



# Niagara Habitat Conservation Strategy

## Project Purpose:

Provide a science-based, collaborative blueprint to guide future efforts to protect and restore the habitat values, species communities and ecological functions that define a healthy Niagara Watershed.

## Project Need:

- *Niagara River RAP* delisting criterion (BUI 14):  
“Develop measurable targets for habitat types within the AOC.”
- *Niagara River Greenway Plan* priorities for funding:  
. . . projects involving “restoration of the Niagara River ecosystem.”
- *NYS Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* recommendations:  
“Determine current and historic extent of habitat types; set goals.

## Scope:

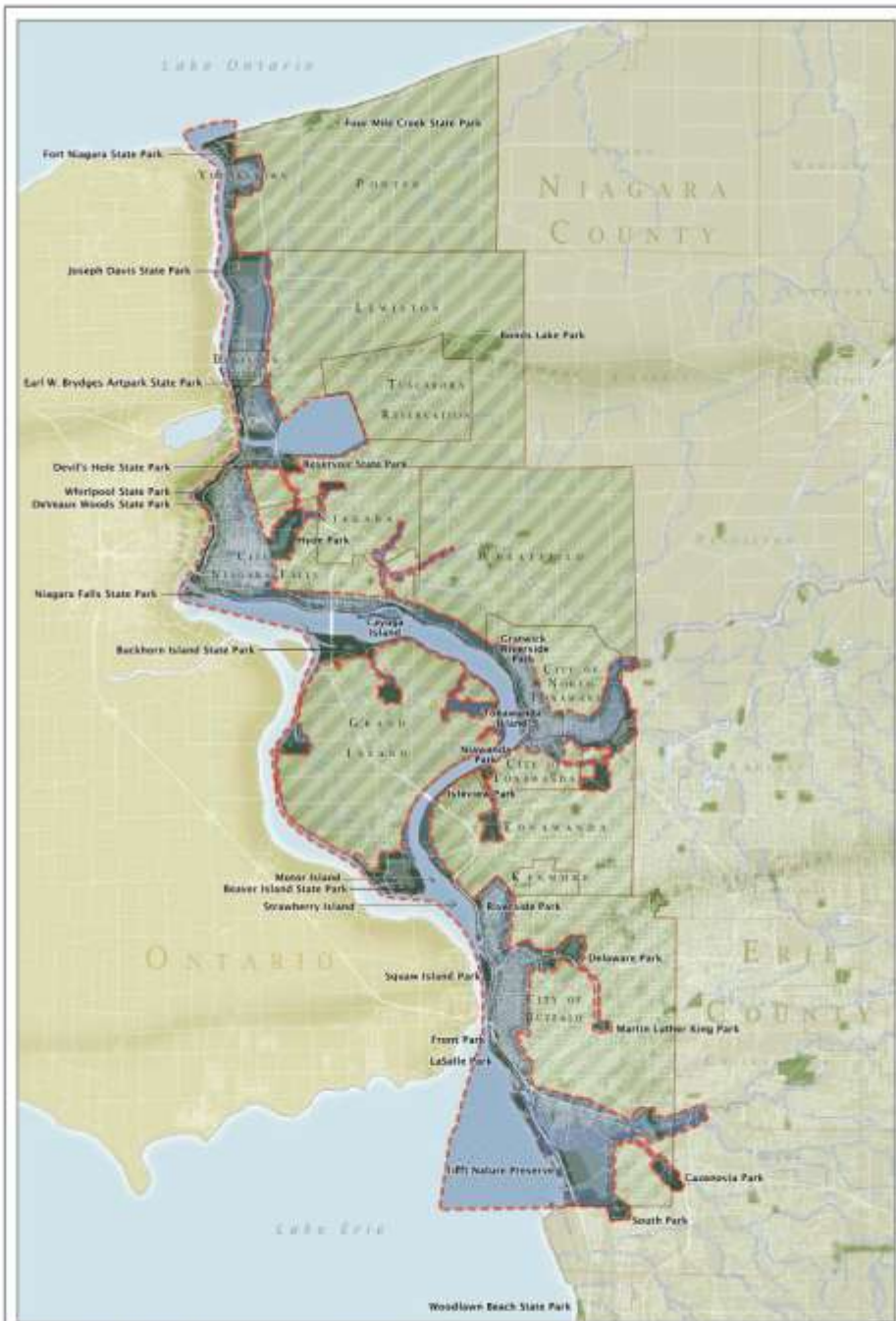
As a Great Lakes connecting channel the Niagara:

- drains 263,700 square miles. The upper Great Lakes supply >85% of its tributary flow;
- supplies 83% of the tributary flow to Lake Ontario;
- is a significant habitat for migratory birds and fish.



