

Environmental Review for Trail Projects

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife



Get an Idea of What Is on Your Site

- **Check the viewers:** ←

- [Environmental Review Tool](#) (regulatory)
- [Beginning With Habitat](#) (conservation planning)

- **“Turtle Towns”**

- Mostly Mid and Southern Maine

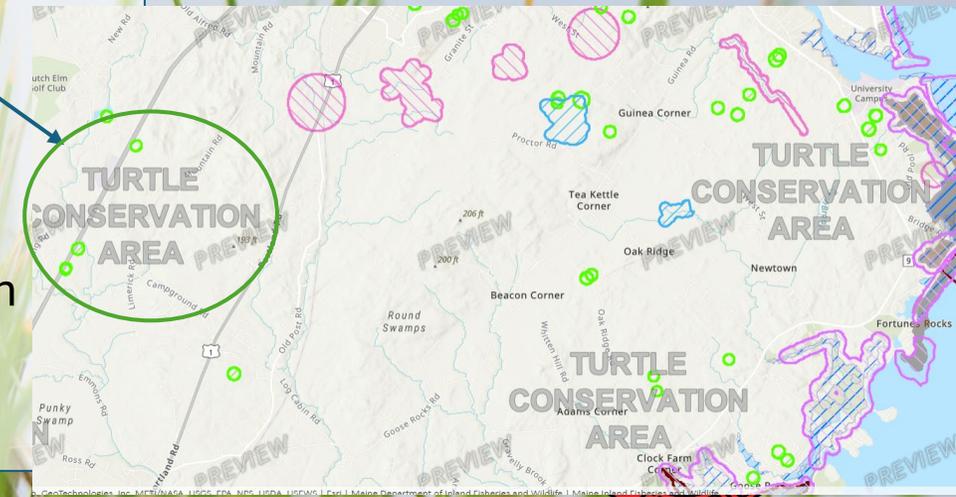
- **Deer Wintering Areas**

- Mainly Northern and Central Maine, generally no/limited removal of evergreen trees
- Heavy wintertime use may be a concern depending on site

- **High Elevation Species**

- Bicknell’s Thrush and Roaring Brook Mayfly
 - Above 1,000 feet, central and western Maine
- Blackpoll Warbler and Northern Spring Salamander
 - More flexible, generally above 500 feet, central and western Maine

Not sure how to use the viewers?
Come see me after the presentations for a quick tutorial!



What Do I Need in My Letter to Environmental Review?



Mapping:

- Best: Shapefile (full file set) or Google Earth KMZ of the trail
- Just Fine: Clear Maps (Google screenshots/DeLorme photocopy with trail highlighted)
 - Show larger context (i.e. town scale), but also close up context
 - Bonus: Lat/Long Coordinates at key intervals

Vegetation Removal?

- If you can, specify approximate amount and type (tree vs. shrub)
- Any within 100-300 feet of Streams or 250 feet of Vernal Pools?

Stream Crossings

- Where are they?
- How will you cross them?
- Is there in-water work?
- If you can, send stream photos where you plan to cross

Trail Specifics

- New or Existing?
 - Relocation = new section of trail
- Trail width?
 - Specify if wider than previous
 - If multiple: note section lengths and widths
- Trail use?
- Trail surface material?
- Pesticide or Herbicide use?
- Construction timing and methods (if using machinery)?

Common Concerns on Trail Projects



Will there be potential erosion from trail use or construction into the stream?

