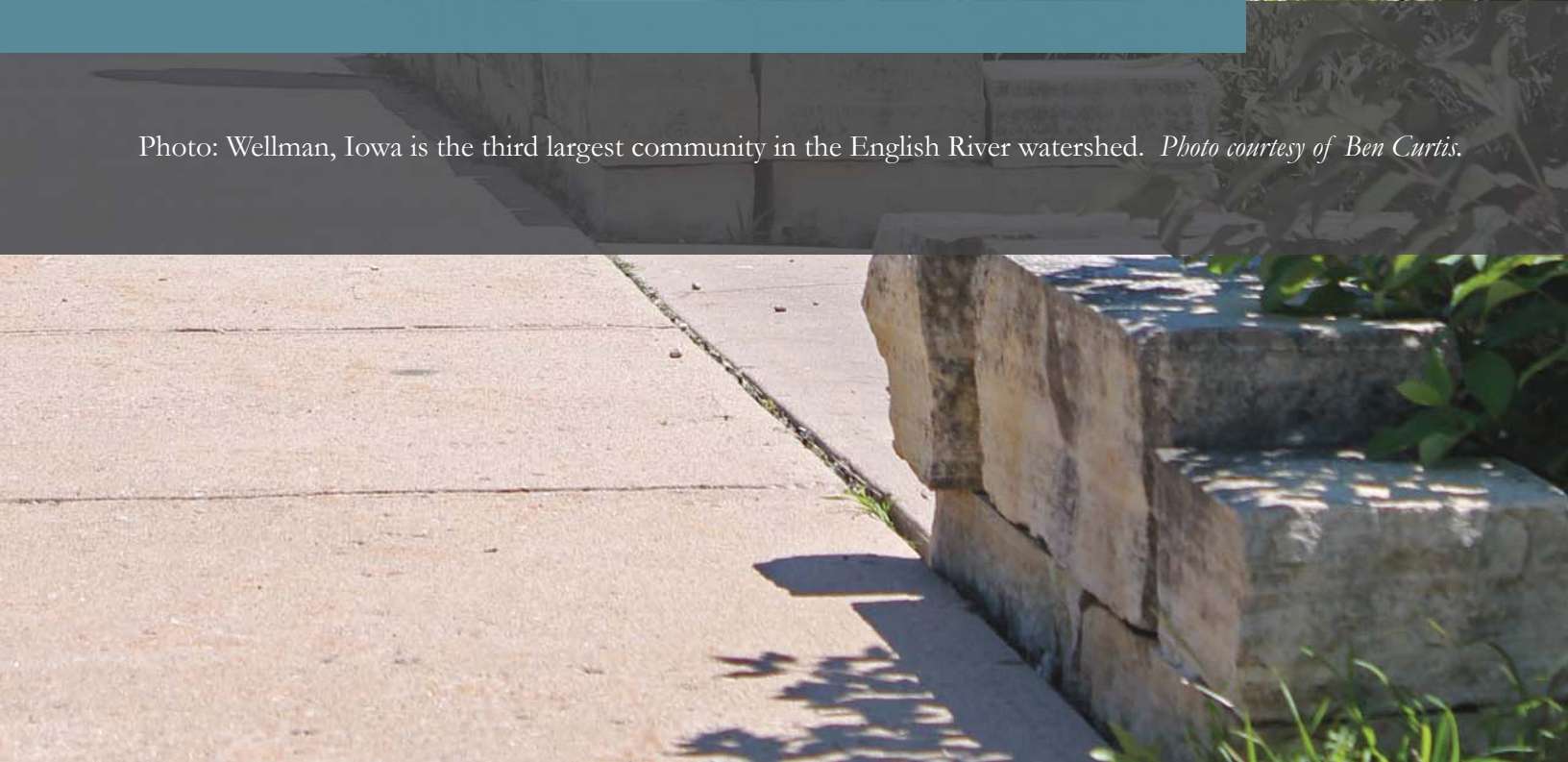




2 | Introduction

Photo: Wellman, Iowa is the third largest community in the English River watershed. *Photo courtesy of Ben Curtis.*



2.1 Geography of the Watershed

The English River Watershed is a 409,236 acre (639 square mile) watershed in southeastern Iowa (refer to Figure 1). It is home to around 21,700 people, the majority of whom live in several small communities around the watershed. Slightly over half of the townships that overlap with the watershed boundary have experienced declining population in the last decade. A clear majority of the residents in the watershed identify as White. The population is also aging. It is part of the larger Upper Lower Iowa watershed, and comprises over 1,400 miles of streams and tributaries. The majority of the watershed has been tilled and 2/3 of the landscape is utilized for row crops. A quarter of the area is grassland or pasture. Approximately 6 percent of the watershed is timber and another 6 percent is urban development.

