widespread community respect in the course of their work.

Why seek designation?

Inclusion in the Act secures some federal funding and creates a 'veto power' over federal infrastructure that might otherwise dam or block the river, all while maintaining local control.

Once designated, some federal funds are made available in the forms of grants that could be used by towns for recreational river access projects and other river priorities.

Army Corps of Engineers proposed
To build a massive
Tide gate on the
Great Egg

Impact: restricting
Tidal flow by 40%
Even when open.
Migrating fish,
Sediment transport,

Result:
Denied by Section
7 Authority

Feds, N.J. propose \$16B plan to build flood barriers, elevate 19K Shore buildings

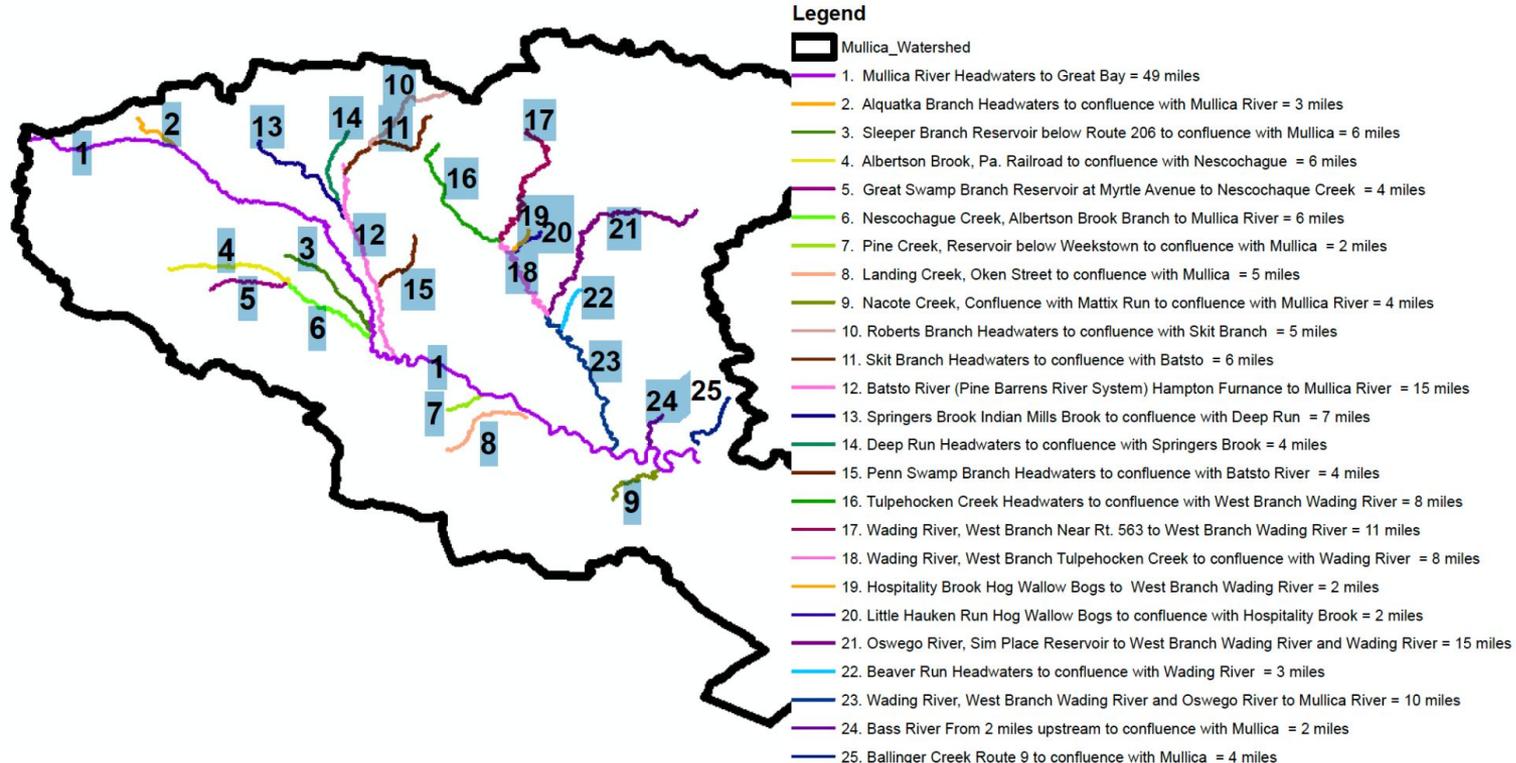
Updated: Aug. 20, 2021, 7:38 a.m. | Published: Aug. 19, 2021, 12:00 p.m.



