



Maine Department of Environmental Protection 2024 Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards

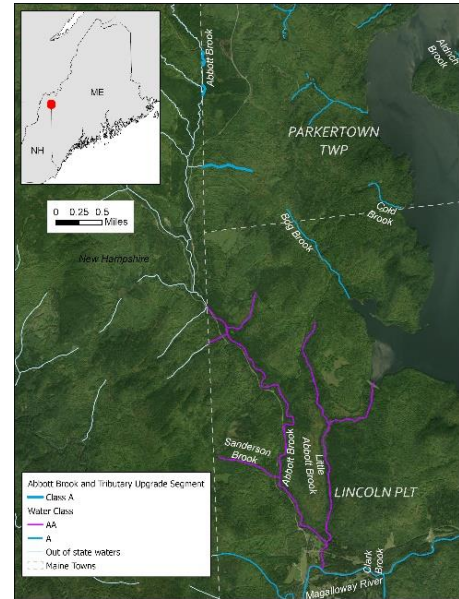
Department Proposals for Upgrades of Water Quality Classifications

Department staff submitted 5 proposals to be considered for water quality classification upgrades:

Abbott Brook – Upgrade to Class AA.....	2
Mount Blue Stream and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class AA	3
Pleasant River Middle Branch and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class AA	4
Sandy River and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class A.....	5
Temple Stream and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class A.....	6

Abbott Brook – Upgrade to Class AA

- 1. Waterbody Name:** Abbott Brook and one unnamed tributary (~0.9 miles)
- 2. Location of proposed change in classification:** Parkertown Township
- 3. Write a brief statement that justifies why the waterbody should be considered for change.** Abbott Brook and its tributaries in Lincoln Plantation (~8.9 miles) are tributaries to the Magalloway River. The waters were upgraded to Class AA in 2009 based on a proposal from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife because they contain very high value brook trout spawning and rearing habitat for the Magalloway River fishery, which is of statewide significance. Two very short segments of Abbott Brook (combined ~0.3 miles) and a portion of one unnamed tributary (~0.6 miles) located upstream in Parkertown Township were inadvertently omitted from the upgrade and remained Class A. It is expected that these upstream waters provide similarly valuable brook trout habitat as the waters downstream in Lincoln Plantation. The upstream waters proposed for upgrade also serve to protect water quality for the Class AA waters downstream.