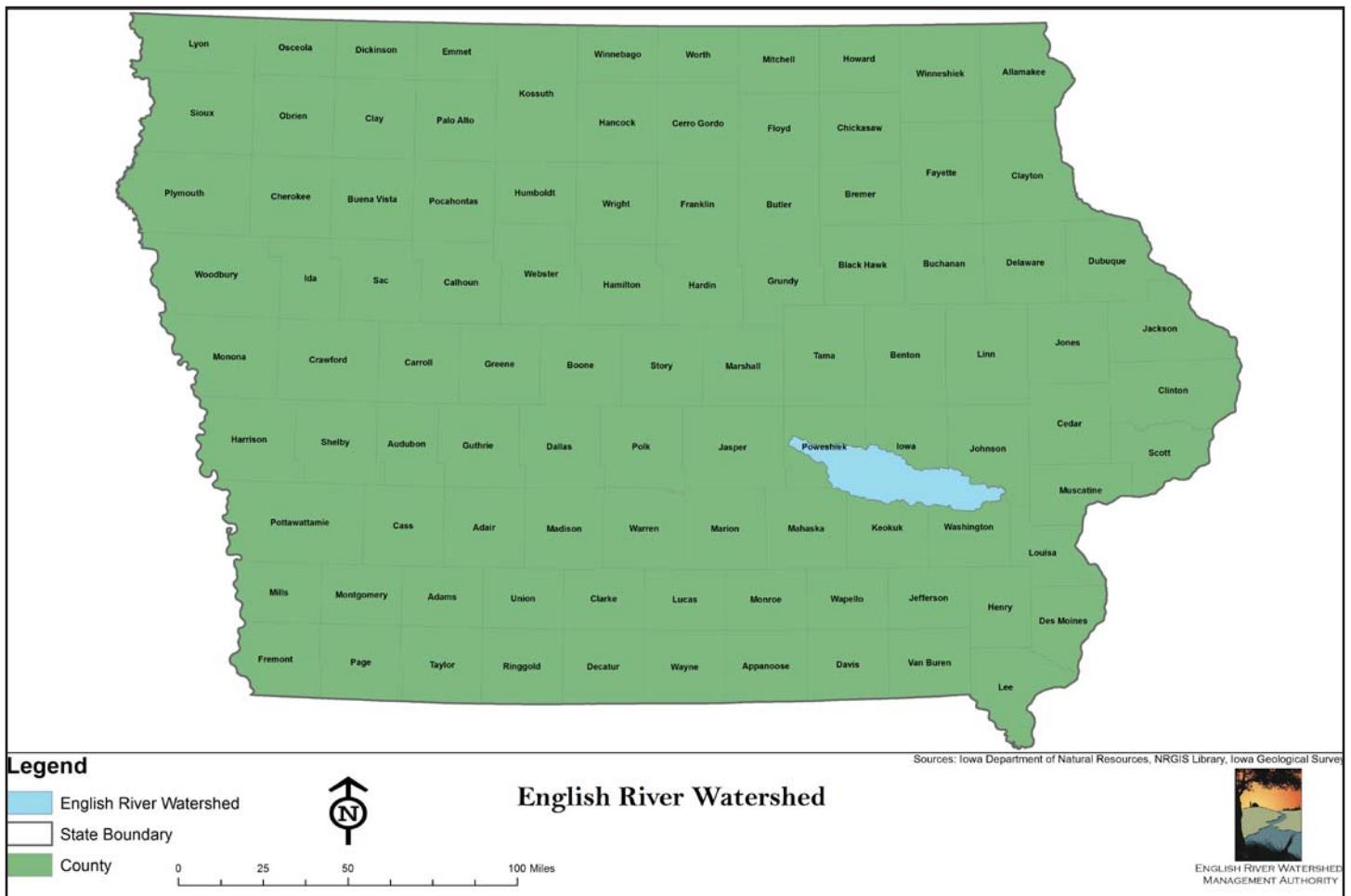


Figure 1. Location of the English River Watershed in Iowa

Small, scattered rural villages dot the landscape. The watershed covers portions of Poweshiek, Iowa, Johnson, Washington, and Keokuk Counties and includes portions, or all of the communities of: Grinnell, Guernsey, Montezuma, Barnes City, Deep River, Millersburg, Keswick, Webster, Kinross, North English, Parnell, Wellman, Kalona and Riverside (Figure 2).

