

Black River Watershed Management Plan

WHY PREPARE A WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN?

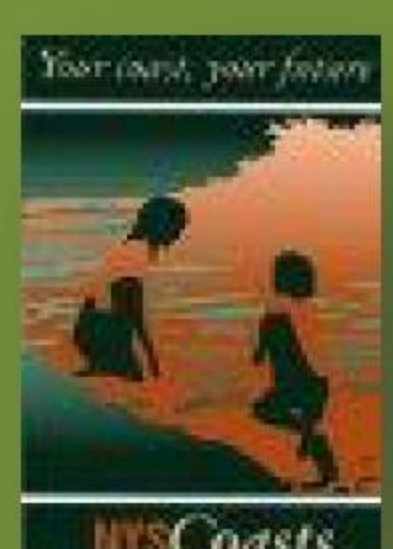
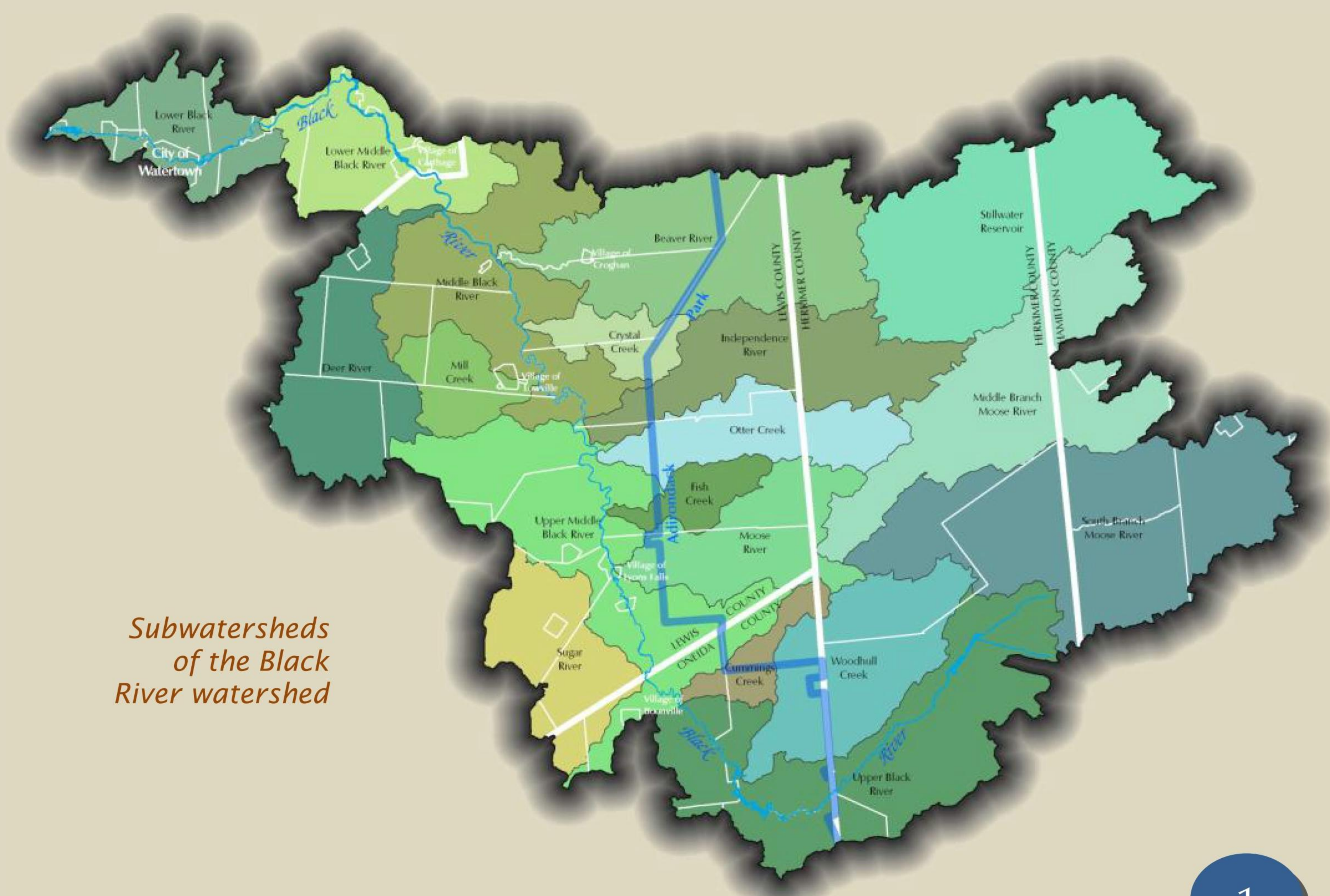
The purpose of the Black River Watershed Management Plan is to examine the existing physical and regulatory conditions of the natural and built environments within the Black River watershed, identify those factors negatively impacting water quality, and recommend strategies that focus on the protection and improvement of water quality in the watershed.