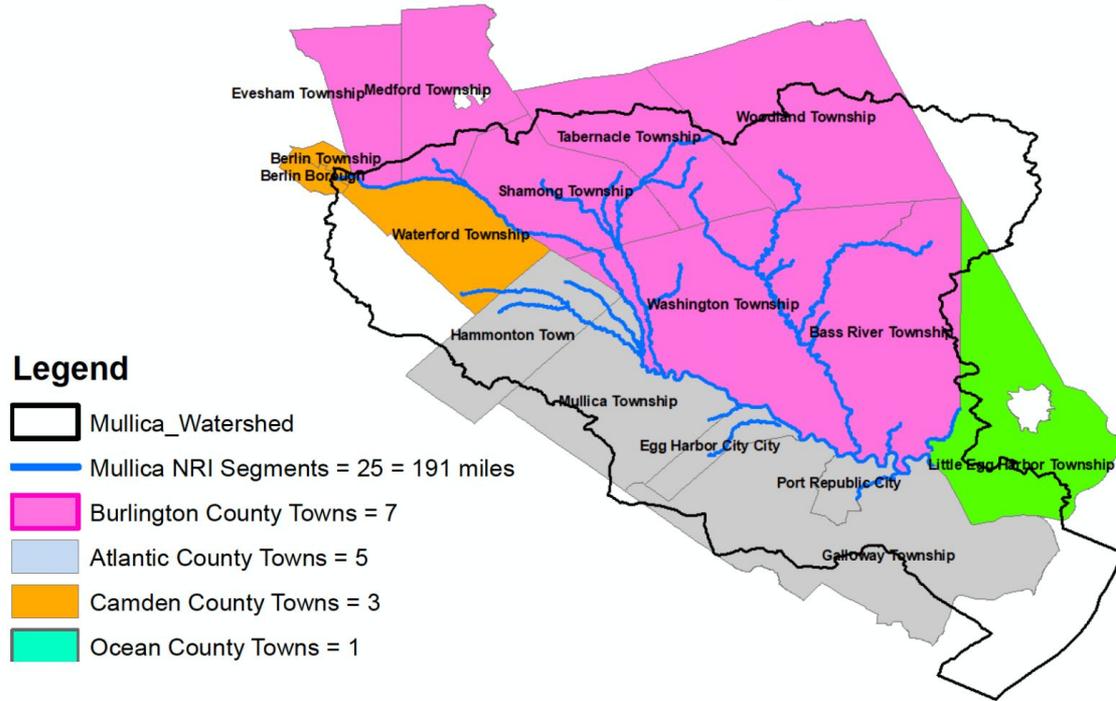
A rendering of a proposed storm surge barrier across Great Egg Harbor Inlet in New Jersey. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) U.S. Army

