



LAND AS THE COMMUNITY TO WHICH WE BELONG

Taunton River: **developed land increased 21% since 2001** in some areas

Humans use and categorize lands.
2 largest categories = forest & developed

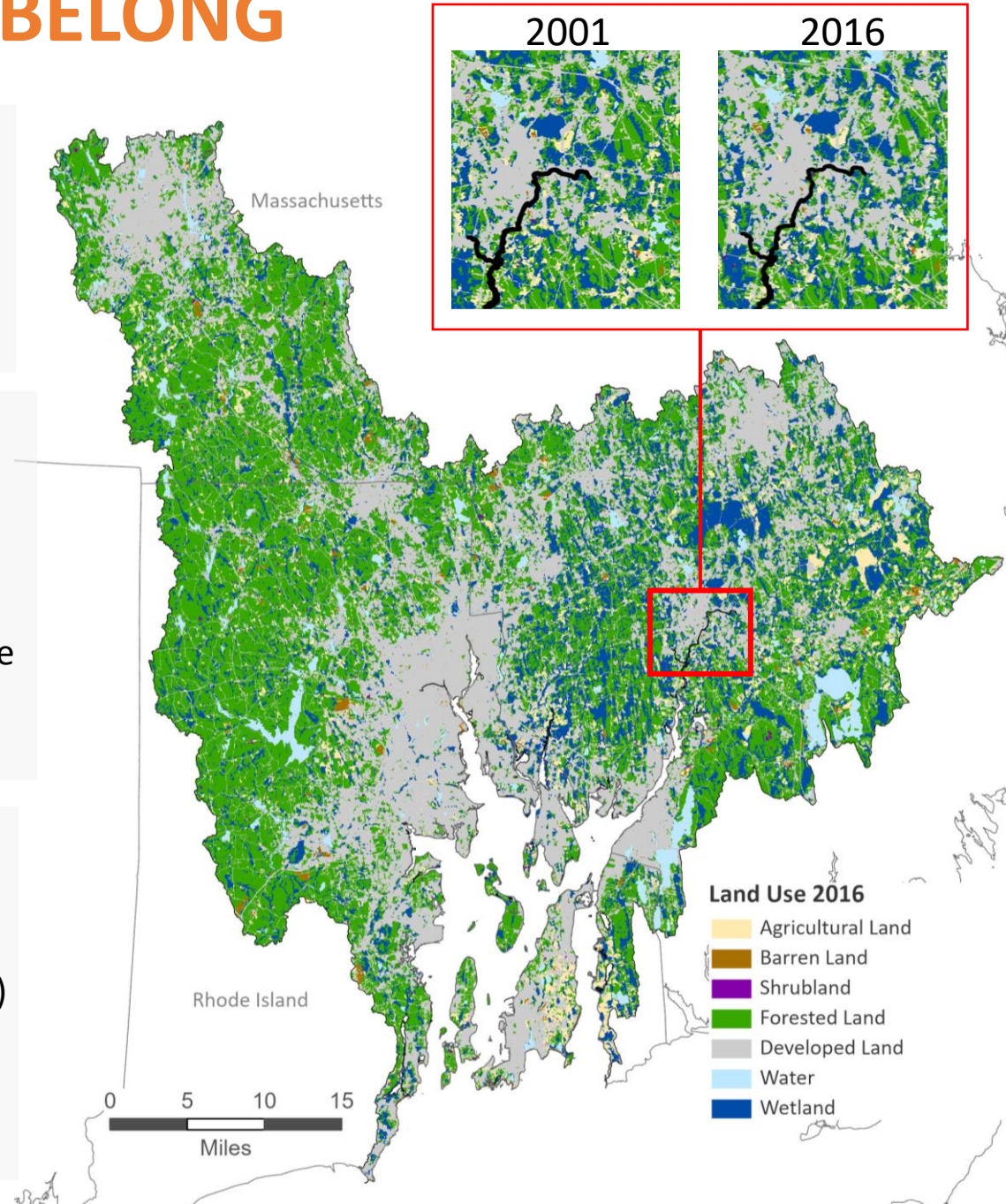
Forest cover continues to decline as
development increases.