Preparation of the Black River Watershed Management Plan began in 2007 and is sponsored by the NYSDOS Division of Coastal Resources and the Town of Greig in partnership with the Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Tug Hill Commission, and the NYSDEC. Plan development is overseen by a Project Advisory Committee, which includes numerous agencies, municipal representatives, and stakeholders from each of the Black River counties. Additionally, a variety of forums and outreach mechanisms are being used to engage interested persons in the development and preparation of the Black River Watershed Management Plan. Funding was provided from two Environmental Protection Fund grants to the Town of Greig and matching funds from the Black River Advisory Committee Fund and NYS Senator Griffo.

THE BLACK RIVER WATERSHED

Located in the rural and remote North Country region of New York State, the Black River drains approximately 1.2 million acres of the western slopes of the Adirondack Mountains and the eastern edge of the Tug Hill Plateau before emptying into Lake Ontario near Watertown. The Adirondack portion of the watershed is drained, for the most part, by two large watercourses – the Beaver River and the Moose River – and several smaller tributaries such as the Independence River, Otter Creek, and Woodhull Creek. The Tug Hill region of the Black River watershed, however, is characterized predominantly by numerous small tributaries flowing over steep slopes.

As a whole, there are approximately 4,000 miles of rivers and streams within the watershed, as well as more than 500 lakes and ponds covering approximately 35,000 acres within 19 distinct subwatersheds. This heavily forested region exhibits a variety of ecological conditions related to differences in climate, topography, dominant vegetation, land cover, soil, geology, and hydrology.