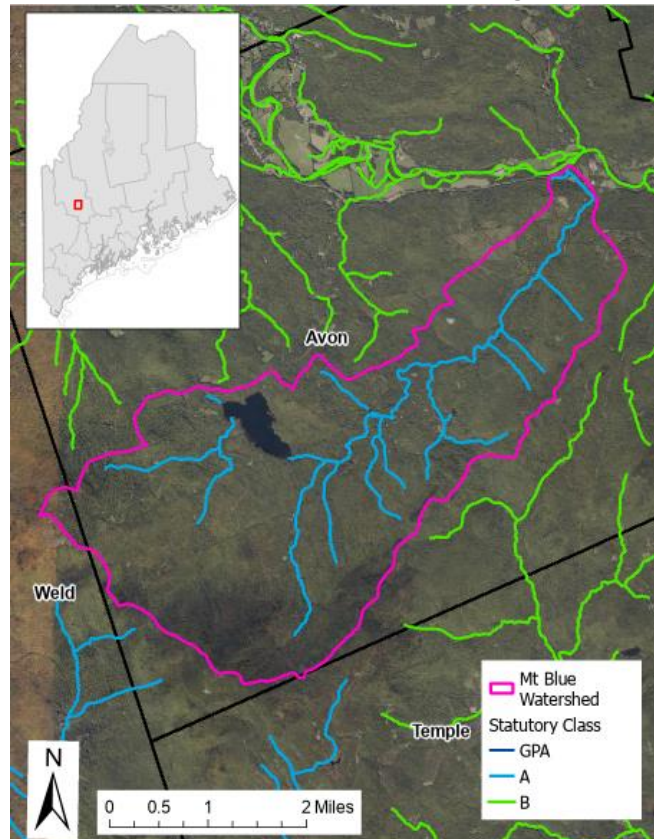


- 4. State how the proposed change will affect other users of the waterbody, for example holders of wastewater or stormwater discharge permits or holders of land-development permits.** There are no existing water control structures, and no stormwater sites, licensed wastewater discharges, or overboard discharges on the short segments proposed for upgrade. Likewise, there are no land-development permits. The Department is not aware of any existing water withdrawal activities or permits in this watershed. Hydroelectric power generation is not a designated use in Class AA and an upgrade will thus preclude future construction of water control structures. Forestry activities are not expected to be affected because under Maine's Forest Practices Act, forestry activities are generally subject to the same regulatory requirements regardless of water classification.
- 5. Provide water quality data, if available (including source of data), that documents the attainment status of the candidate waterbody relative to the designated uses and criteria of the proposed classification.** No relevant water quality data are available.
- 6. Provide a summary of known human activities in the watershed of the proposed reclassification that might jeopardize attainment of standards of the proposed classification, for example landuse altering activities, landfills, hazardous waste sites, wastewater discharges, etc.** The areas around the short segments proposed for upgrade are undeveloped with limited industrial forestry activities. The segments in question are expected to attain Class AA standards.

Mount Blue Stream and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class AA

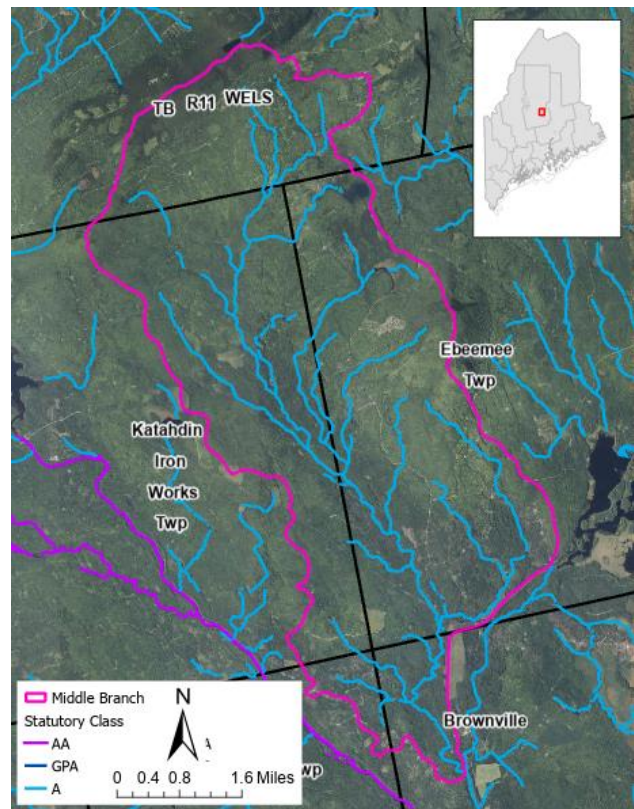
- 1. Waterbody Name:** Mount Blue Stream and tributaries (~19 miles)
- 2. Location of proposed change in classification:** Avon and Weld.
- 3. Write a brief statement that justifies why the waterbody should be considered for change.**

Mount Blue Stream is class A and tributaries contain high quality habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon and have been designated critical habitat for this species by NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the federal Endangered Species Act, lending significant ecological importance to these waters. Salmon redds were found in the lower portion of the watershed in 2022. Mount Blue Pond supports brook trout and brown trout populations. The watershed is 90% forested and 92% is an undeveloped habitat block.
- 4. State how the proposed change will affect other users of the waterbody, for example holders of wastewater or stormwater discharge permits or holders of land-development permits.** There are no discharges in the watershed and no recent land-development permits. Forestry activities that may be occurring in the watershed are not expected to be affected because under Maine’s Forest Practices Act, forestry activities are generally subject to the same regulatory requirements regardless of water classification.
- 5. Provide water quality data, if available (including source of data), that documents the attainment status of the candidate waterbody relative to the designated uses and criteria of the proposed classification.** Data from a 2012 Bates undergraduate thesis (Fancy 2012) on the Upper Sandy River watershed, plus DMR data, showed that Mt. Blue Stream had good water quality and a macroinvertebrate community indicative of excellent water quality. DEP monitoring data for Mount Blue Stream indicate that Class A aquatic life criteria for macroinvertebrates were attained in 2020, and that the water quality is good for salmonids.
- 6. Provide a summary of known human activities in the watershed of the proposed reclassification that might jeopardize attainment of standards of the proposed classification, for example landuse altering activities, landfills, hazardous waste sites, wastewater discharges, etc.** The watershed is mostly undeveloped, with some residential use. Industrial forestry activities may occur in the upper watershed, especially above Mount Blue Pond. It is expected that the streams proposed for upgrade attain Class A.



