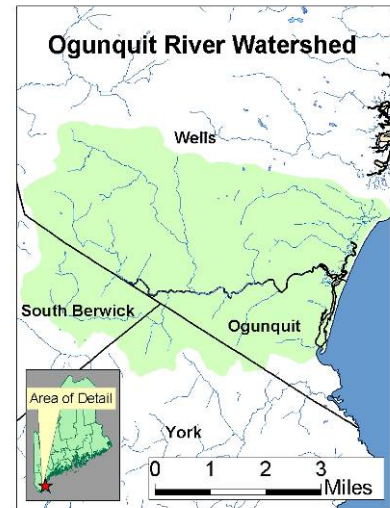


# Ogunquit River Watershed Management Plan

#2003-01

Waterbody Name:	Ogunquit River
Location:	Ogunquit, Wells, York and South Berwick – York County
Waterbody Status:	NPS Priority Watershed
Project Grantee:	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Project Duration:	May 2003 – March 2007
319 Grant Amount:	\$32,800
Local Match:	\$14,675



## PROBLEM:

The Ogunquit River watershed covers approximately 20 square miles. The river discharges into the Ogunquit estuary behind a 2.5-mile-long beach. Its estuary accommodates many recreational uses, including swimming, recreational fishing, canoeing, kayaking and bird watching. As one of the most productive clam flats in southern Maine, the river is also a valuable economic resource. Annually, clam harvesting licenses provide \$6,200 in revenue to the Town of Ogunquit, and about \$70,000 worth of soft shell clams are harvested each year.

During the 1990's, Ogunquit's year-round population increased by 26%, which was twice the rate of York County as a whole. Also within this period, there was an 8% increase in both single family housing units and hotel/ motel rental units. Nearly all of the Town's runoff flows to the Ogunquit River and estuary, and from 1988 until 1998, the clam flats were closed due to elevated bacterial pollutants. Since the clam flats were re-opened, there have been several emergency closures due to heavy stormwater runoff events.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

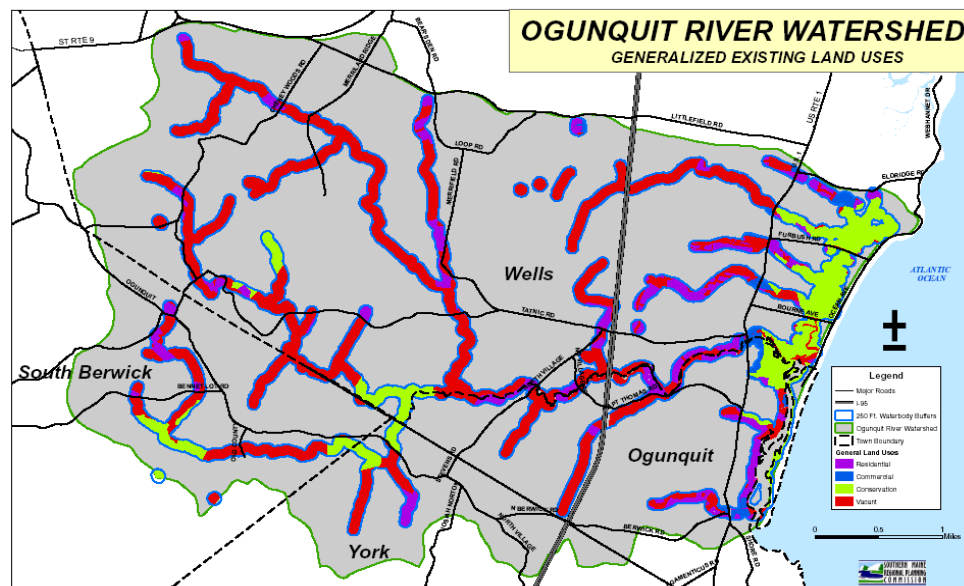
The purpose of this project was to develop a watershed management plan for the Ogunquit River watershed that can be used to guide long-term protection efforts. Watershed problems and needs were assessed in the early phases of the project. In 2003, technical staff and 35 volunteers identified and prioritized 160 NPS sites within the 100 to 250+ foot shoreland zone in the entire watershed. The Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC) used GIS and zoning maps to map vacant land within 250 feet of the river and its main tributaries with the potential for future development.

Survey information and the build-out analysis maps were used to develop a watershed management plan, which recommends BMPs and "smart growth strategies" to significantly reduce NPS pollution and estuary degradation. The project raised awareness and gathered public input in the watershed through six public presentations. 600 property owners within 250 feet of the Ogunquit River were contacted, and several community events were publicized and well attended.



## PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- 160 potential NPS sites were identified in the 2003 Ogunquit River shoreland survey. Survey results were summarized in the report, *Ogunquit River Watershed: Shoreland Survey of Non-Point Source Pollution* (March, 2005).
- Staff from SMRPC used GIS and town zoning information to identify and map vacant land within 250 feet of the Ogunquit River and its major tributaries with the potential for future development. The build-out analysis maps are included in the watershed management plan.
- The *Ogunquit River Watershed Management Plan* was completed in 2007. The plan outlines four objectives and 23 action items to protect and restore the watershed.
- The Ogunquit Conservation Commission was formed in 2004, and they have since assumed a leading role in the river protection efforts in Ogunquit and the other watershed towns.



## PROJECT PARTNERS:

Towns of Ogunquit, Wells, South Berwick and York  
York County SWCD  
University of New England  
York County Technical College  
Ogunquit River Water Sampling Committee  
Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission



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Suggested Citation:

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