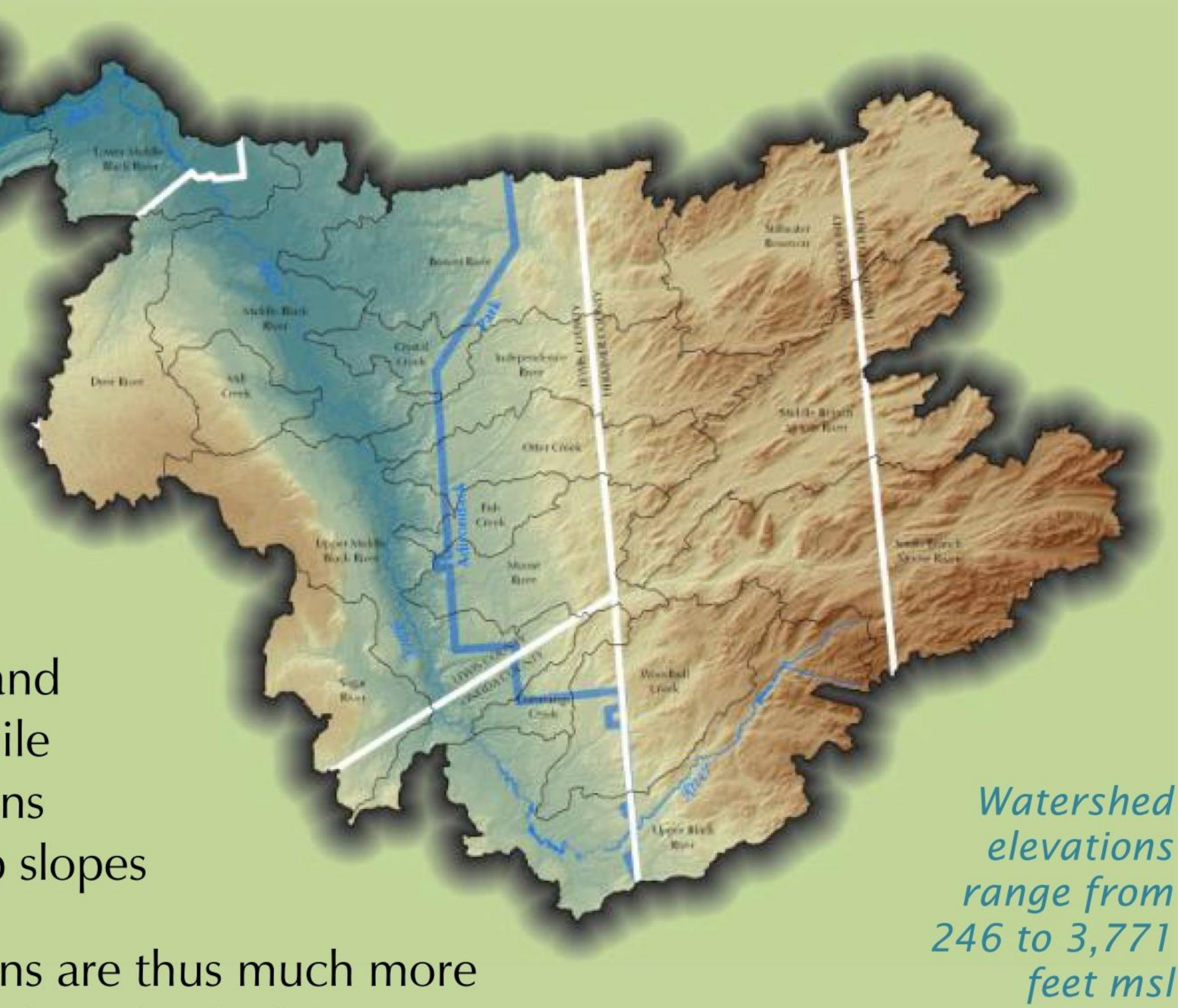


Characteristics of the Black River Watershed

More information regarding the Black River Watershed Planning Initiative is available at:
<http://blackriverstudy.org>

