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York River Stewardship Committee appointed and coordinator hired

Earlier this year, the towns of York, Eliot, Kittery, and South Berwick appointed eleven residents to serve on the newly formed York River Stewardship Committee, which began meeting over the summer. Committee meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month and are open to the public. The committee is the local partner and convener responsible for implementing the Partnership Wild and Scenic River designation for York River. Its creation was prompted by the December 2022 legislation that designated York River into the national Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The committee received its first round of annual funding through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, the federal agency partner for all rivers in the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program.

After conducting a national search, the committee very recently selected Jennifer Hunter as its watershed program coordinator. Hunter served as coordinator for the earlier Wild and Scenic River study phase and was instrumental in developing the York River Watershed Stewardship Plan and helping achieve the national designation for the river. In the near term, she will work with the committee to identify and develop high priority projects for the group to undertake with the newly awarded federal funds. The committee also will establish a grant program to support local activities that enable communities to protect, enjoy, and benefit from a healthy river and watershed.

The national Wild and Scenic River designation for York River was the focus of a recent News Center Maine '207' story. Reporter Don Carrigan toured the river and spoke at length with several York River Stewardship Committee members. The resulting 6-minute story aired on October 11. A link to the '207' program segment, as well as information about river designation, is available on the Stewardship Committee's website: www.YorkRiverMaine.org.
