

Renewing Local Watersheds

People who are willing to work together can develop local policies and practices that protect their watershed resources.

What were the waters in your watershed like when you were a kid?



What do they look like now?

Are people in your watershed ready to work together to solve water problems?

- Do they talk about water issues at the school football game, the local diner, or the grocery store?
- Has your watershed been headlined in the local news?
- Are citizens "showing up" at planning board, town council, or county supervisor meetings to express concern about water related decisions?
- Do you have one or more local groups that are involved in activities to improve the watershed?
- Are local farmers searching for solutions to soil and nutrient loss to reduce input costs and retain soil productivity?
- Do local businesses view water as a valuable amenity?
- Has your community experienced a water crisis in the last five years—drought, flood, accidental chemical spills?

For leadership and organizational development support, contact your local ISU County Extension Office, Lois Wright Morton, Sociology Extension (515) 294-2843, or Steve Padgitt, ISU Extension to Communities (515) 294-8397.

Community watershed groups can partner with Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, environmental groups, farmers, businesses, and natural resource professionals to:

1. Help establish communication networks with other watershed residents and groups
2. Educate and motivate others to get involved
3. Initiate demonstration and field trials of best management practices
4. Collect local data such as water quality monitoring, nature mapping, resource inventories, and surveys of farmer and land use practices
5. Undertake watershed activities such as willow planting, trash clean-up, prairie and tree plantings
6. Identify priorities for allocating limited public financial resources
7. Set local water quality goals
8. Plan strategies for achieving goals
9. Offer innovative solutions for controlling potential water pollution
10. Identify and seek additional funds to support local efforts to solve water quality problems



Photo by Peggy Murdoch

Maintaining water quality needs the contributions of everyone—residents, local leaders, and agency staff alike.



*Photo by Jim Colbert
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