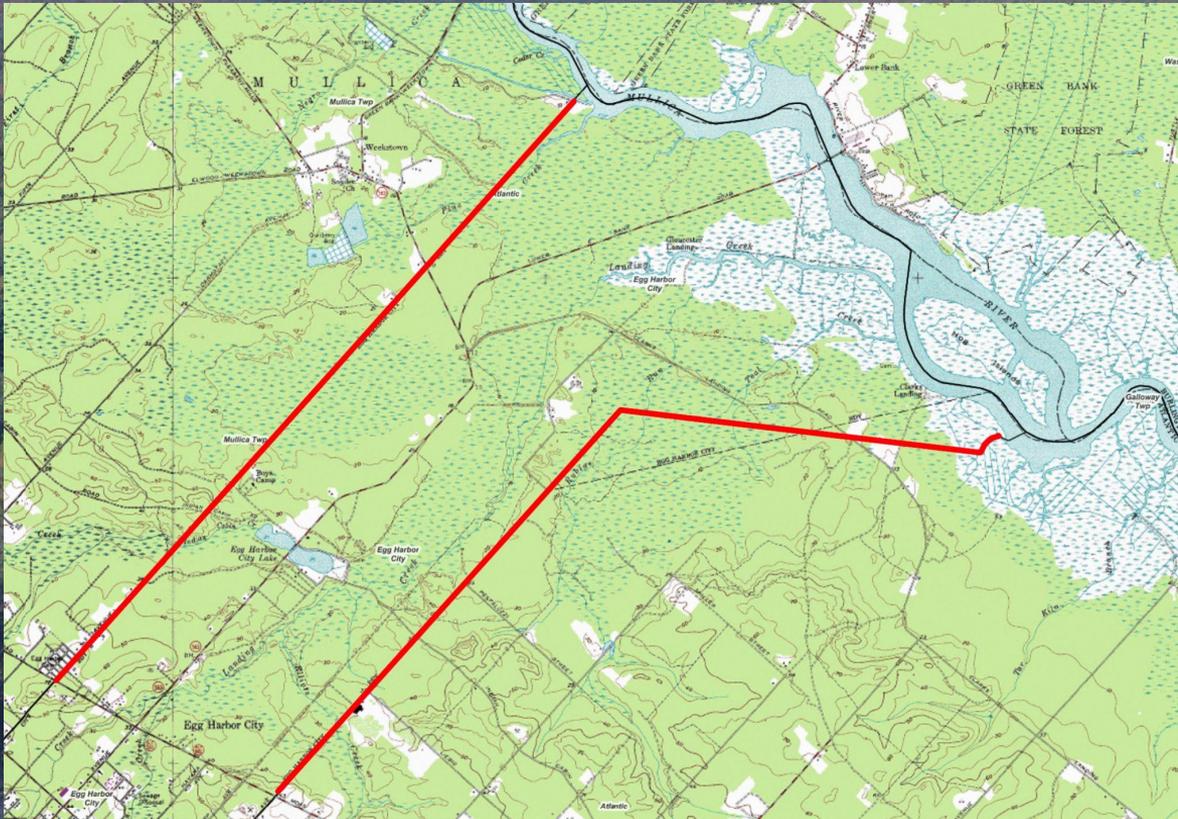
The National Rivers Inventory

25 Mullica River Nationwide Rivers Inventory Segments = 191 miles



The Mullica River and Tributaries flow through 16 Towns in 4 Counties





EHC Potential River Miles

2.1 miles on the Main Stem

1+- mile on the Teal Creek

6+- miles on the Landing Creek

An aerial photograph of a coastal region during sunset. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, orange, and yellow. Below the horizon, a large body of water stretches across the frame, with a winding river or inlet cutting through it. The land is visible in the foreground and along the riverbanks, showing some vegetation and a utility pole in the lower-left corner.

Egg Harbor City's Deep Connection to the Mullica

“Eyren Haven” In 1614, the Dutch vessel "Fortuyn" sailed up the Mullica River searching for food. It happened to be nesting season and bird eggs were everywhere. From the accounts of this voyage, the area became known as "Eyren Haven" or Harbor of the Eggs.

Galloway Potential 4.5 Miles on the Main Stem



River Classification Types

Wild River Areas: Free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail...

Scenic River Areas: Free of impoundments, with watershed largely undeveloped, accessible by road.

Recreational River Areas – Readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

What is the Partnership Model?

The "East Coast Issue": In the early years of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, designation usually meant designating a river in a national forest or park. This was impossible in the East, where rivers flow through private property, historic towns, and state parks.

The Great Egg Harbor Precedent: The Great Egg Harbor River (NJ) became the first "Partnership" river in 1992. It proved that rivers could be protected through local zoning and existing state laws instead of federal acquisition. The National Park Service (NPS) provides technical and financial support, but **local communities** retain management authority.

Success: This model proved so successful that it has expanded to 18 rivers across 10 states including 1089 river miles.

Partnership Model Cooperative Agreement

The Mechanism: The NPS enters into **Cooperative Agreements (CAs)** with local partners (NGOs or regional councils).

Federal Support: These agreements provide the consistent, annual funding needed to staff conservation efforts. Funds are strictly tied to implementing the locally created and federally-approved **Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP)**. This is the guidance document for how to protect the resources of the river.





