

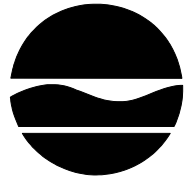
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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Erin M. Crotty
Commissioner

Watershed Stewardship

New Yorkers of all ages can help keep our waters clean and in abundant supply. We all live in a watershed—the land from which rain or melted snow drains to a water body. And we all can help protect resources, prevent pollution and reduce waste at home, school and work.

Caring for our environment takes a partnership of individuals, citizen groups, business and industry, schools and colleges, working together with federal, state and local governments. Our waters can use your help anytime, but Watershed Week—the first full week in May—is a good time to hold a special event or publicize your stewardship work.

Here are some ways to participate in NYSDEC's Watershed Stewardship program, to take credit for your volunteer work and be recognized for your actions.

Watershed Stewardship Program

Make a Commitment to a waterbody! It can be a nearby stream, pond, beach, wellhead area or even a storm drain.

Take Action! Use the list on the next page as a springboard for your ideas. You define the area of action and the degree of involvement, within the capability of your group. Work with the Water Quality Coordinating Committee in your county and with other watershed partners.

Take Credit! When you have completed a volunteer project, fill out the Watershed Stewardship report form and mail it in to:

Watershed Stewardship
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Water
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-3500.

Be sure to give us your street address, not a PO Box. You will receive a framable certificate in recognition of your activities. Awards are presented annually.

SOME STEWARDSHIP IDEAS TO GET STARTED

Hands-on Action

- Work with schools or citizen groups on water quality sampling and monitoring projects.
- Clean up a designated area—stream, riverbank, beach or wellhead recharge area.
- Plant vegetation to prevent erosion on banks or upland slopes.
- Regularly visit and monitor the condition of fire hydrants, a flood control levee or a stormwater retention pond. Report problems to local authorities.

Local Government Action

- Ask a local or state official to sponsor water awareness activities, issue a Watershed Week proclamation or hold a waterworks or wastewater treatment facility tour.
- Attend county Water Quality Coordinating Committee meetings (contact your county Soil and Water Conservation District).
- Inform yourself about issues that affect your community.
- Promote a local ordinance for wellhead protection or erosion and sedimentation control.

Research

- Get to know your aquifer or watershed; find out where your water comes from and where it's going.
- Get topographic maps of your watershed; plot past, present and potential sources of pollution, wells and surface intakes. Use the information to "sell" watershed protection.
- Review state and local laws pertaining to your waterbody, structure or issue. Find out who has jurisdiction and authority to take action.

Education/Information

- Urge your class or organization to participate in the Watershed Stewardship program.
- Organize an essay, poster, photography, model-building or poetry contest.
- Staff an information table at an event. Distribute brochures and fact sheets.
- Conduct nature walks of your watershed or aquifer recharge zone or along local lakes, streams or beaches; get people thinking about the watershed.
- Hold a community forum on water-related issues such as conservation.
- Plan a field trip to your water or sewage treatment facility.

Visit <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/stewop.html> for links that can get you started on many of these activities.

Report your activities on the accompanying form, and your group will receive a Stewardship Certificate. Awards are made annually. Although we cannot make personalized certificates for each group member, we will send a blank form for you to copy and fill in for participants. For more information call (518) 402-8232 or email dowinfo@gw.dec.state.ny.us