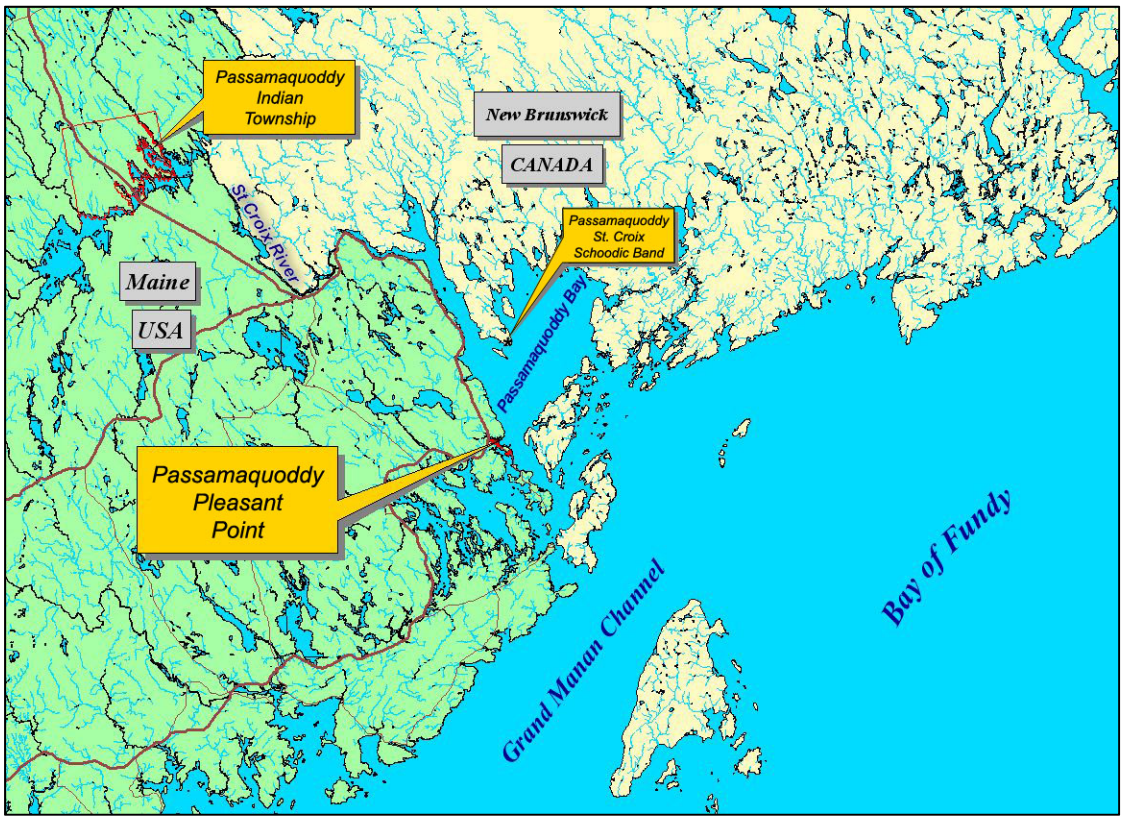
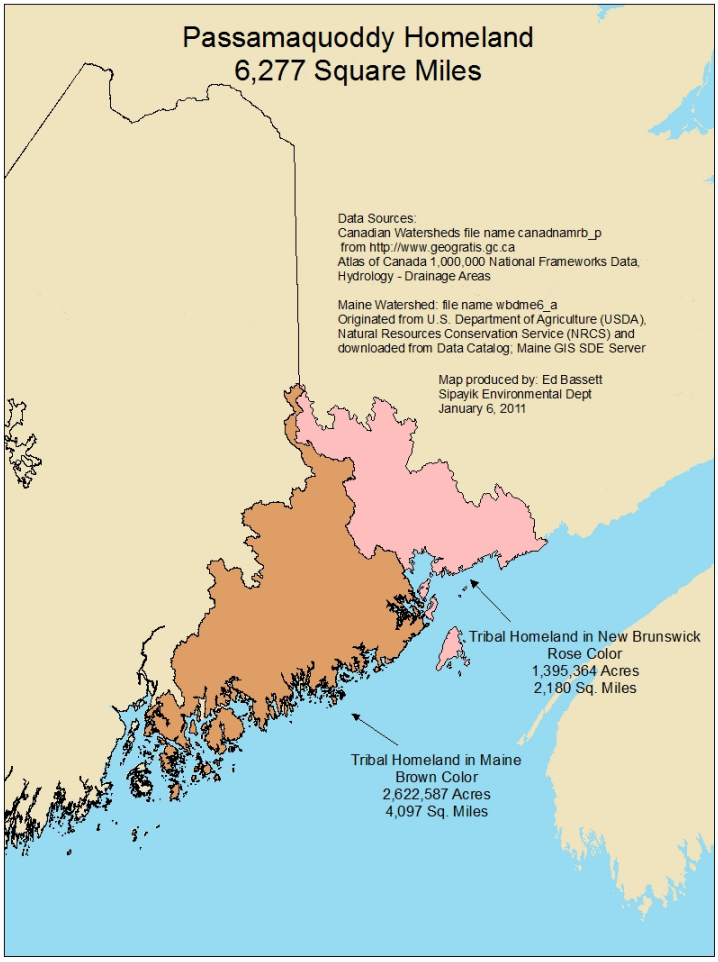
Background:

The Passamaquoddy Tribe currently has 3,575 people on the tribal census rolls. Today there are three distinct self-governing Passamaquoddy communities within the tribe's ancestral homeland with two reservations are located in Maine (Pleasant Point and Indian Township). The St Croix-Schoodic Band of the Passamaquoddy is represented by a Tribal Chief and Council and is located at St. Andrews New, Brunswick. Each of these tribal communities are separated by geography but continues to maintain close social and kinship ties (see map 1)



Map 1

The Passamaquoddy Traditional/Ancestral Homeland is about 6,277 square miles in size. The homeland is made up of a number of watersheds in between but not including the Penobscot River watershed in Maine and the St. John River watershed in NB Canada (see map 2).



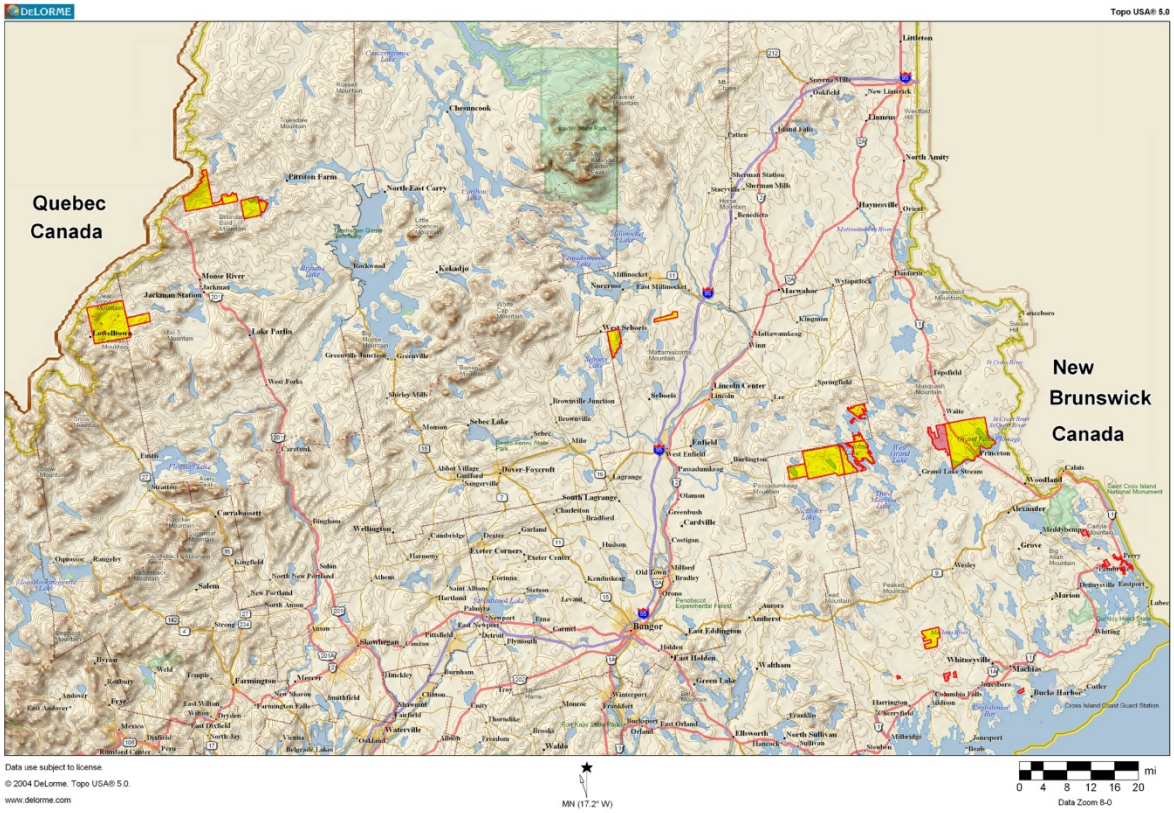
Map 2

Below is a list of the watersheds that are within the Passamaquoddy homeland in the United States:

St Croix River	Little River	Pennamaquan River	Dennys River
Orange River	East Machias River	Machias River	Chandler River
Indian River	Pleasant River	Narraguagus River	Union River

Each watershed is important to the Passamaquoddy with its own unique natural history and connection to the tribe. Right in the heart-center of the Passamaquoddy homeland is the St. Croix River watershed. This river, also known in the recent past as the Schoodic River and the Passamaquoddy River, has a million acre watershed (over 1600 square miles). This river has sustained the Passamaquoddy for thousands of years and because the tribe maintains a physical presence on this watershed it continues to be especially important to the tribe today. It is our home. The tribe has a 12,000 year long vested interest in ensuring that this river stays clean and productive for future generations.

