

The PENOBSCOT RIVER WATERSHED



West branch Pleasant River
(part of the Piscataquis River drainage)

The word "penobscot" is derived from the Wabanaki place-name for "waters of descending ledge," in reference to the lower Penobscot River's rocky rapids and falls. The Penobscot is Maine's largest river, draining more than one-quarter of the state, and the second largest river in New England (after the Connecticut). The 8,592-square-mile watershed is mostly forested, with some agricultural and urban lands. The Penobscot carries a tremendous amount of freshwater to the Gulf of Maine, where it has a strong influence on circulation and mixing in the coastal waters of the Atlantic.



Penobscot River at Costigan



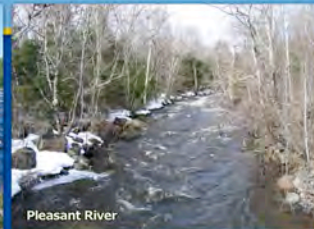
The mainstem of the river begins at the confluence of the East and West Branches at Medway and flows to Bucksport, where it opens up into Penobscot Bay. The West Branch originates on the Maine-Quebec border near Sandy Bay Township and Penobscot Lake, in mountainous terrain 1,700-1,800 feet above sea level. The East Branch begins at East Branch Pond, northwest of Baxter State Park, in a lake-filled region 980 feet above sea level.



Penobscot Bay from Mount Battie



Penobscot River at Basin Mills



Pleasant River

Poster produced for the Penobscot Salmon Club by Maine Sea Grant in partnership with NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service, Orono, ME. All photos © C. Schmitt. Map produced by S. Nelson, Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environmental and Watershed Research, University of Maine. Map data courtesy of Maine Office of GIS. Projection information: UTM zone 19N NAD 1983.

Below Medway, the river receives the flows of the Piscataquis and Mattawamkeag rivers; smaller tributaries of the lower river include the Passadumkeag River, Sunkhaze Stream, Kenduskeag Stream, Souadabscook Stream, Felts Brook, and Eaton Brook. In total, there are over 8,000 miles of rivers and streams in the Penobscot basin.