## Greenway view:

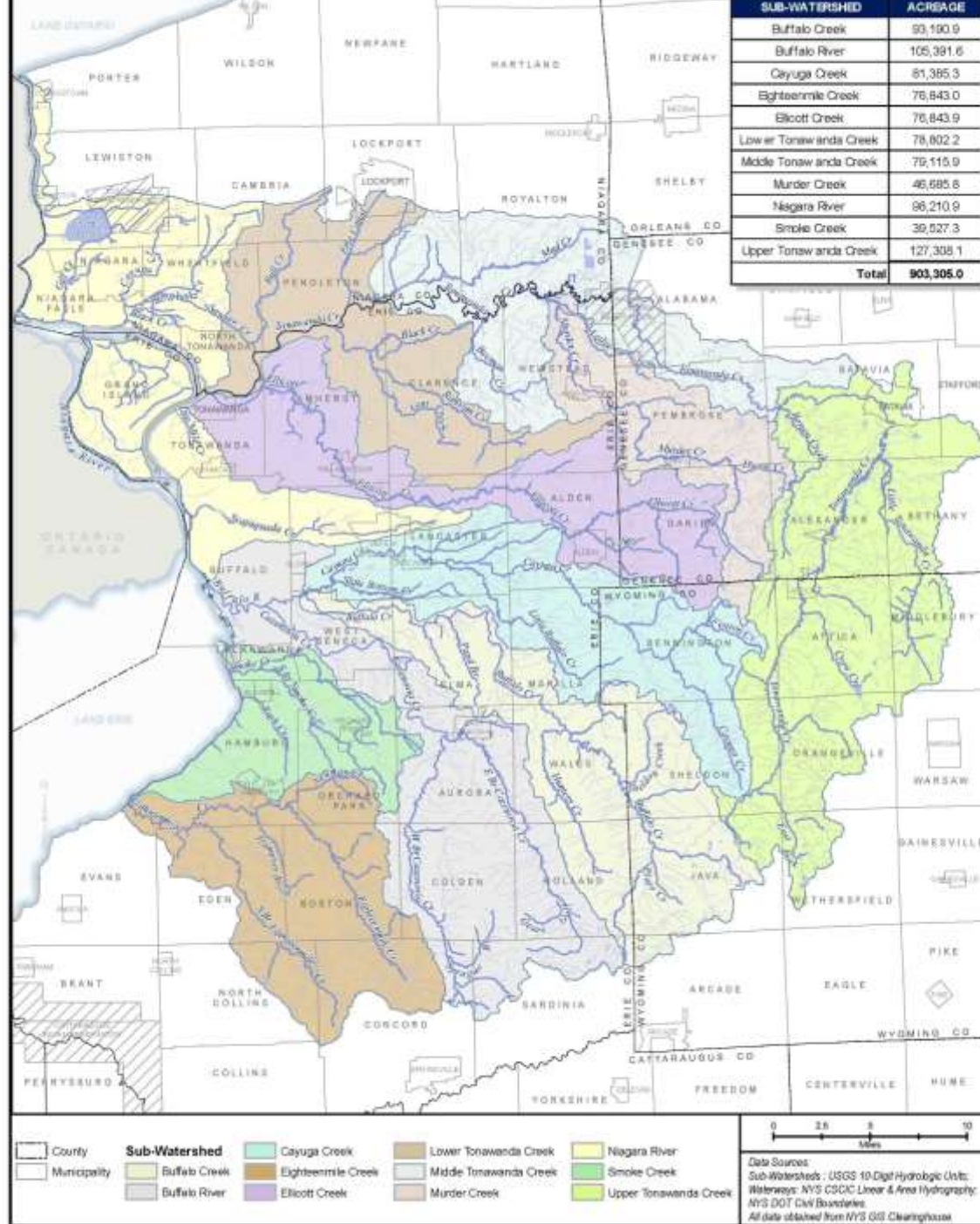
A 37-mile-long lake-to-lake connecting channel



**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY**  
Greenway Focus Areas  
Niagara River Greenway Area

# Focus:

In New York State, the Niagara River Watershed is approximately 903,000 acres with 9 tributary sub-basins.



# Methodology: Conservation Action Planning

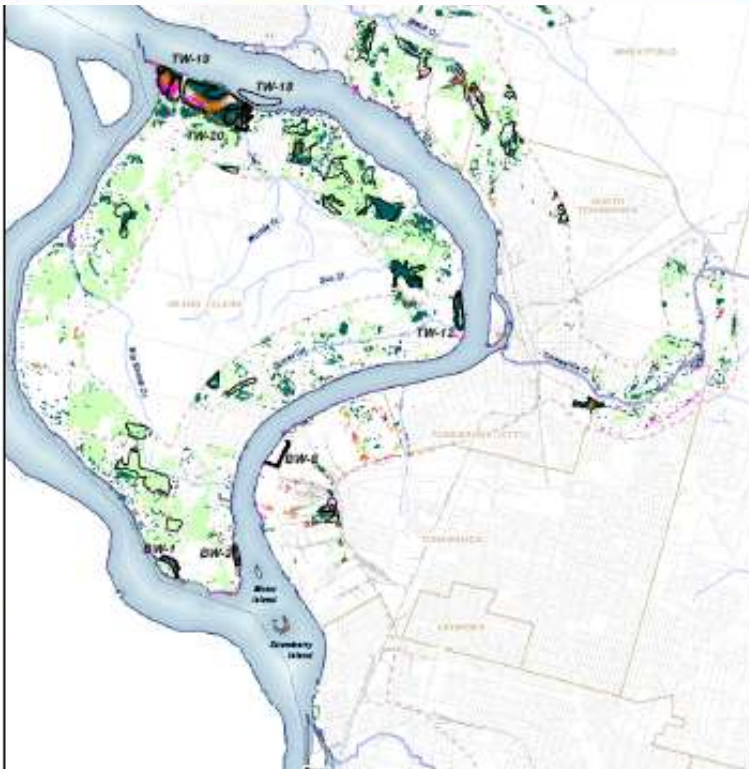
- Identify the species, natural communities and ecological systems that represent the biodiversity within the watershed.
- Define attributes and indicators to help rate the health status of each feature. Refine assessments with stakeholders.
- Identify critical threats and rank according to potential severity of impact.
- Develop conservation measures and priority areas to focus limited resources.
- Implement, adapt, improve.