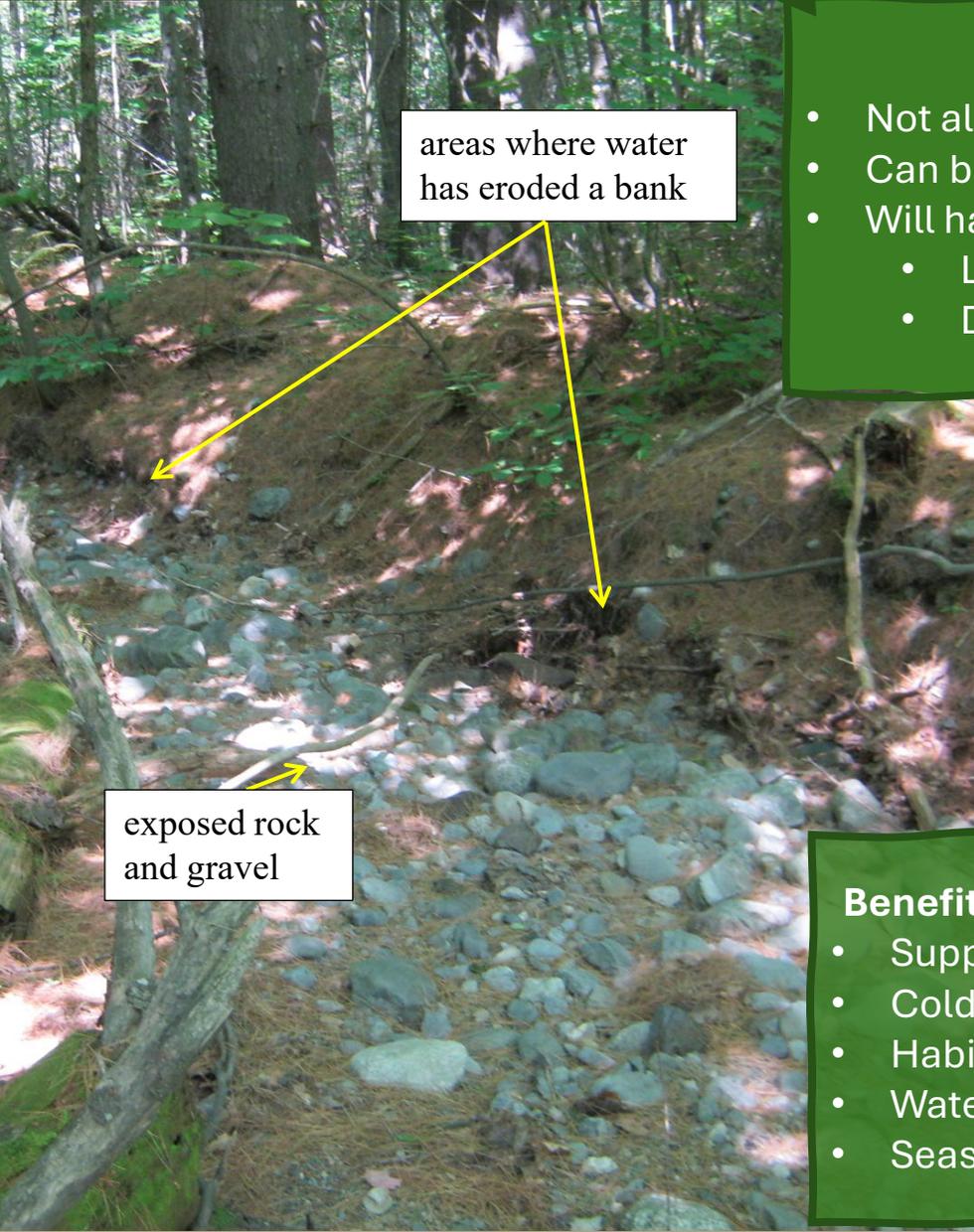
Can vegetation removal be avoided or limited?

Will the trail use cause disturbance to sensitive wildlife during important time periods?

Is the stream crossing potentially going to restrict water during high flow conditions?

Can the trail be sited to avoid sensitive habitat?