Pleasant River Middle Branch and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class AA

- 1. Waterbody Name:** Pleasant River Middle Branch and tributaries (~8 miles main stem, ~49 miles including all tribs)
- 2. Location of proposed change in classification:** Brownville, Williamsburg, Ebeemee Twp., Katahdin Iron Works Twp., and TB R11 WELS
- 3. Write a brief statement that justifies why the waterbody should be considered for change.** Pleasant River Middle Branch and tributaries are class A, with a primarily forested watershed. It is high quality habitat for federally endangered Atlantic salmon and has been designated critical habitat for this species by NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the federal Endangered Species Act, lending significant ecological importance to these waters. Salmon redds have been documented within the watershed. The watershed is 83% forested, with 97% in undeveloped habitat blocks and 84% protected as conservation land by the Appalachian Mountain Club.
- 4. State how the proposed change will affect other users of the waterbody, for example holders of wastewater or stormwater discharge permits or holders of land-development permits.** There are no existing or planned water control structures, and no stormwater sites, licensed wastewater discharges, or overboard discharges in the watershed. Likewise, there are no land-development permits. The Department is not aware of any existing water withdrawal activities or permits in this watershed. Hydroelectric power generation is not a designated use in Class AA and an upgrade will thus preclude future construction of water control structures. Except for certain cases as defined in Maine statutes, there may be no direct discharge of pollutants to Class AA waters. . *It is important to note that the current statutory allowance for stormwater discharges to Class AA waters is under review with EPA (as a result of EPA's 6/5/15 decision letter to DEP Commissioner Patricia W. Aho, pp. 6 and 29) and may be amended or eliminated at some point in the future. Amendment or elimination of the current statutory allowance could limit or prohibit certain types of stormwater discharges and associated development in AA watersheds.* Forestry activities are not expected to be affected because under Maine's Forest Practices Act, such activities are generally subject to the same regulatory requirements regardless of water classification.



5. **Provide water quality data, if available (including source of data), that documents the attainment status of the candidate waterbody relative to the designated uses and criteria of the proposed classification.** DEP biological monitoring data indicate class A aquatic life criteria for macroinvertebrates were attained in 1997, and for algae in 2003 and 2006. DEP water quality monitoring data show good water quality for salmonids, with high dissolved oxygen and cool water, which is further supported by continuous temperature data from MDMR and MIFW.

6. **Provide a summary of known human activities in the watershed of the proposed reclassification that might jeopardize attainment of standards of the proposed classification, for example landuse altering activities, landfills, hazardous waste sites, wastewater discharges, etc.** The watershed is mostly forested, with some agricultural fields in the lower portion of the watershed and some light residential development. Forestry activities may occur in much of the watershed. It is expected that the streams proposed for upgrade attain class AA standards.

Sandy River and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class A

1. **Waterbody Name:** Sandy River and tributaries (17 miles of main stem, 174 miles total (excluding the Mount Blue Watershed, which is already A and proposed to be upgraded to AA))

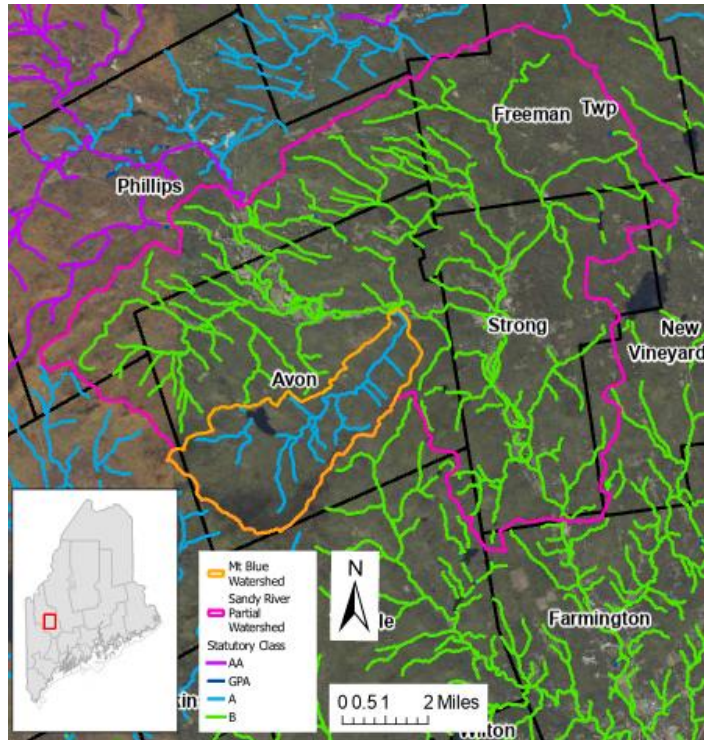
2. **Location of proposed change in classification:** Strong, Avon, Freeman Twp., Phillips, Temple, New Vineyard, Weld

