

Protect Your Water

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A **watershed** is an area of land where all the water drains to a common body of water.

Protecting your environment means protecting your watershed.

The land immediately adjacent to a river or stream is known as a **riparian zone**. Trees and plants in the zone absorb nutrients and pollutants, slow the flow of rain water, and help prevent erosion.

Nonpoint source pollution is water pollution which comes from many diverse sources rather than from any one point. As rainfall and snowmelt move over streets, parking lots, and driveways, they carry soil, animal waste, fertilizers, road salts, and other chemicals into our streams.

Most properties have a low point where water accumulates. Plant some water-loving shrubs, flowers and trees in such an area and run your downspouts into the area, and you've created a **rain garden**.

Groundwater originates as precipitation and percolates through the soil. **Aquifers** are the porous underground formations through which the ground water percolates. Aquifers provide a critical source of well water.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1. **Cut back on (or eliminate)** the use of fertilizers and other chemicals.
2. **Construct driveways**, parking lots, and other "flat" surfaces using porous materials that facilitate the absorption of water into the ground and reduce horizontal run-off.
3. **Don't litter**. Litter often gets swept away when it rains and ends up floating in our streams.
4. **Plant trees**, especially along lakes and streams. Trees are a natural sponge, soaking up toxic materials that would otherwise enter and pollute our waters.
5. **Properly maintain septic systems**. Faulty septic tanks release bacteria into the soil. Bacteria then flow over or through the ground into our streams.
6. **Clean up pet waste and food litter**. These items, too, release bacteria and other undesirable chemicals into the groundwater.

Tobyhanna Creek/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association

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Please visit our web site and complete our survey.

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WATERSHED WORD FIND

SAFE	W	A	T	N	O	I	T	U	L	L	O	P	E
WOODS	M	B	T	U	O	R	T	S	N	W	O	D	D
VALUE	I	E	S	M	A	E	R	T	S	N	W	O	D
WATERSHED	W	A	T	E	R	S	H	E	D	V	R	Q	N
BEAVER	O	V	R	F	R	O	G	S	T	C	E	L	R
STREAM	O	E	E	F	F	O	N	U	R	U	V	E	S
POLLUTION	D	R	A	I	N	A	G	E	L	B	D	L	A
RUNOFF	S	R	M	I	C	I	B	A	F	N	U	B	F
DRAINAGE	H	E	R	U	P	C	V	I	A	F	O	D	E
RIPARIAN	C	L	E	A	N	B	R	M	R	N	W	S	G
CLEAN	E	Y	W	E	T	L	A	N	D	S	A	R	O
CLEAR	H	S	I	F	K	L	A	K	E	F	I	G	O
PURE	E	D	Q	R	A	E	L	C	F	R	W	N	E
SALAMANDER	L	N	Z	S	P	R	I	P	A	R	I	A	N
FROGS	S	T	E	W	A	R	D	S	H	I	P	R	I
DOWNSTREAM													
LAKE													
TROUT													
FISH													
STEWARDSHIP													
WETLANDS													

When we convert natural land surfaces to residential or commercial uses, the **natural water cycle** of evaporation > condensation > precipitation, etc. is interrupted, increasing runoff and pollution.

When excessive amounts of nutrients (phosphates, sulphates, potassium, etc.) flow into the water, they encourage the growth of algae and other undesirable species. Over time, fish can be deprived of oxygen, and an entire lake eco-system can deteriorate. This process is called **eutrophication**.