## Sample biodiversity features:

- Benthic/pelagic offshore
- Nearshore/shallows
- Islands
- Riparian habitats (e.g. wetlands, grassland, floodplain forest)
- Upland forest
- Unique habitats (e.g. Niagara Gorge)
- Native communities (or selected species)
- IBA bird species



# Map 5.8 Wetland Areas Niagara River Study Area



Wetland land cover  
in the river corridor:

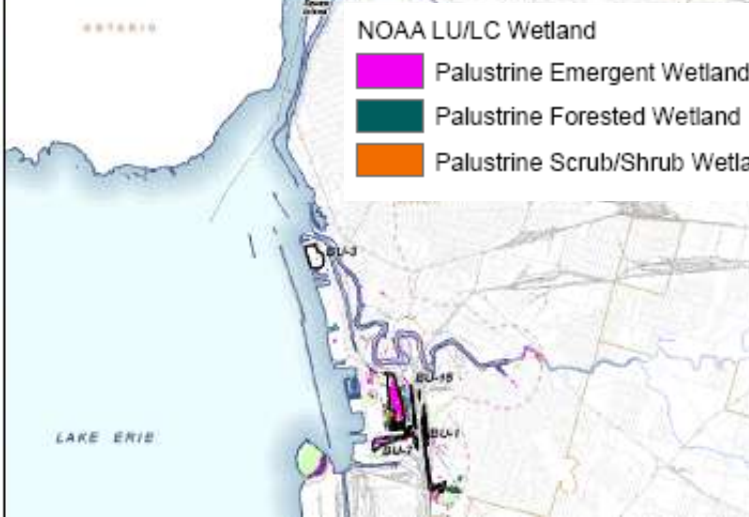
- 2% NYS regulated
- 6% NOAA identified

NOAA LU/LC Wetland

- Palustrine Emergent Wetland
- Palustrine Forested Wetland
- Palustrine Scrub/Shrub Wetland

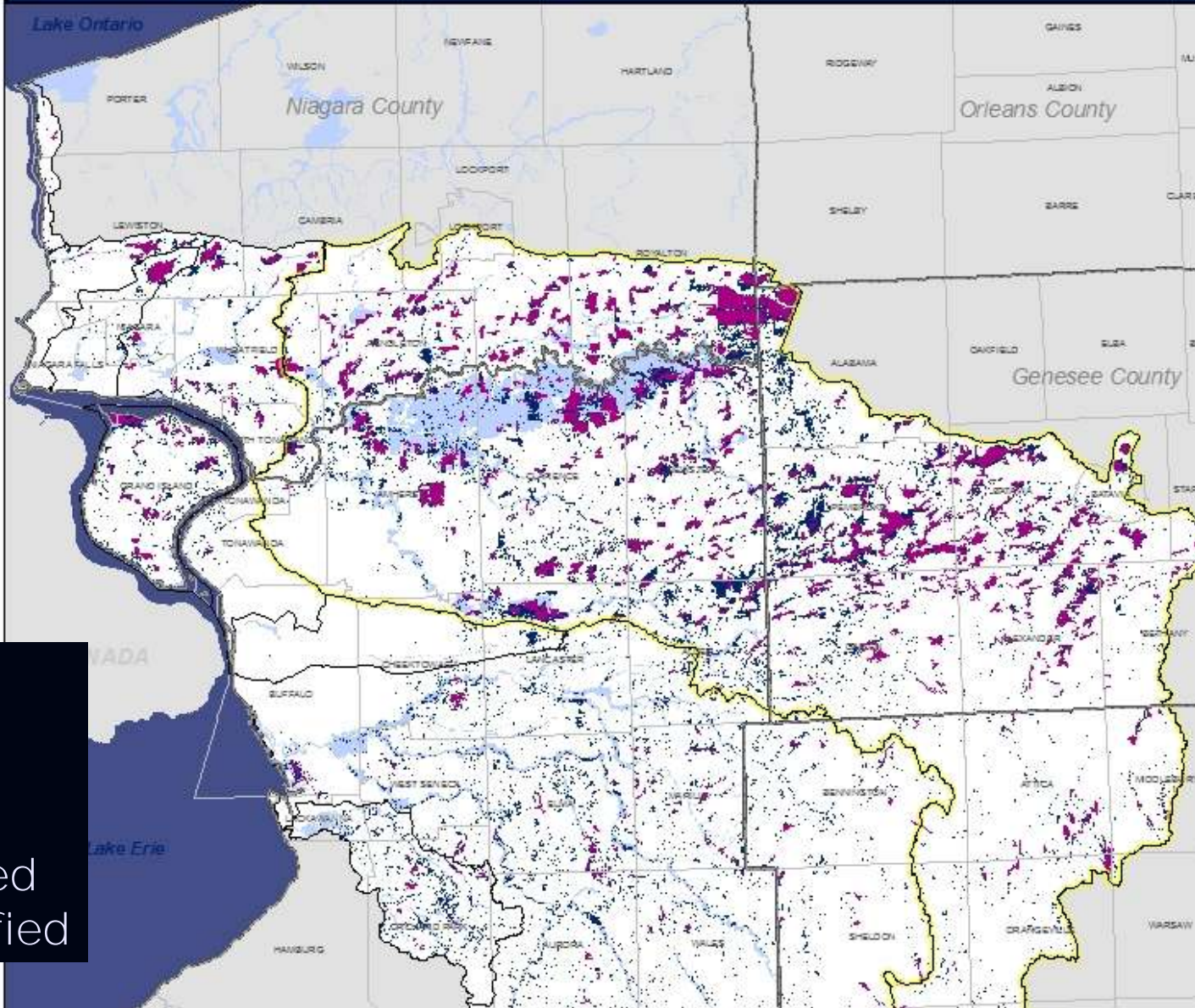
State Wetland (*Numbered Sites are listed in 1994 RAP*)

