

What YOU can do to protect your local watershed and help maintain water purification services

Water purification services depend on maintaining healthy ecosystems and balancing the water quality and quantity needs of both humans and ecosystems. Some of the key strategies to do this include protecting existing wetland and riparian systems while restoring degraded ones, and planning urban, industrial and agricultural development projects to avoid negative impacts on wetlands, rivers, and streams. It will also be necessary to increase our understanding of wetland ecology and enhance our efforts in improving restoration technologies for wetlands and riparian areas. Last but not least, we will need to increase financial and political resources to slow the loss and increase the acreage of the ecosystems that provide water purification services.

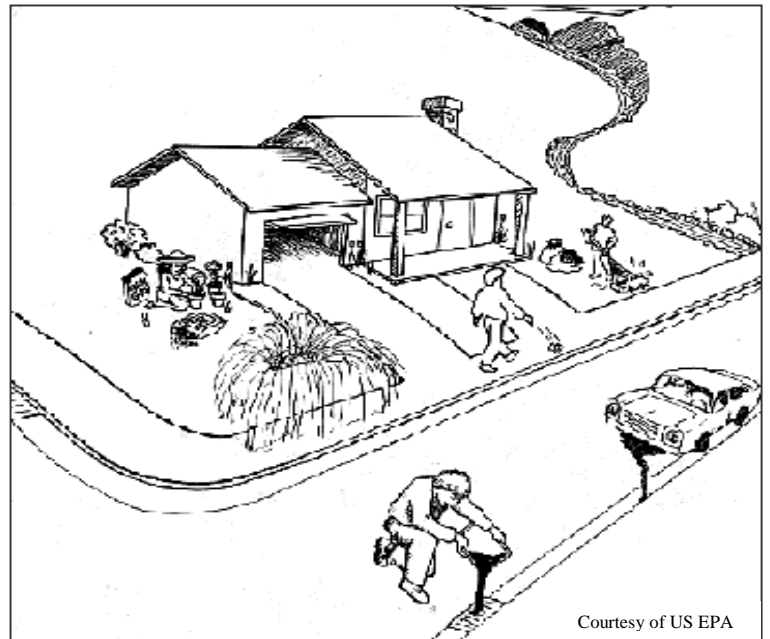
There are many ways that *you* can make a difference in your everyday lives and within your local community. These include:

Become more aware of the effects of your everyday habits. Avoid activities such as:

- Overfertilizing your lawn
- Overtreating with pesticides
- Pouring pesticides and herbicides in sewers or drains
- Disposing of toxic wastes improperly, such as automobile fluids

Become active by:

- Supporting parks and other natural areas
- Helping plant vegetation along waterways
- Volunteering to monitor and clean a waterway
- Attending community meetings that deal with development issues



Helpful on-line education and action resources:

- EPA: Things you can do to make a difference in your watershed. <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/earthday/earthday.html>
- National Association of County Governments: A great site providing input into national affairs from a local standpoint. <http://www.naco.org/links/index.cfm>
- Local government environmental assistance network page on wetlands: Provides updates on current local environmental policies and planning. <http://www.lgean.org/>
- Case study examples of local wetland conservation activities: Case studies from around the country on a variety of community partnerships that seek to improve water quality in local and regional areas. <http://www.iwla.org/SOS/handbook/casestudies/index.html>
- EPA environmental volunteer ListServ: Established by the USEPA to encourage communication and information exchange among the Nation's growing number of volunteer environmental monitoring programs. <http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/smb/listserv.htm>
- Education program for young people to get involved in water related projects. <http://www.uwex.edu/erc/>