Sudbury-Assabet-Concord River, Massachusetts



Wood-Pawcatuck Rivers, Rhode Island/Connecticut



Great Egg Harbor River, New Jersey



Taunton River, Massachusetts



Wekiva River, Florida



Farmington River, Connecticut



Maurice River, New Jersey



Missisquoi and Trout Rivers, Vermont



Lamprey River, New Hampshire



White Clay Creek, Delaware/Pennsylvania



Farmington River-Salmon Brook, Connecticut



Nashua-Squannacook-Nissitissit Rivers, Massachusetts/New Hampshire



Musconetcong River, New Jersey



Eightmile River, Connecticut



Lower Delaware River, Pennsylvania/New Jersey



Westfield River, Massachusetts

The Rivers: The Partnership model protects 1,089 miles of river through local-federal collaboration.

1. Eightmile River (CT)
2. Farmington River (CT)
3. Great Egg Harbor River (NJ)
4. Housatonic River (CT)
5. Lamprey River (NH)
6. Lower Delaware River (PA/NJ)
7. Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook (CT)
8. Maurice River (NJ)
9. Missisquoi & Trout Rivers (VT)
10. Musconetcong River (NJ)
11. Nashua-Squannacook-Nissitissit Rivers (MA/NH)
12. Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Rivers (MA)
13. Taunton River (MA)
14. Westfield River (MA)
15. Wekiva River (FL)
16. White Clay Creek (DE/PA)
17. Wood-Pawcatuck Rivers (RI/CT)
18. York River (ME)



York River, ME



Housatonic River, CT

What is a River Council?

Community-Led Governance: Each river is overseen by a Management Council composed of municipal representatives, state agency staff, and local stakeholders.

Technical Assistance: The Council acts as a forum for local towns to review development, discuss riparian health, and coordinate cross-boundary conservation.

Section 7 Consultation: When a federally-assisted project (like a bridge or pipeline) is proposed, the Council works with the NPS to ensure it doesn't harm the river's values and resources.

Frequent Questions

Question: Does this increase federal regulation?

Answer: No. It utilizes local authorities. NPS only reviews *federally* funded/permitted projects (Section 7).

Question: How does the Partnership model differ from a 'Traditional' Wild and Scenic River managed by the National Park Service?

Answer: In "Traditional" or "Classic" designations (common in the West), the river often flows through federal land (National Parks, Forests, or BLM land). In the **Partnership model**, the river flows almost entirely through **non-federal lands**, including private, state, and municipal property.

Question: How does the Partnership model leverage federal funding?

Answer: The Partnership model uses federal dollars to provide a baseline of funding for an organization which is amplified through partnerships, state and foundational grants, etc.

Council Responsibilities

- **Reviewing Projects:** They often review local land-use applications or permits that might affect the river corridor.
- **Grant Funding:** They frequently manage funds for river restoration, invasive species removal, or educational programs.
- **Monitoring:** Keeping an eye on water quality, wildlife habitats, and recreational usage.
- **Community Outreach:** Acting as a bridge between the federal government and local landowners to address concerns about property rights and access.

Wild and Scenic Partnership Program Success Stories

The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association (GEHWA) was formed in 1989 to promote the protection of the Great Egg Harbor River and the Great Egg Harbor Watershed through its designation by Congress into the federal Wild & Scenic Rivers Program.

Makepeace WMA

Great Egg Harbor River Council

Chair:
Gregory Gregory
Ron Meischker
Somers Point

Vice Chair:
Rick Coe
Monroe Twp.

COUNCILLORS:

Julie Akers
Lou Harvey
Jenn Jennings
Buena Vista Twp.

Brian Camp
Chuck O'Donnell
Corbin City

Bill Christman
Michael Dupras
Hamilton Twp.



Ralph Bernard
Bill Egan
Susan Stiles
Weymouth Twp.

Clark Sprigman
Winslow Twp.

John Keenan
Lynnee LoCicero
Hammonton

Jim Owen
William Donath Sr.
Estell Manor

Joel Spiegel
Ira Grindlinger
Borough of Folsom

David Brown
Tom Baum
Egg Harbor Twp.