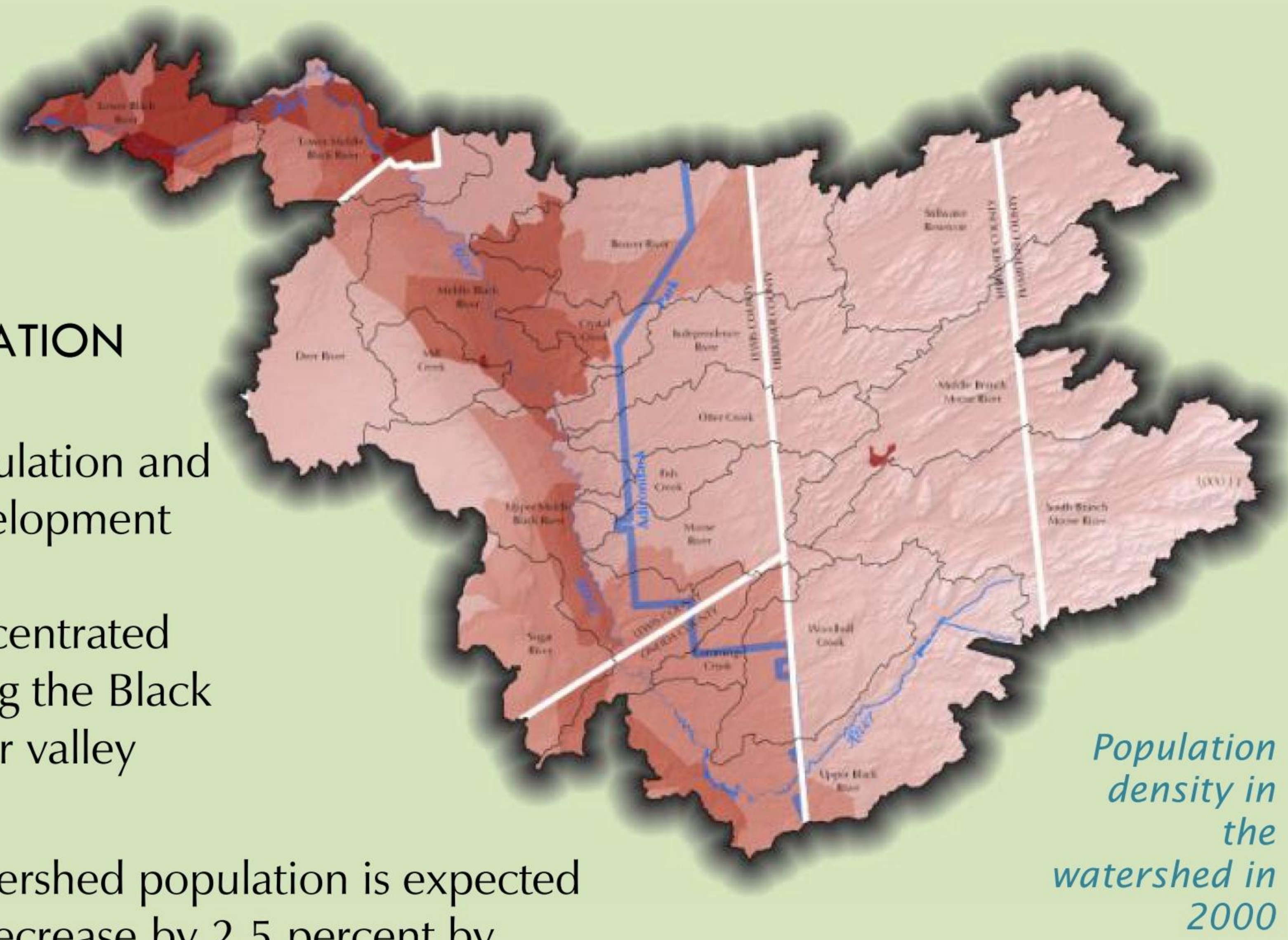
TOPOGRAPHY

- Lower elevations are characterized by flat terrain and fertile soils, while higher elevations comprise steep slopes
- Lower elevations are thus much more intensively developed, which has serious implications for water quality