On Streams

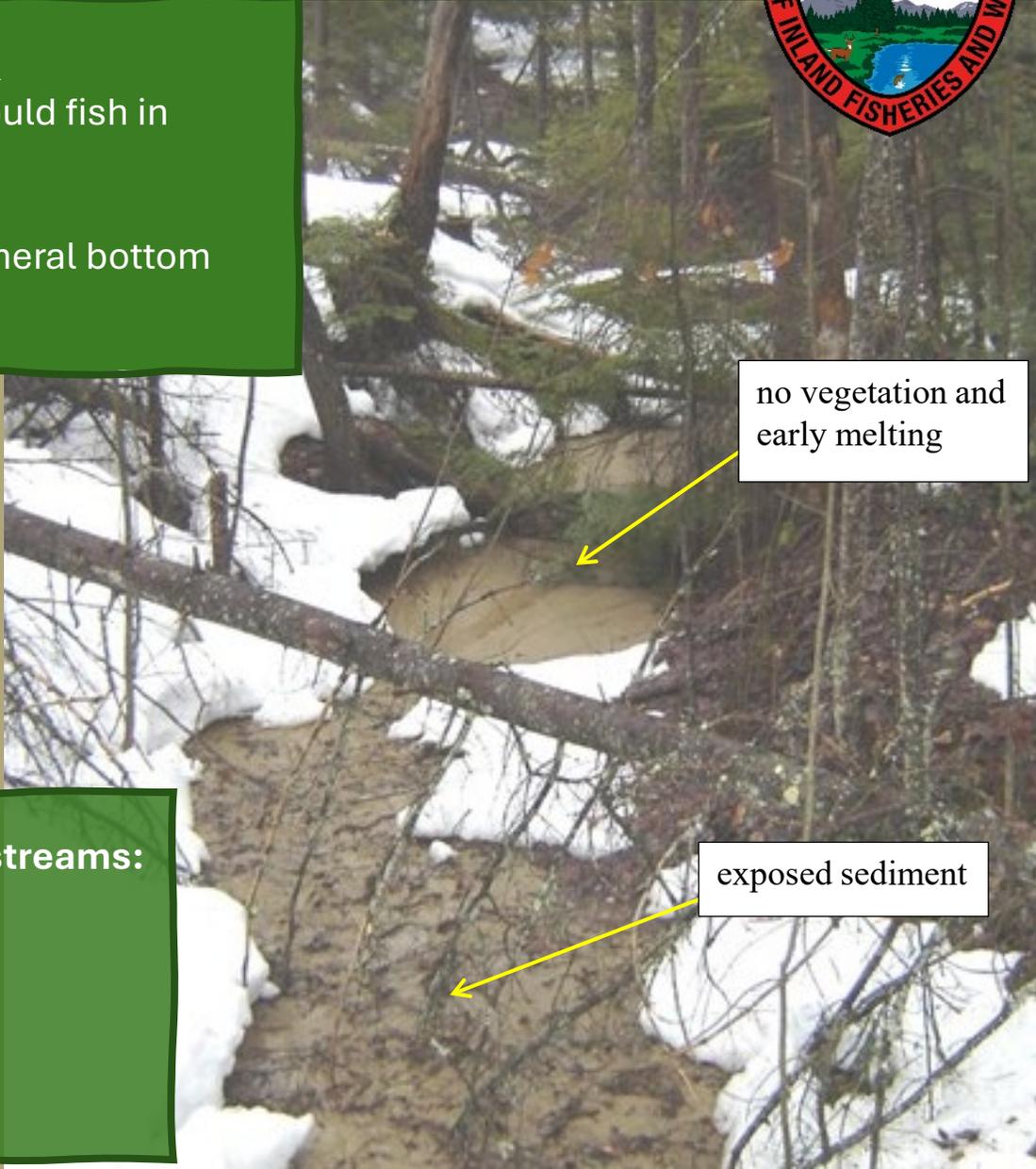


areas where water has eroded a bank

exposed rock and gravel

What is a stream?