In 1980 the United States, the Passamaquoddy Tribe and the State of Maine entered into an out-of-court land claim settlement agreement. This agreement enabled the tribe to purchase back a small portion of its land base in Maine, some in our traditional homeland and other land outside the homeland. Currently the tribe has 118,056 acres of land held in trust by the United States and about 10,031 acres of fee land in Maine. Map 3 below shows the location of tribal lands in Maine (trust lands in yellow).



Map 3

<u>Critical Tribal natural resources and environmental issues</u>

<u>Fishing Rights</u>

From the perspective of food fisheries the Passamaquoddy have come to realize that man's impact on the rivers and related ecosystems have been devastating over the past few hundred years. For example, the St Croix River has been altered with large hydro dams and other smaller dams for hundreds of years. Many of these dams were built with no fish ways or inadequate fish ways thereby making it impossible for fish to migrate and spawn resulting in a loss of the fishery which the tribe depends on for sustenance.

These dams have altered the river and have flooded thousands of acres of land at Indian Township and several tribal reservation islands in the St. Croix River which has had a negative impact on tribal fishing and hunting rights. The tribe is currently requesting the federal government for assistance to secure our land base in the river.

The St Croix River, estuary and bay has had a long history of industrial development over the past few hundred years and has been inundated with industrial pollution. Although many of the old polluting factories and shipyards have disappeared and new environmental and clean water regulations have forced industry, towns and private development to clean up their discharge much residual pollution still remains in the river bottom and estuary sediment making it difficult for life to flourish again. Some sections of the river and estuary bottom still remain anoxic, toxic and barren. This kind of hidden ecosystem destruction in the St. Croix affects the ecosystem in many unknown ways. It would not be surprising to find this kind of damage in the other homeland river systems.