Bill Handley
Steve Eisenhauer
Bill Stuempfig
Upper Twp.

Dick Colby
Paul Ludgate
GEHWA

Partnership Success Story



“Back in the late 1960s and 70s, the first rivers to be designated were surrounded mostly by public land, many in western parks. The Park Service created a partnership program to help protect Eastern rivers that flow through private land with little or no federal land ownership, like the Maurice,” - Karla Rossini, CU Maurice River

Protecting the River, Protect the Water Supply

NEW JERSEY Regional Drinking-Water-Supply Indicators & Declared Water-Supply Status						February 1, 2026			
Region		Drinking-Water-Supply Indicator					Water-Supply Status		
		Status	90-day precipitation	90-day stream-flow	N.J. reservoirs	Del. R. reservoirs			Unconf ground water
Coastal South		Near or above normal			Not a significant region-wide water resource.	Not a significant region-wide water resource.		Normal	
		Moderately dry						Watch	
		Severely dry						Warning	
		Extremely dry						Emergency	

NJ State Water Supply is Stressed

However, conservation measures and land preservation in our area have created a groundwater buffer in times of severe drought.

Protecting the river's base-flow can help prevent local water shortages in the future.

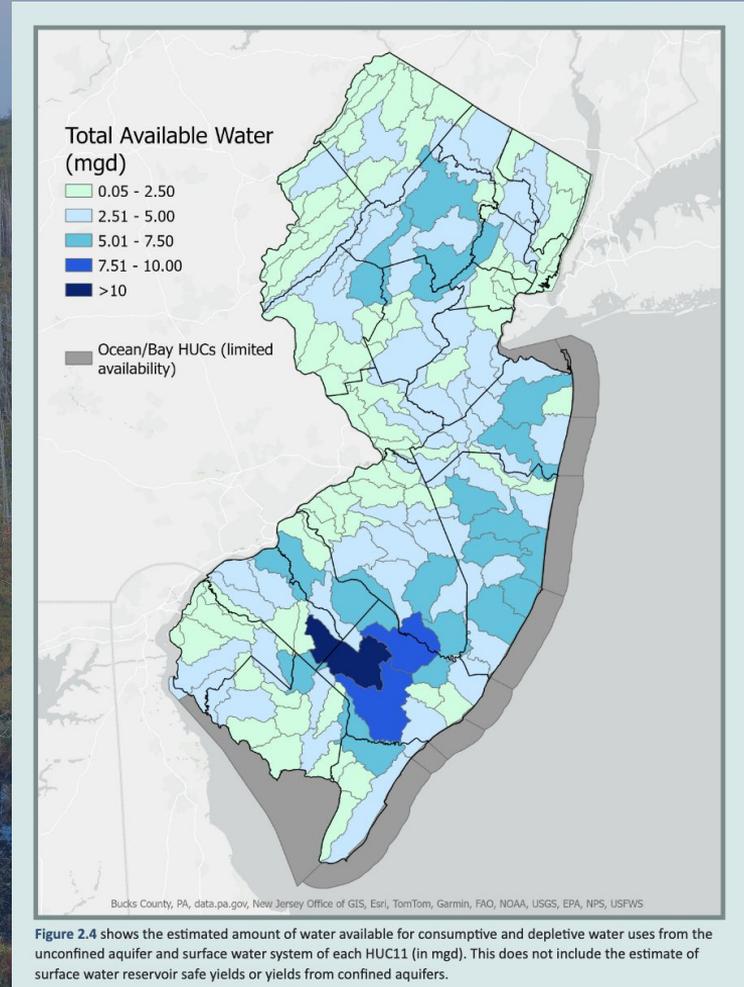
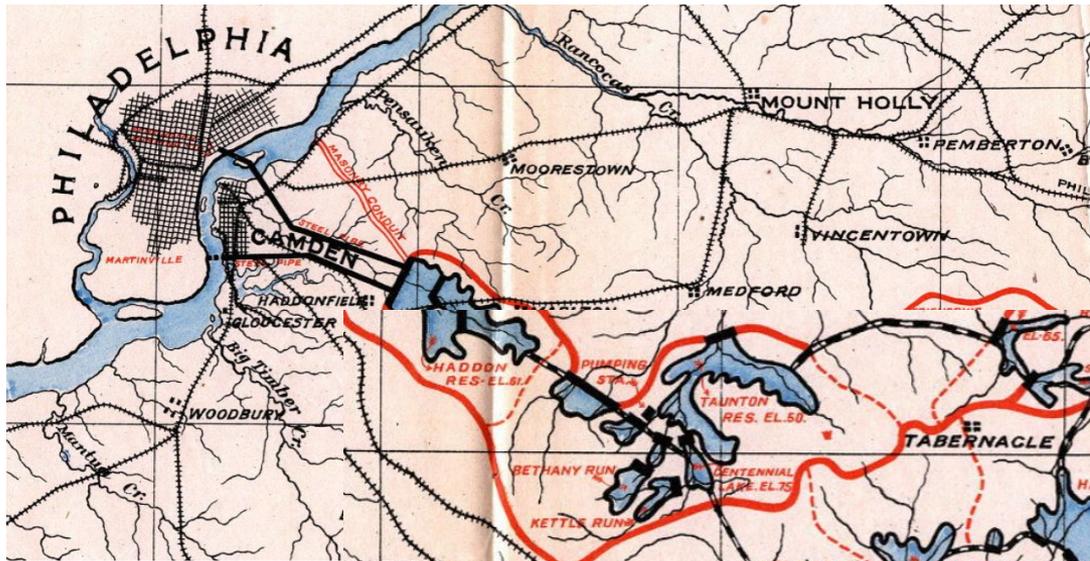
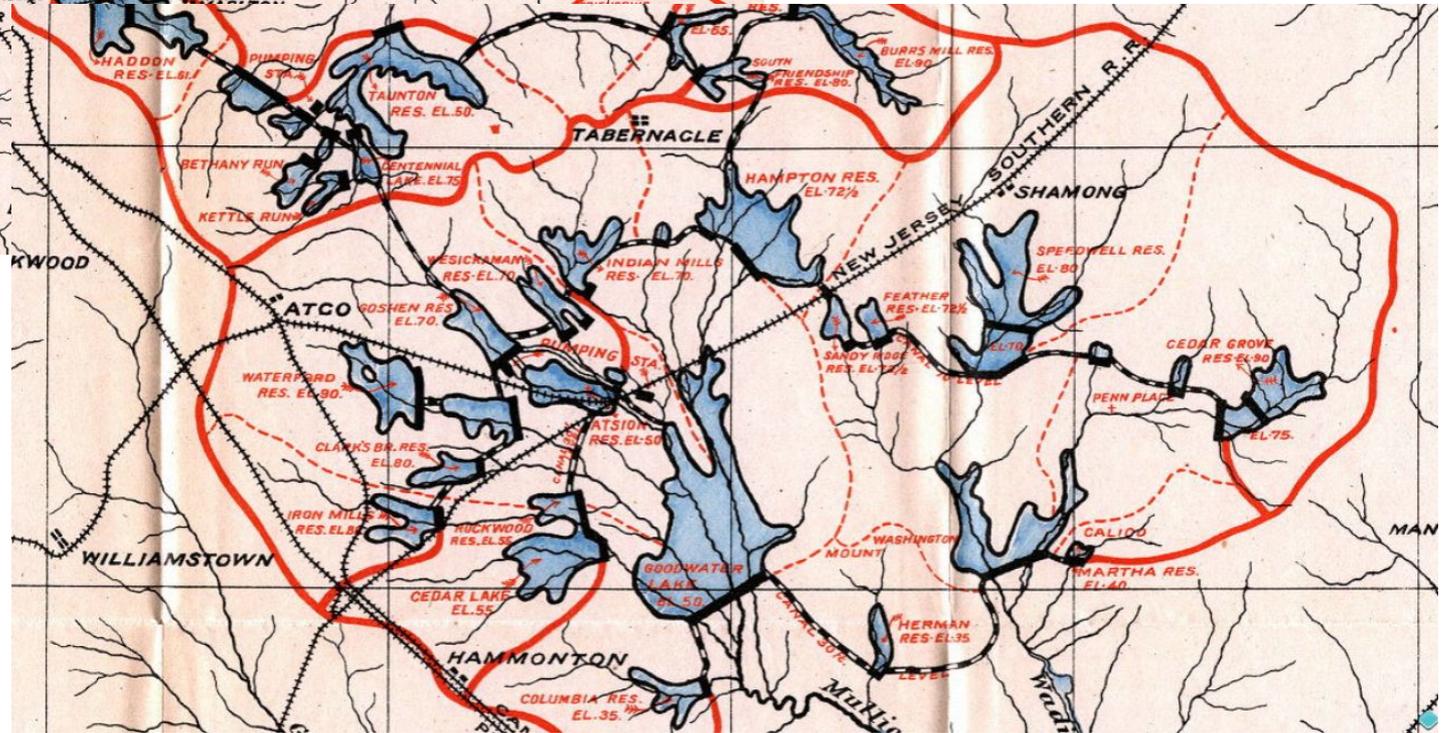


