

TOWN OF RYE

NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Stewardship of our natural environment is a critical component of Rye’s Master Plan, development regulations, sustainability efforts, and land protection initiatives. Rye’s natural resources include its waterways, marshland, coastline, forests, and fields. They provide invaluable benefits to the local ecology and community through hazard mitigation, recreation, and tourism. To protect the quality and quantity of Rye’s natural landscape in the future, the town must strategically preserve these areas through regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives.



52% of New Hampshire’s coastline is within Rye, including over 3 miles of beaches.



30% of Rye is classified as wetlands.



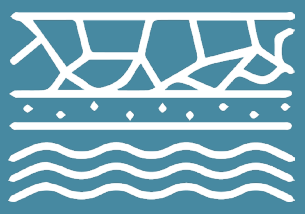
29% of the town is classified as Tier 1 habitat, which is the Highest Ranked Habitat in New Hampshire.



41% of the town was identified as being within a Prioritized Habitat Block, as defined by the NH Fish and Game.



24% of Rye’s wellhead protection areas are conserved.



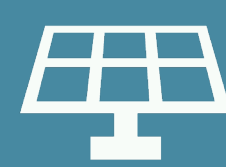
25% of the town exists within the 100 or 500-year floodplain.



10 of the 17 bird species listed by the State of New Hampshire as either threatened or endangered have been seen in Rye.



262 species of seabirds and migratory birds have been observed on the Isles of Shoals and 305 on Rye’s mainland.



In **2023**, Rye Community Power was implemented and most of the town’s municipal facilities utilize community power.



13.6 miles of trails in Rye offer residents hiking, bicycling, dog walking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing opportunities. Please note that this total miles of trail does not include the Airfield Woods, Cedar Run Woods, or trails developed on private properties.



2,362 acres of Rye are forestland.

Compared to neighboring towns, Rye has the highest percentage of conserved lands at 25%.

Town	Town Area (acres)	Areas of Conserved Land	% of Town
Rye	8,580	2,164	25%
North Hampton	8,923	2,016	23%
Greenland	8,524	1,488	17%
Portsmouth	10,763	1,492	14%

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Habitat fragmentation of Rye's ecosystems is increasing as development increases. This results in habitat loss and/or disconnection between habitat areas.

There are waterbodies in Rye that have **"water quality impairments"** (i.e. levels of contamination), such as Berry's Brook, Parsons Creek, Eel Pond, and Lower Sagamore Creek.

Swimming advisories at beaches are increasing due to elevated levels of fecal sourced bacteria.

Marsh erosion and flooding from more severe storms are increasing and flooding of coastal roads is becoming more common.

Marsh degradation from **saltwater inundation** threatens the health and stability of marshes.

Rye has had issues with **contamination of its drinking water resources**. In 2022, routine water testing conducted by the Department of Environmental Services found several of its water distribution sites within the Rye Water District (which is a private entity) contained E.coli and fecal coliform.

Sustainability in Rye

Over the last decade, Rye has demonstrated its commitment to **renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate resilience**.

Rye's active **Energy Committee** has identified several future projects moving forward including the **construction of a solar array at the old landfill, expanding EV charging infrastructure, and the exploration of a microgrid**.

A Few Noteworthy Sustainability Accomplishments

In October 2022, **solar panels were installed on the Rye Junior High School roof**. Over time, these panels reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Solar panels will be installed on the elementary school roof in 2024.

There are currently **120 residences** in Rye that have installed **solar panels**.

In 2022, there were **8,619 vehicles** registered in Rye of which a small percentage were electric.