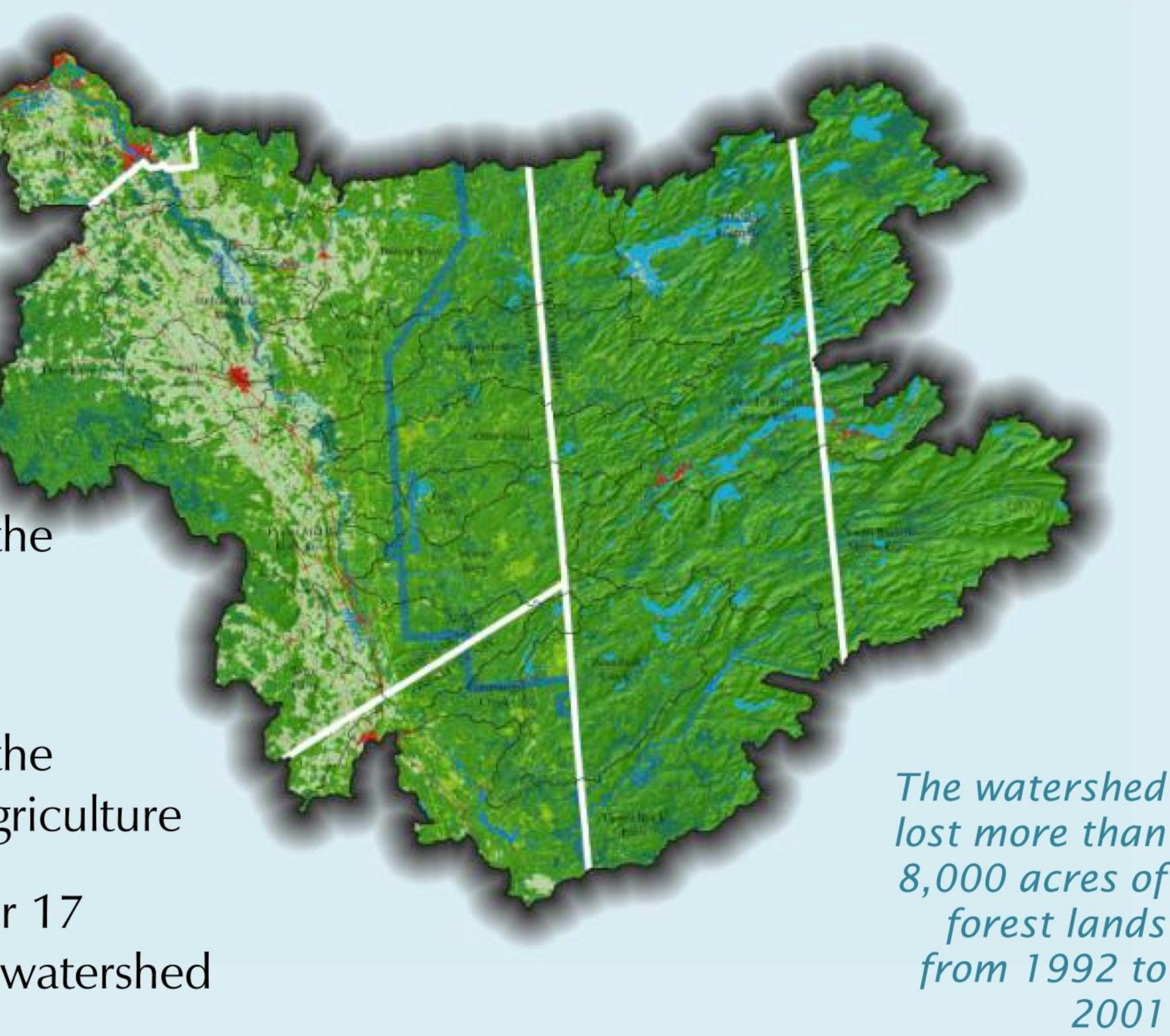
POPULATION

- Population and development are concentrated along the Black River valley
- Watershed population is expected to decrease by 2.5 percent by 2020



LAND COVER

- 57 percent of the watershed is forested
- 12 percent of the watershed is agriculture
- Wetlands cover 17 percent of the watershed
- Areas classified as urban account for only 2 percent of the watershed



GOVERNMENT

- There are 5 counties, 1 city, 37 towns, and 18 villages in the watershed
- The watershed also falls within the purview of 5 regional planning bodies, including the Tug Hill Commission and the Adirondack Park Agency



WATER QUALITY

While most of the basin is characterized by waters of good to excellent quality, the Black River watershed still has problems with water quality. The sources of these problems include:

- Atmospheric deposition and acid rain
- Point source and nonpoint source pollution from agricultural operations
- Nonpoint source pollution from failing septic systems
- Inadequate or nonexistent municipal wastewater treatment facilities
- Municipal stormwater sewer systems, combined sewer overflows (CSOs), and sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs)