Figure 2.4 shows the estimated amount of water available for consumptive and depletive water uses from the unconfined aquifer and surface water system of each HUC11 (in mgd). This does not include the estimate of surface water reservoir safe yields or yields from confined aquifers.



Joseph Wharton Water Plan

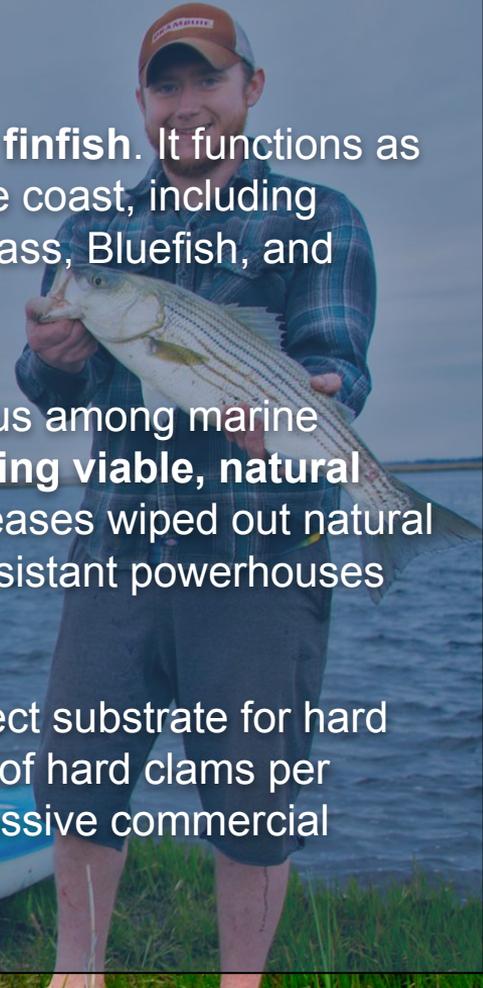


Protecting the Estuary

The Mullica River and Great Bay support over **60 different species of finfish**. It functions as a massive, protected incubator for the most sought-after catches on the coast, including Summer Flounder (Fluke), Winter Flounder, Striped Bass, Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, and Weakfish.

The Last Wild Oyster Stronghold: The Mullica River Estuary is famous among marine biologists and aquaculturists because it supports one of the **last remaining viable, natural oyster populations** along the Atlantic Coast of New Jersey. While diseases wiped out natural reefs in other bays, the Mullica's oysters survived. They are disease-resistant powerhouses that have actually been used to re-seed other failing bays.

Clamming: The historic shell beds in Great Bay have created the perfect substrate for hard clams. Some historic leases in Great Bay boast the highest population of hard clams per square foot anywhere in the region. It is a sanctuary that sustains a massive commercial clamming industry.



A scenic view of a river with a green canoe in the foreground and a forested background. The river flows through a natural landscape with trees and grasses. The canoe is green and has a wooden paddle resting inside it. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding environment. The background shows a dense forest of trees, some with bare branches, suggesting a cooler season. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Summary: Designation of the Mullica River will

- **Provide:** Funding opportunities for recreational river access and enhancement
- **Protect:** Local fisheries, recreational resources, wildlife, and our local water supply for homes, farms, and businesses
- **Enhance:** Public perception of our local area and increase tourism potential for river towns.
- **Encourage:** Activities like hunting and fishing, agriculture, aquaculture, paddling, and boating.