- Federal Wetland
- Study Area





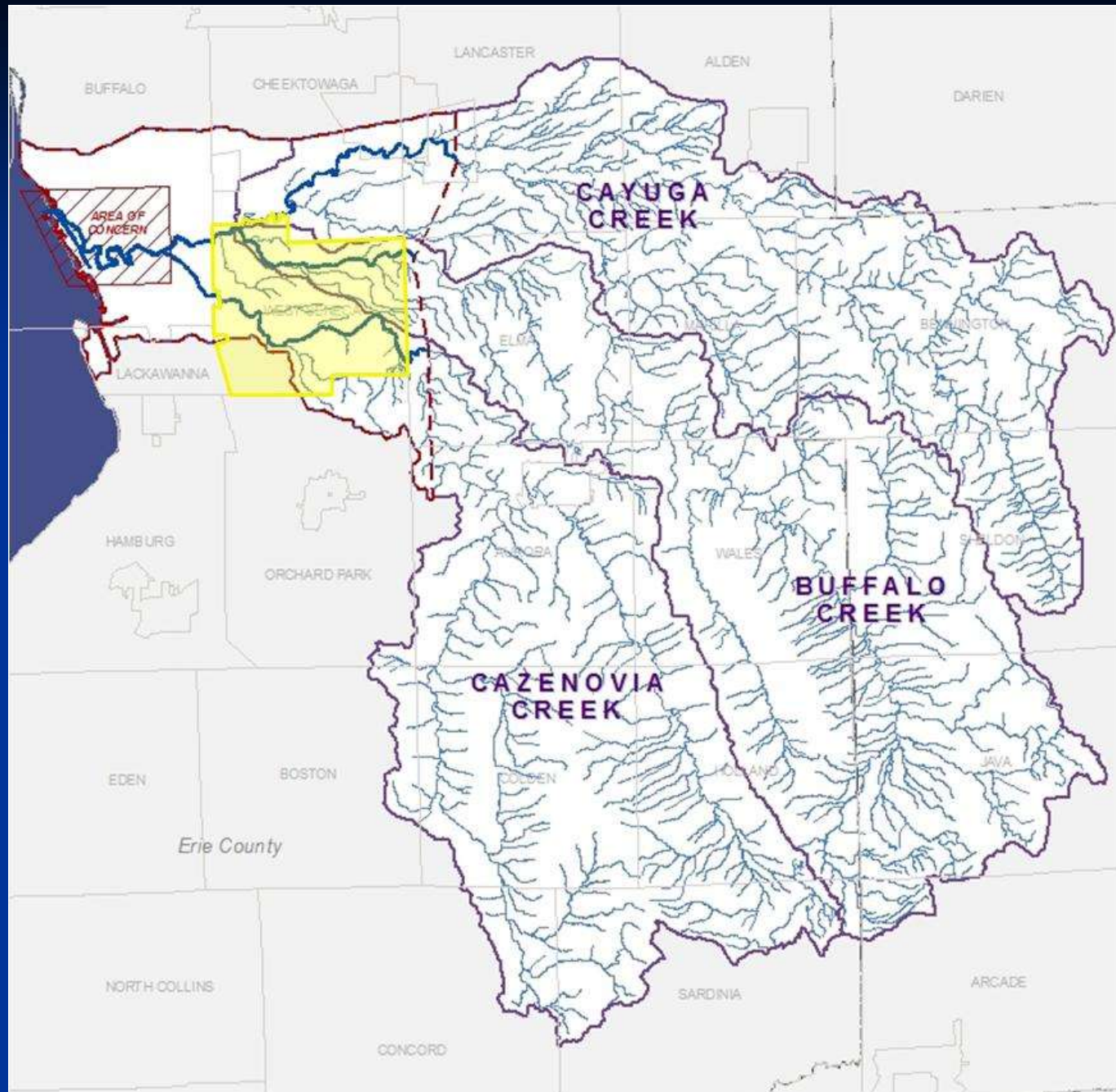
## Map 6.1 Wetlands and Floodplains Niagara River Watershed and Sub-Basins



... in the  
Watershed:

4% - NYS regulated  
8% - NOAA identified

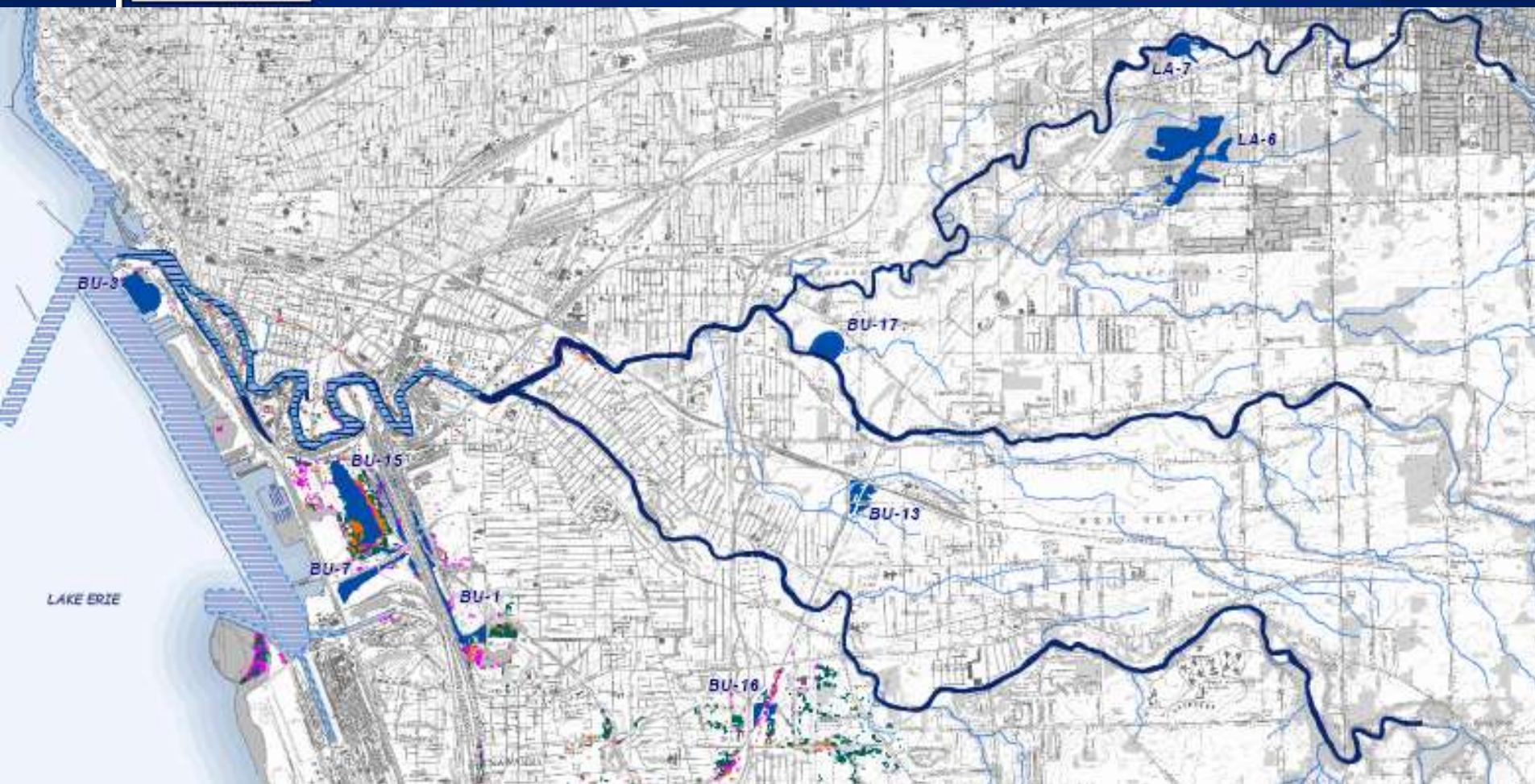
# Where's Wally?





# Restore connectivity



Map 4.2 Wetlands (NYSDEC Regulated and NOAA Landuse Classes)




 Navigation Channel


 Buffalo River and Tributaries (to first Impassible Barrier)