3. **Write a brief statement that justifies why the waterbody should be considered for change.** The Sandy River from Philipps to Farmington and its tributaries are class B, with a primarily forested watershed. The main stem is high quality habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon and have been designated critical habitat for this species by NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the federal Endangered Species Act.

4. **State how the proposed change will affect other users of the waterbody, for example holders of wastewater or stormwater discharge permits or holders of land-development permits.** There is one overboard discharge in the watershed, five land licensing locations, and numerous permit-by-rules (primarily bridge replacements or bank stabilization). One fish hatchery discharge to a tributary expired in 2010.

5. **Provide water quality data, if available (including source of data), that documents the attainment status of the candidate waterbody relative to the designated uses and criteria of the proposed classification.** DEP biological monitoring data indicate that Class A aquatic life criteria for macroinvertebrates were attained in 2022 in the main stem and an unnamed tributary. DEP water quality monitoring data show water quality is good for salmonids, with high dissolved oxygen and cool water, which is further supported by continuous temperature data from MDMR and MDOT.

6. Provide a summary of known human activities in the watershed of the proposed reclassification that might jeopardize attainment of standards of the proposed classification, for example landuse altering activities, landfills, hazardous waste sites, wastewater discharges, etc. The watershed is mostly forested, with some development along the mainstem (residential, town, and fields), with mostly undeveloped tributaries and headwaters. Industrial forestry activities may occur in the upper watershed. It is expected that the streams proposed for upgrade attain class A.



Temple Stream and Tributaries – Upgrade to Class A

1. **Waterbody Name:** Temple Stream and tributaries (~10 miles main stem, ~69 miles including all tributaries)
2. **Location of proposed change in classification:** Avon, Temple, Wilton, and Farmington
3. **Write a brief statement that justifies why the waterbody should be considered for change.** Temple Stream and tributaries are class B, with a primarily forested watershed. It is high quality habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon and has been designated critical habitat for this species by NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Walton’s Mill Dam was removed in 2022, allowing fish passage upstream and converting a 1-mile impoundment into a free-flowing stream. Salmon redds were found upstream of the former dam following removal.
4. **State how the proposed change will affect other users of the waterbody, for example holders of wastewater or stormwater discharge permits or holders of land-development permits.** There is one overboard discharge in the watershed, and numerous permit-by-rules (mostly bridge replacements) and two land licensing locations near the impoundment. Forestry activities that may be occurring in the watershed are not expected to be affected because under Maine’s Forest Practices Act, forestry activities are generally subject to the same regulatory requirements regardless of water classification.

5. **Provide water quality data, if available (including source of data), that documents the attainment status of the candidate waterbody relative to the designated uses and criteria of the proposed classification.** DEP biological monitoring data indicate class A aquatic life criteria for macroinvertebrates were attained in 2020 and in 2017 for algae. DEP water quality monitoring data show good water quality for salmonids, with high dissolved oxygen and cool water, which is further supported by continuous temperature data from USFWS.

6. **Provide a summary of known human activities in the watershed of the proposed reclassification that might jeopardize attainment of standards of the proposed classification, for example landuse altering activities, landfills, hazardous waste sites, wastewater discharges, etc.** The watershed is mostly forested, with some development along the lower half of the stream, including residential, agricultural fields, and timber harvest. Industrial forestry activities may occur in the upper watershed, especially above the confluence with Edes Brook. It is expected that the streams proposed for upgrade attain class A.