At one time in history the Passamaquoddy Bay and St. Croix ecosystem was considered the most productive food fishery in the Northeast. The tribe was able to easily sustain itself year round with the bounty from these waters. Today everything is upside down.

The treaty of 1794 between the Passamaquoddy and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the 1980 Land Claim Settlement Act both recognize the Passamaquoddy right to fish for sustenance. If there is no fish in the river how can tribal members exercise these aboriginal fishing rights?

Damage to the river ecosystem affects other connected and important ecosystems.

Consider the current state of the salt water fishery. At one time food fish such as sea-run alewife, shad and the endangered atlantic salmon provided large amounts of feed for other species of fish and animals in the ocean. This biomass food has since suffered a serious decline and is removed from the ecosystem. Countless other fish and animals in the food chain have suffered from this loss of food. Since all things in nature are connected this causes a negative chain reaction, decreasing the productivity in other dependent-connected ecosystems. Although this is not the only cause for the decline in the productivity of the salt water fishery it is an important one. If this is happening in all the local downeast rivers this is a serious loss of food and productivity.

An effort needs to be made to determine the extent of the environmental damage from dams, pollution, in these ecosystems and then to reverse this damage and restore them to healthy and productive conditions. This would also restore the tribal sustenance fishery and restore the commercial fishery in the region for everyone.

Intensive studies related to Tribe identified critical resources and/or issues

Invasive Species

The Atlantic Sea-Run Salmon in the St. Croix watershed has been suffering from negative impacts from invasive and exotic species introduction. The salmon population was once in the millions of fish. Reintroduction efforts have been hampered by the aggressive smallmouth bass whish were introduced into the river a little over 100 years ago. Just a few years ago the Largemouth Bass was found in the St. Croix River watershed. This predatory fish is more aggressive than the Smallmouth Bass and poses a serious threat to the entire system. Federal assistance is needed to help with restoration efforts for the Atlantic Salmon and to also protect the watershed from invasive fish species.

Erosion

The Pleasant Point Reservation is a small peninsula in the Passamaquoddy Bay and has been suffering from erosion for many years. The shoreline has receded and storm surge is now threatening to flood out the tribal waste water treatment plant as well as some residential areas. Assistance will most likely be needed to help with remedial efforts to protect the reservation from further erosion and salt water storm surge flooding.

Half Moon Cove, Cobscook Bay Estuary Restoration

In the 1930's a tidal causeway was constructed as part of the federal Passamaquoddy Bay Tidal Power Project. This causeway was meant to serve as part of a larger dam to harness the tides for the generation of electrical power in the Passamaquoddy Bay and Cobscook Bay. The tidal project was never finished and was demobilized by the federal government in 1936. This causeway has altered the natural tidal flow and habitat passage between Passamaquoddy Bay, Cobscook Bay and Half Moon Cove. Half Moon Cove was once a rich nursery ground for a wide variety of marine This causeway has ruined the environment and eroded the quality of the estuarine ecosystem and species abundance and diversity. Tribal elders have described this area as once being a very productive lobster nursery and breeding ground, flounder feeding area and rich clam-flats and was used to help sustain the Passamaquoddy. The causeway now serves as a road that links a few islands from the city of Eastport through Pleasant Point and terminates on the mainland in the town of Perry.

Several years ago the Army Corps of Engineers conducted a preliminary reconnaissance study for the restoration of the Half Moon Cove estuarine habitat. Curtis L. Thalken, Colonel of the Army Corps did find that the Half Moon Cove estuarine habitat has been affected by the causeway and that modifying the causeway *"provides an opportunity to restore the quality, abundance, species diversity and anadromous fisheries habitat of the estuarine ecosystem of Half Moon Cove."* He recommended that a feasibility study be conducted. However, funding for the study was not available so the study was not conducted.

The tribal council has strongly supports the modification/removal for the causeway for environmental restoration, and the preservation of cultural and natural resources.