



Why focus planning within a Watershed?

What is a watershed?

All the land over which water drains to collect in a common watercourse.

Is the idea of “watershed” new?

In North America, the idea of using watersheds as a unit of land for planning and conservation goes back to the middle of the 19th Century: when explorer and scientist John Wesley Powell reported to the U. S. Congress that “the Watershed is the most logical unit for resource planning and land use decision making.”

Why are watersheds important?

Watersheds provide critical natural services that sustain or enrich quality of life. They supply water for drinking, agriculture and industry; provide significant habitat for plants and animals; offer areas of natural beauty, and include a variety of water bodies for recreation and relaxation.

What can we do to protect watersheds?

- Communities use watershed protection to sustain watershed services that are endangered as populations grow. Regardless of region, underlying threats to watershed quality is usually the same: increased development.
- Working at a watershed level solves diverse water resource problems. Eight basic management tools can be used to mitigate the impacts of development:
 - *Watershed Planning* - Balances the need for growth with the need for watershed protection.
 - *Land Conservation* – Finds sustainable ways to protect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

- *Riparian Buffers* - Protects a stream, lake, or wetland from future disturbance or encroachment.
- *Better Site Design* – Reduces total paved area; distributes and diffuses stormwater; and conserves natural habitats.
- *Erosion Control* - Reduces sediment loss during construction.
- *Stormwater Treatment Practices* - Delays, captures, stores, treats, or infiltrates stormwater runoff.
- *Control of Non-stormwater Discharges* - Controls the way wastewater and other non-stormwater flows are treated and discharged in a watershed.
- *Watershed Stewardship* - Increases public awareness about watershed management and ensures that citizens practice good pollution prevention on their own properties.

NSWA uses a Watershed Approach:

The NSWA , the official Watershed Protection and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta under the Government of Alberta's Water for Life strategy is dedicated to using a watershed approach to all of its work.

The NSWA's State of Watershed Report for the North Saskatchewan River provided a snapshot in time of the general state of the watershed.

The NSWA's Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) is the response to the State of the Watershed Report. This collaboratively developed plan is designed to protect, maintain and where possible, restore a healthy watershed.

Understanding the importance for watershed planning requires an appreciation for and knowledge of a variety of natural and cultural values. To this end NSWA continually initiatives up-to-date technical studies and reports to inform and guide the watershed planning process.