 NYS DEC Wetland

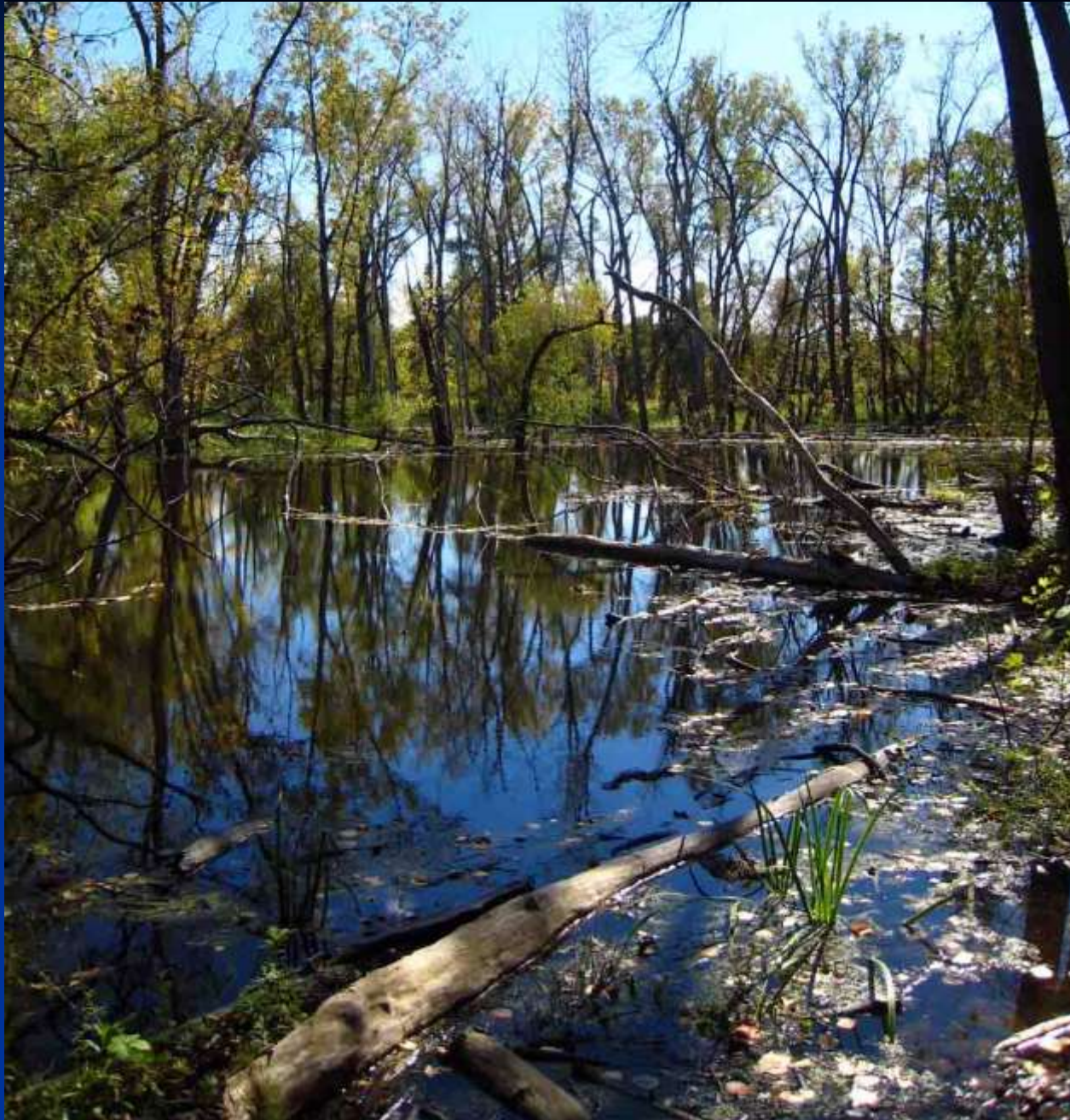
#### NOAA Landuse Class

 Palustrine Emergent Wetland

 Palustrine Forested Wetland

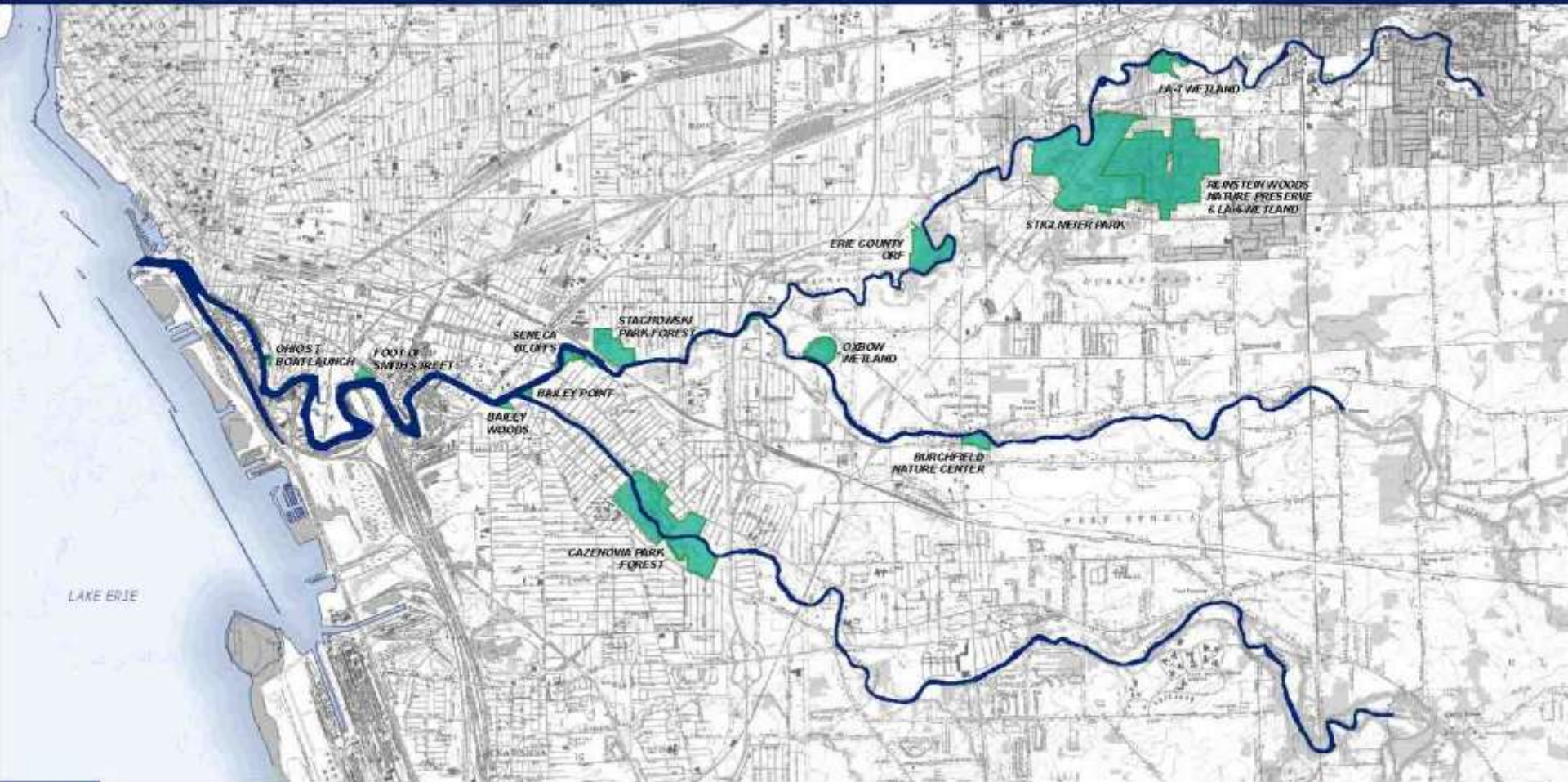
 Palustrine Scrub/Shrub Wetland

# Biodiversity features assessment: RIVERKEEPER and ERIE





## Map 4.5 Protected Habitat Buffalo River Corridor



### LEGEND

- Protected Habitat
- Buffalo River and Tributaries

Data Sources:  
