



We all Live Downstream

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Mount Prospect Golf Course in Illinois is proactive in clearing garbage and debris from the waterways that traverse their property, even if they are not responsible for its presence.

Did you know that you're standing in a watershed? That's right. Though your feet are dry, you and your house and workplace and school and town are located in a watershed, which includes the *total land area* that drains directly or indirectly into a particular stream or river. A watershed is *often named for the stream or river into which it drains*, so the name of the nearest major water body is likely the name of the watershed you're standing in.

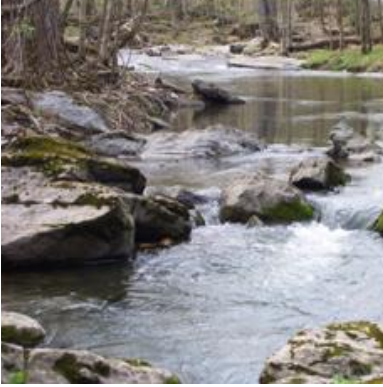
Now, look around you, or take a drive around town. What land uses and land management practices do you see in your watershed? What kind of impacts—and collective impact—might these have on the land and water needed to sustain people, wildlife, and healthy environment where you live?

What happens upstream affects all users and natural systems downstream. It's as simple as gravity! As water flows down hill it carries sediments, pollutants, and other dissolved materials from roads, parking lots, buildings, construction sites, commercial and industrial sites, and residential areas into streams, rivers, lakes, or groundwater. Each parcel of land is like a drop in the bucket, either contributing to or degrading the watershed.

Unfortunately, property management and municipal land use planning and zoning are based more on land use demands and politics than on maintaining healthy watersheds. How different it would be to take a *watershed approach* to property management and community planning. Working with the natural, rather than political, boundaries of the landscape would require that we see the parts (each parcel of land in a community) in relation to the whole (the entire watershed). The results could be dramatic—improved land management, proactive decision-making, integrated planning, a cleaner environment, and healthier communities.

Getting There

Making such a monumental shift may seem nothing less than daunting. Yet numerous communities are moving in that direction, taking manageable steps over several years to involve citizens in developing master plans that attempt to balance property rights with community values and environmental assets. On an individual basis, we can consider a watershed approach to managing our own properties by implementing a variety of best management practices that are truly best for our own land and the watersheds in which we live.



Learning more about your area's water resources is a good way to begin protecting them. Residents of the Onesquethaw-Coeymans watershed in upstate New York explore the Onesquethaw Creek and learn how protecting and preserving the quality of the creek will benefit people, wildlife, and the environment.



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Let the suggestions and examples here offer inspiration and ideas for what may be possible in your watershed. We hope they help you stand up for the watershed you're standing in.

Upper Hudson River Watershed, Eastern New York

The location of Audubon International's headquarters in upstate New York presents the perfect place for us to *practice what we preach*. Our office is situated on the 140-acre Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary that is bounded by the Onesquethaw Creek, a prime trout stream and drinking water source that provides recreational opportunities and quality riparian habitat along much of its length as it makes its way to the Hudson River. Limestone bedrock and thin soils within the surrounding watershed make the creek especially sensitive to pollutants.

In 1999, we collaborated with a core group of stakeholders to form the Onesquethaw/Coeymans Watershed Council (OCWC). The OCWC is dedicated to protecting and preserving the quality of the Onesquethaw-Coeymans Creek and its watershed for the benefit of people, wildlife, and the environment.

From its inception, the OCWC has been mapping the watershed and monitoring water quality. During the past two years, the OCWC has partnered with local high school students, who monitor water quality each month. A grant received in 2003 from the Hudson River Basin Estuary Program enabled OCWC to develop a GIS-based PowerPoint presentation to educate landowners and officials from surrounding towns about the creek and water quality issues. The comprehensive, easy-to-understand presentation has been recently singled out by the Hudson River Basin Estuary Program as a model for watershed education to be replicated elsewhere.

In March 2005, Audubon International's Fred Realbuto, who also serves as OCWC's current president, joined colleagues from a number of non-profit organizations in the Hudson River valley to explore the creation of a Hudson River Watershed Alliance. Realbuto was selected to serve on an organizing committee charged with developing a mission statement, bylaws, and standing committees. This is the first and only group to look at the preservation of the Hudson River watershed from Mt. Marcy in the Adirondacks to the mouth of the Hudson at the Atlantic Ocean.

Schuylkill Watershed, Eastern Pennsylvania

The Schuylkill River supplies drinking water to 1.5 million people in the City of Philadelphia and surrounding suburbs. Charged with its protection, the **Philadelphia Water Department** employs innovative solutions to preserve and protect local waterways and watersheds, including promotion of voluntary environmental stewardship as a means to protect drinking water quality. As part of this effort, it has partnered with Audubon International to

present a series of seminars to golf courses located in the Schuylkill watershed. Peter Bronski, Sustainable Communities Coordinator for Audubon International, completed the second full-day seminar in the series, which featured a half-day presentation, lunch, and an afternoon golf course tour. Ace Golf Club, a Silver Signature project in Lafayette Hill, hosted this year's event. Skippack Golf Course, a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, hosted last year's presentation.

In the coming year, Audubon International plans to expand its work in the Schuylkill watershed by working in continued partnership with the Philadelphia Water Department, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to involve schools and youth in watershed-wide environmental stewardship and education.

Big Cypress Watershed, Southwest Florida



Pelican Marsh Golf Club in Florida saved 14 million gallons of water by implementing a variety of conservation measures.

Water is a shrinking resource in Southwest Florida, where population growth in Naples alone grew by 65% from 1990 to 2000. Since 2002, David Smith, Superintendent of Pelican Marsh Golf Club in Naples, has been doing his part to conserve water used for golf course irrigation. Smith set a goal of reducing use by 10% and is employing a variety of measures to achieve it, including maintaining electrical rain sensors, reducing watering times and frequency, maintaining proper spray patterns on irrigation heads, and closely monitoring water use. As a result, Pelican Marsh saved 14 million gallons of water during 2003, compared with 2002. The course has been a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary since 2001, and is joined by 72 ACSP and Audubon Signature Program members located in the Big Cypress Watershed.

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