Why it matters....

- Converting forests to developed lands increases non-point source pollution and alters stream flow
- Population growth is driving land conversion through increased demand for infrastructure to support homes, transportation, and commerce

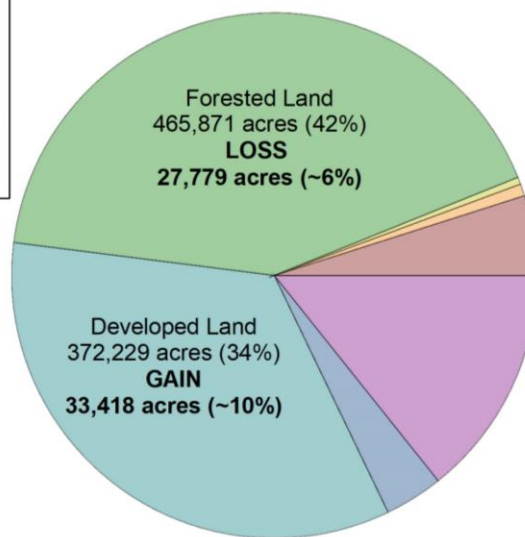
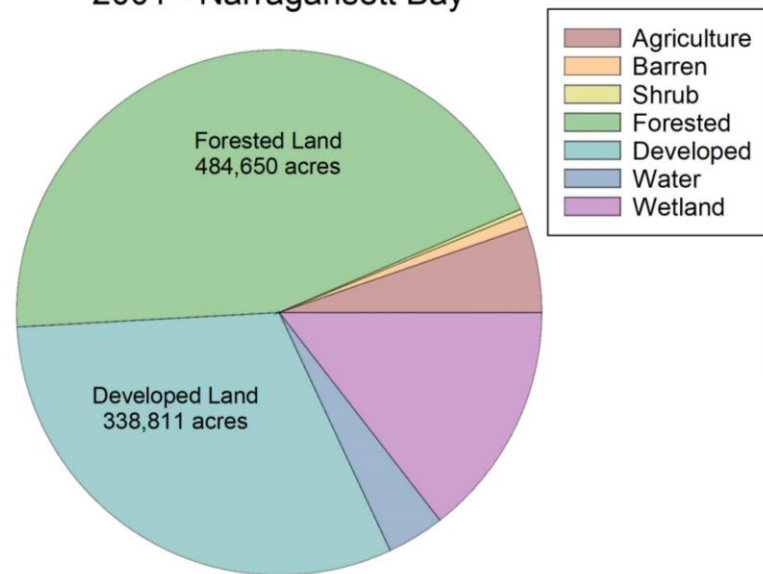
Overall Findings

- Narragansett Bay Watershed:
42% forest and **34% developed** (2016)
 - Coastal areas most developed (up to 86%)
- From 2001 to 2016:
 - Forests **declined** by 6%
 - Developed lands **increased** by 10%



2001 - Narragansett Bay

2016 - Narragansett Bay



Percent Changes in Land Use

	2001-2016	2011-2016
Developed	↑ 10%	↑ 0.9%
Forest	↓ 6%	↓ 0.4%

From: [State of Narragansett Bay and Its Watershed](#)

Impacts to the Community

- At more local scales (like the Taunton River), even small land use changes are important – they change the landscape of the area
- Development in forested areas increases urban sprawl, contributes to habitat fragmentation, and reduces protection for the watershed's natural resources.

Solar Arrays

- A new and growing development trend is ground-mounted solar photovoltaic arrays.
- This can create competition between preserving forested lands and green energy development.
- In [Massachusetts](#), between 2012 and 2017, **roughly 25%** of all new development was solar-related.

Areas for Further Study

- How is land being developed? How do we address policies to ensure that development occurs with habitat preservation in mind?
- How do we balance the need for development (including green energy) with the need for forested lands?
- How can we better protect forests to protect water quality?
- How are forested lands surrounding wetlands changing? Forests are an important buffer for wetlands.