NOAA Electronic Nautical Charts (ENC); NYS DEC Wetlands; FEMA Floodplains; USGS DRG

Map Produced by: Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper

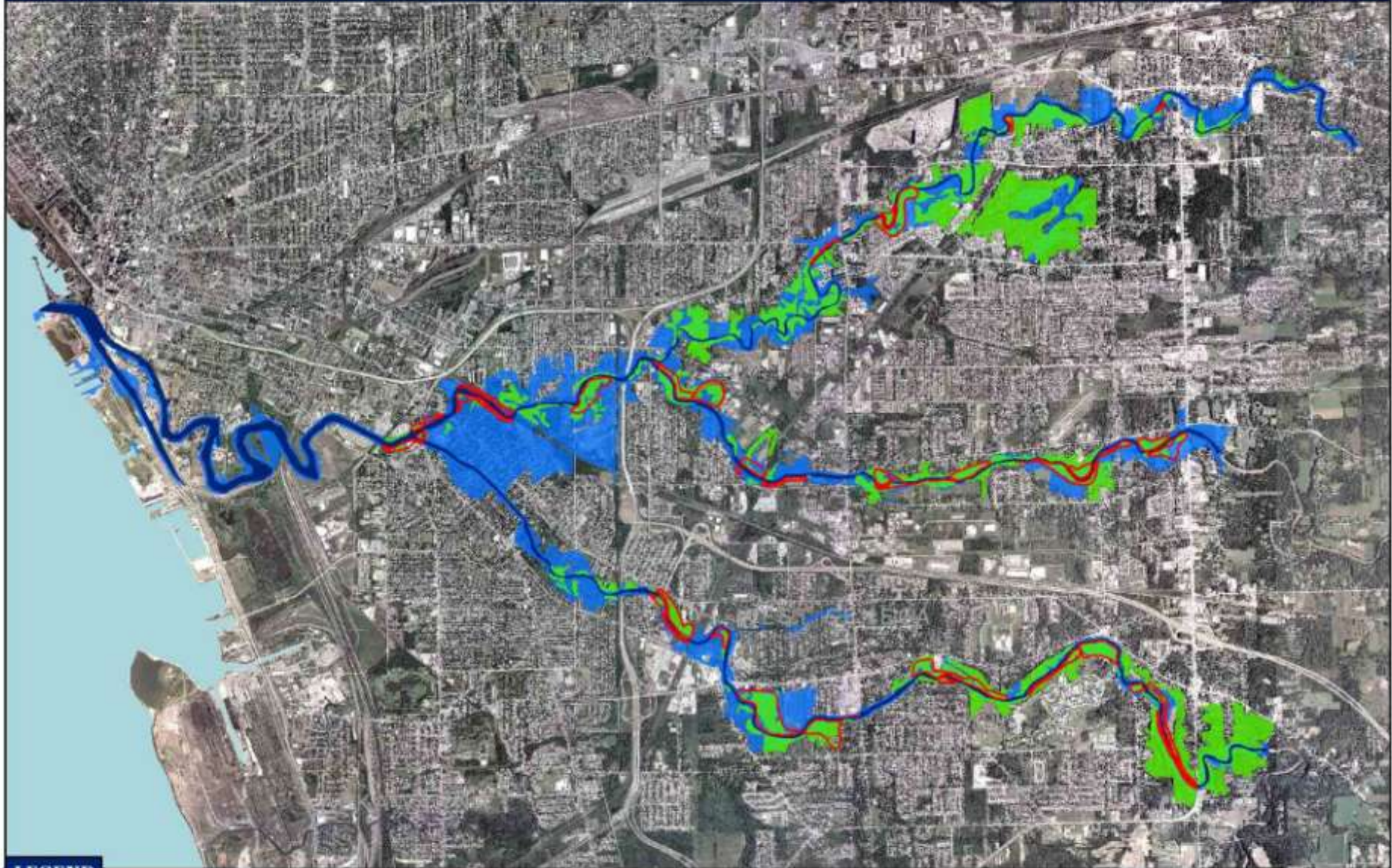


Western New York  
**BUFFALO RIVER  
HABITAT INVENTORY &  
ASSESSMENT**



# Buffalo River Corridor : Habitat Area

DRAFT - APRIL 14, 2008  
NOTE: This map is a working draft document  
and is subject to future revisions and amendments.