Few wetlands have survived the last century of land use conversion and urban development. The watershed is characterized by a precarious combination of highly erodible land and fertile soils with high corn suitability ratings (CSR). Observations from the English River watershed are consistent with general Iowa population and watershed trends seen across the state.

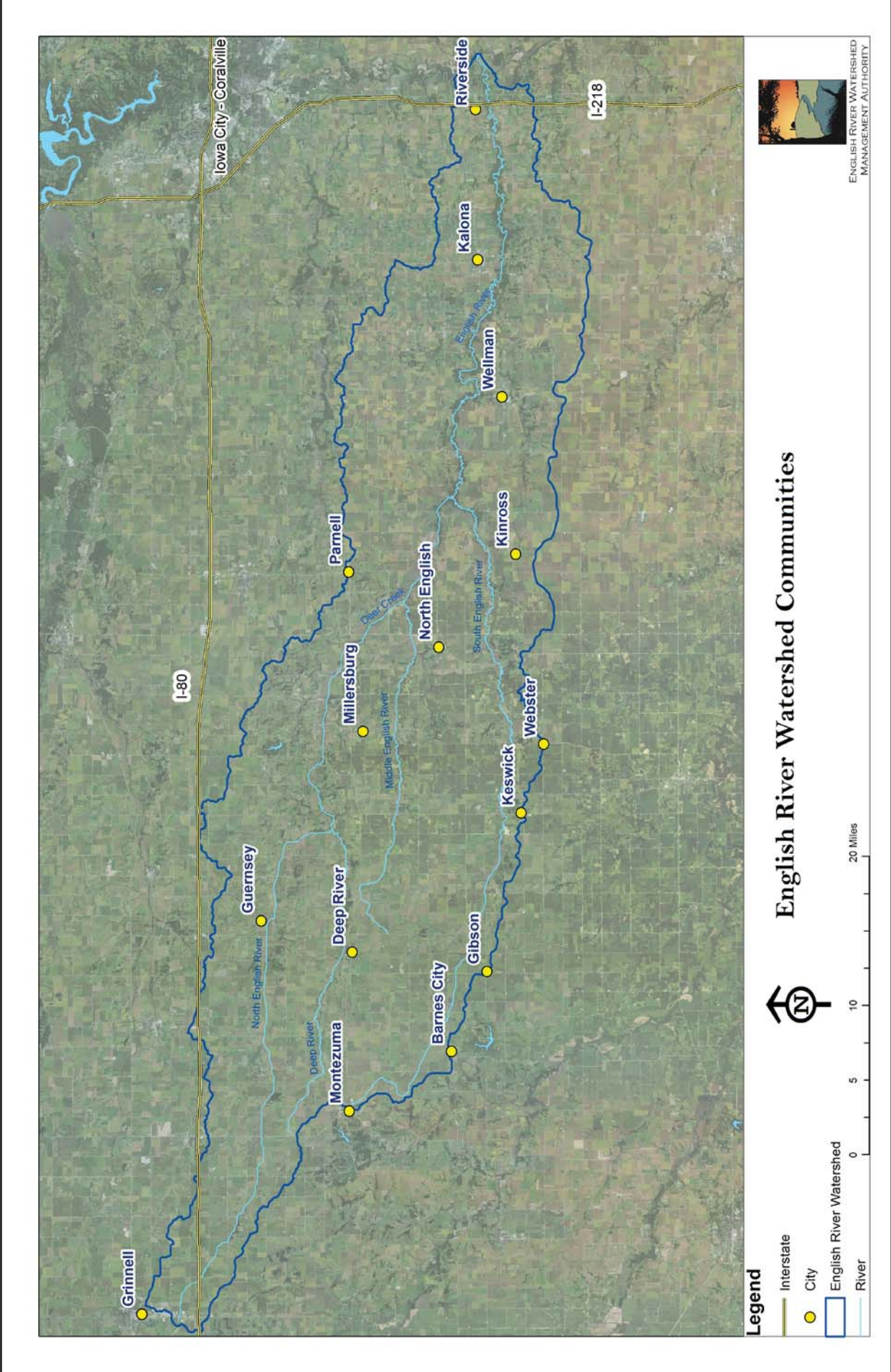


Figure 2. Communities in the English River Watershed