- Not all streams are what you would fish in
- Can be dry sometimes
- Will have:
 - Lack of vegetation with mineral bottom
 - Defined channel



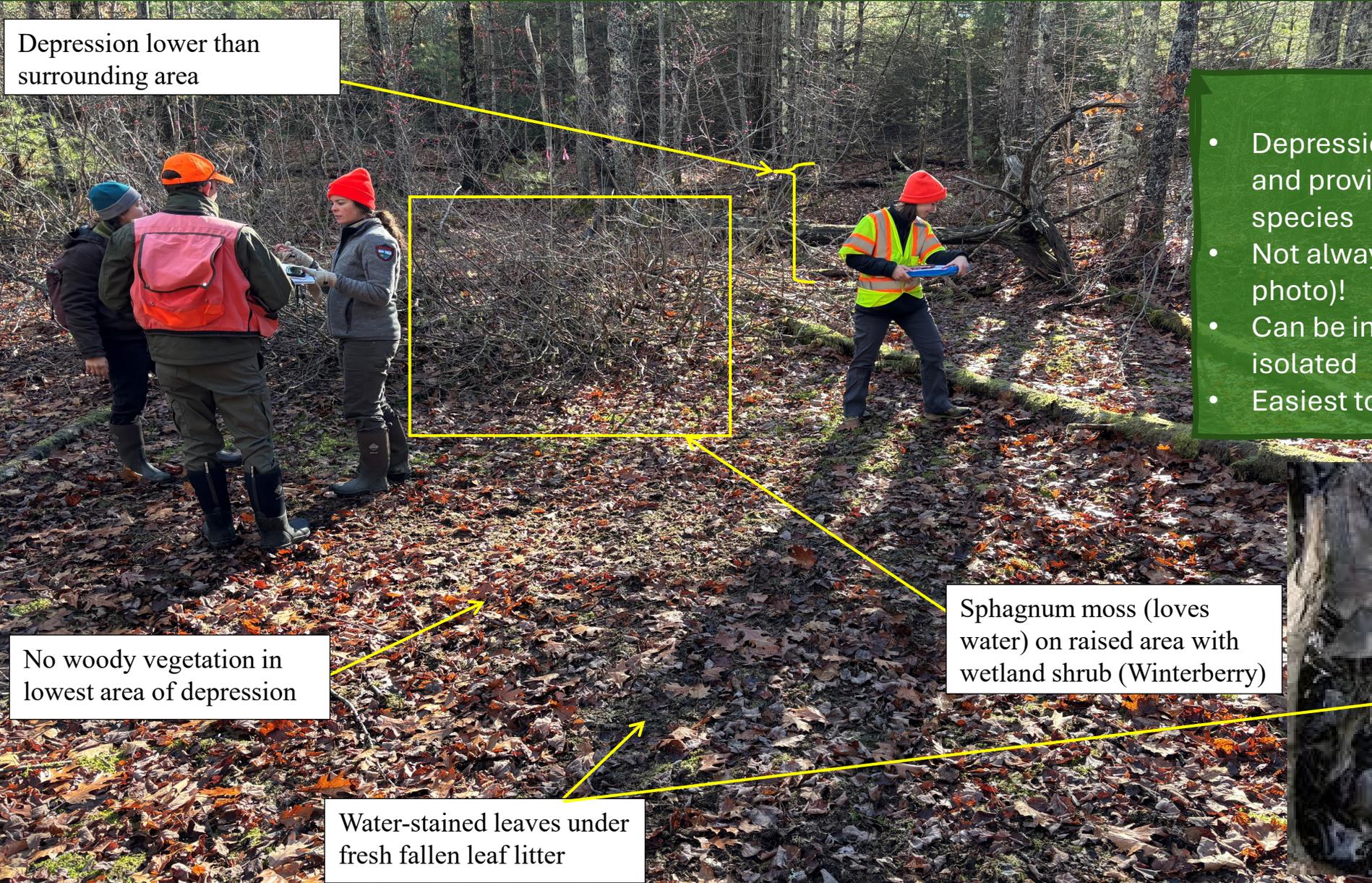
no vegetation and early melting

exposed sediment

Benefits of seasonally flowing streams:

- Supply food sources for fish
- Cold water refuge for fish
- Habitat inputs
- Water quality source
- Seasonal spawning areas

On Vernal Pools



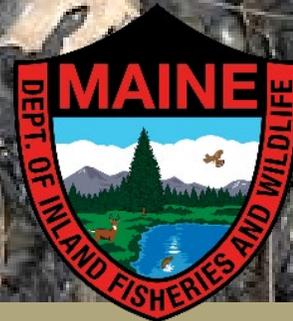
Depression lower than surrounding area

No woody vegetation in lowest area of depression

Water-stained leaves under fresh fallen leaf litter

Sphagnum moss (loves water) on raised area with wetland shrub (Winterberry)

- ### Vernal Pools
- Depressions that fill with water seasonally and provide breeding areas for various species
 - Not always small – can be quite large (see photo)!
 - Can be in upland or wetland areas, often isolated
 - Easiest to find in the spring



Common Recommendations to Avoid & Minimize

Limit vegetation clearing

Narrow or route trails to avoid waterbodies and sensitive habitat

Use bog bridging or raised boardwalks in wet areas

Use oversized culverts or full span bridges for stream crossings

Use a construction monitor to walk ahead of trail work and **move critters outside of the work area**

Bottom Line:

We encourage the wise use of our natural resources, **we are here to help you!**

Time of year recommendations for work; most common:
In-Water Work Window: July 15-October 1



When to Submit to Environmental Review



• Flying By the Seat of Your Pants?

- May 11, 2026 for this cycle (~45 days from grant due date)
- **Caveat:** Doesn't give you much time if you need to respond in your application to our recommendations, we may not be able to schedule a meeting and there is no time for a site visit.

• Better Safe Than Sorry?

- April 15, 2026 (2.5-month lead time)
- Gives us time to review and get comments back to with time left for you to edit/adjust as needed
- Gives us time to meet with you if needed
- If we need a site visit, we *might* be able to still arrange this

• If It's Tricky...

- **As soon as possible** – even if you don't have a full scope or plan yet!
- Request that we do a site visit with you

Thank you! Questions?



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Image: National Park Service

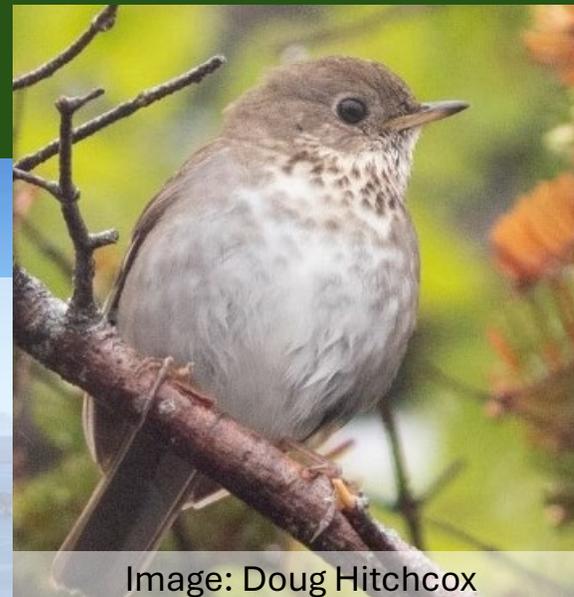
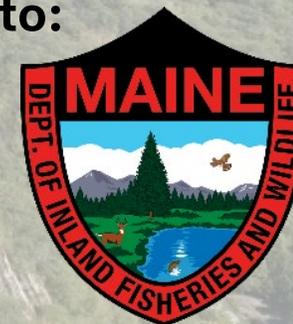


Image: Doug Hitchcox

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