## LEGEND

- Forested Areas (2005)
- 100 Year Floodplains, NYSDEC Wetlands, and Riparian Buffer (100 Ft)
- Floodplain Forest (1993) and Riparian Wetlands- 434 Acres
- Buffalo River and Tributaries

Data Source:  
 Erie County Orthorectified Mosaic: USDA Natural  
 Resources Conservation Service (2005)  
 Map Produced By: Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper



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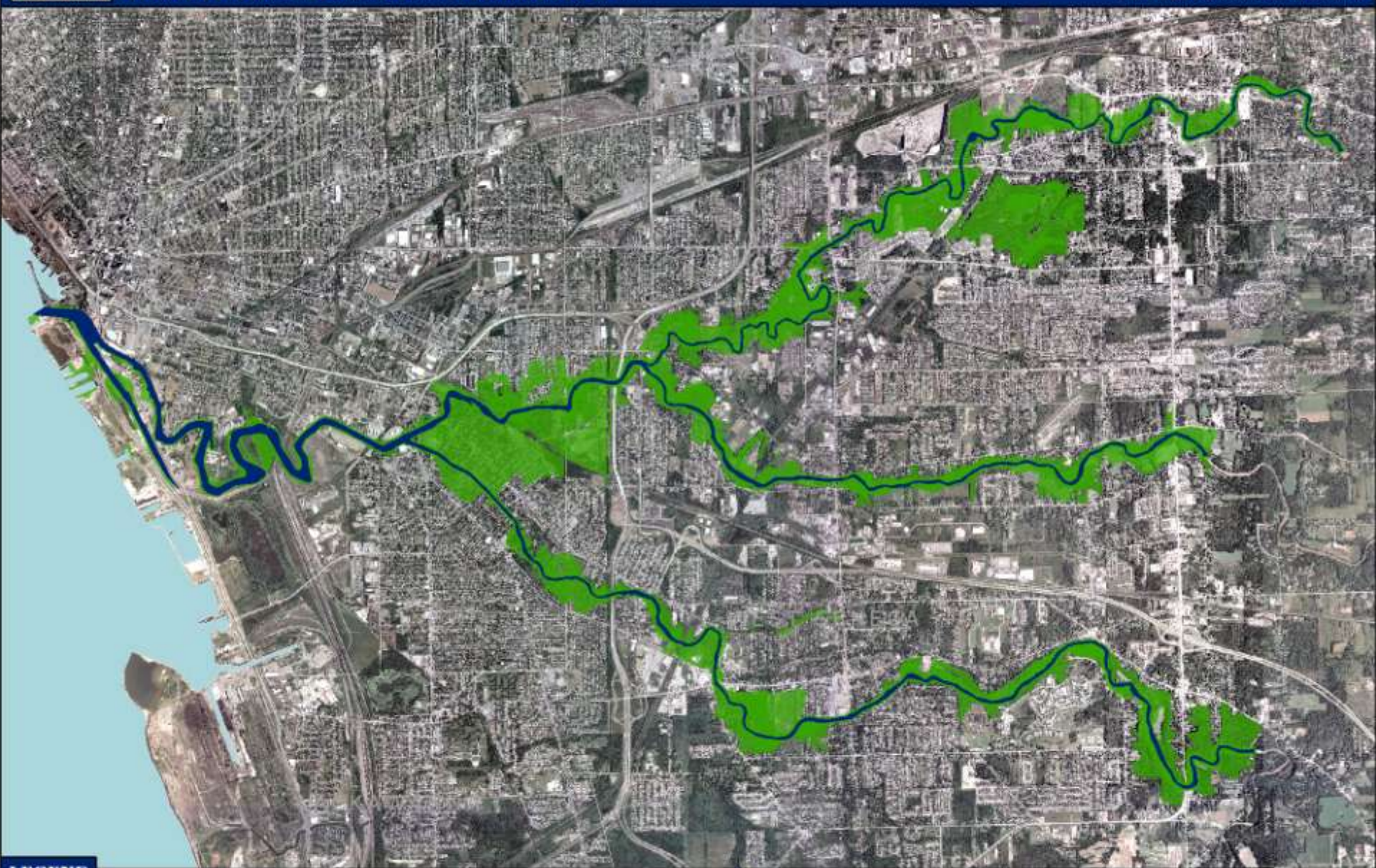


**Western New York**  
**BUFFALO RIVER**  
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# Buffalo River Corridor : Habitat Area

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## LEGEND

-  Buffalo River Corridor
-  Buffalo River and Tributaries

Data Source:  
 Erie County Orthoregistry Mosaic: USDA Natural  
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1:75,000



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