



Watershed Management Resources at EPA

Many watershed organizations, local governments, tribes, and state and federal agencies are now working together to manage water quality at the watershed level using a step-by-step watershed management process. This process uses a series of cooperative actions to:

- characterize existing conditions,
- identify and prioritize problems,
- define management objectives,
- develop protection or remediation strategies, and
- implement and adapt selected actions as necessary.

A watershed plan documents the expected outcomes of this process and serves as the action agenda for managing water quality at the watershed level.



Although watershed practitioners recognize the benefits of using a holistic watershed approach, some may feel overwhelmed by the amount and range of information often needed to create a watershed plan. Fortunately, EPA offers numerous free tools and resources that simplify the watershed planning process and provide access to needed resources. These tools, highlighted in this fact sheet, include:

- 1 Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters.** This guidance document walks you through the watershed management process.
▶ www.epa.gov/nps/watershed_handbook
- 2 Watershed Plan Builder.** This online tool leads you through a series of Web pages that asks you to input information about your watershed. The tool generates a customized outline that will help you develop a watershed management plan.
▶ <http://iaspub.epa.gov/watershedplan>
- 3 Watershed Central and Watershed Central Wiki.** Using this online information sharing and networking resource, you can find applicable watershed management information and connect with knowledgeable professionals.
▶ www.epa.gov/watershedcentral
- 4 Training.** EPA offers free online seminars and courses to help educate you, your staff and stakeholders about watershed protection and planning.
▶ www.epa.gov/watershedacademy
- 5 Funding.** EPA offers a series of tools, documents, databases and other tools to help you identify potential funding sources to support your watershed management efforts.
▶ www.epa.gov/owow/funding.html

How do I protect and restore my watershed?

Developing a watershed plan will help you better manage your water resources. A watershed plan is a document that describes the water resource assessments, management strategies and restoration and protection actions—and expected outcomes of those actions—for a particular drainage basin or watershed. A plan will guide you in your efforts to protect and restore water quality.

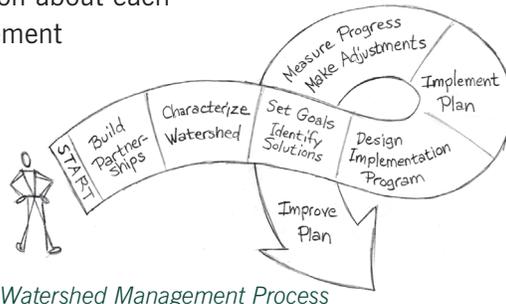


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EPA's Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans

www.epa.gov/nps/watershed_handbook

EPA developed the *Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters* (Handbook) to help you develop and implement watershed management plans. The Handbook offers detailed background information about each step in the watershed management process (see diagram) and provides comprehensive instructions for developing, implementing and tracking the success of watershed plans. It offers a series of tools that:

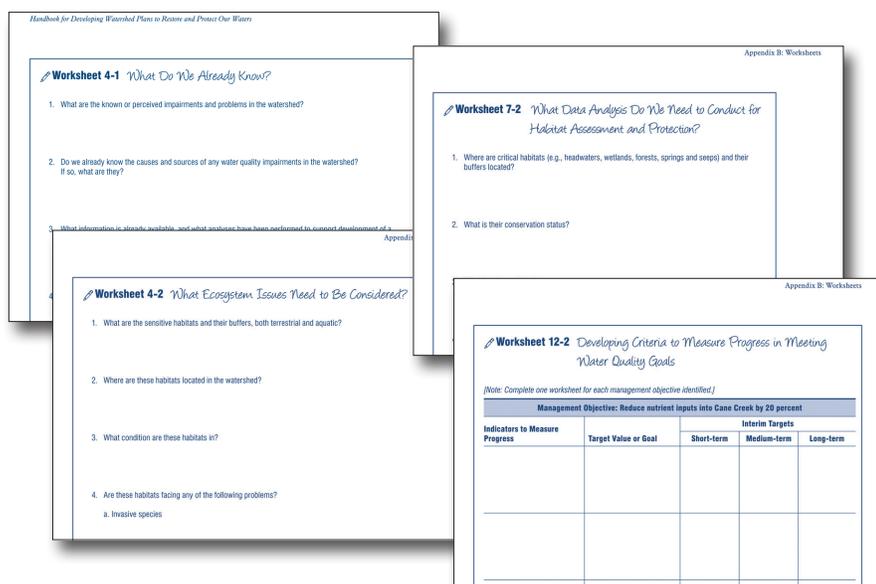
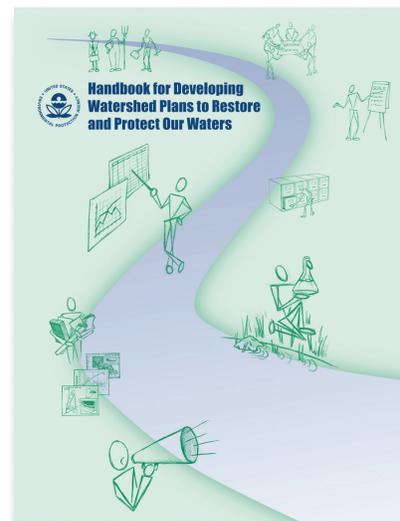


- Address social and economic factors, incorporate watershed science and involve a wide variety of stakeholders
- Identify sources and help quantify existing pollutant loads and estimate load reductions needed to meet water quality criteria
- Help select management measures appropriate for achieving the needed load reductions

EPA intends for the Handbook to supplement the many good watershed planning guides developed by other agencies, universities and nonprofit organizations. The Handbook can help anyone undertaking a watershed planning effort, but should be particularly useful to those working to improve and restore impaired or threatened waters.

Contents of the Handbook

The Handbook is very user-friendly. It is divided into 13 chapters that move through the process of developing, implementing and evaluating a watershed plan. The Handbook's structure allows readers to either work through the process step-by-step or go directly to individual sections that highlight specific technical tools used



in different watershed planning steps. Each chapter explains the key concepts included in a particular watershed planning area and includes examples illustrating how the concepts are applied. To help you navigate through the watershed planning process, the Handbook provides worksheets, checklists and summaries of diverse watershed planning resources (see examples at left).

The Handbook may be used with **EPA's Watershed Plan Builder** (see next page), a Web-based watershed planning resource. With your input, Plan Builder creates a detailed, annotated outline that you can use to begin developing a comprehensive watershed plan.

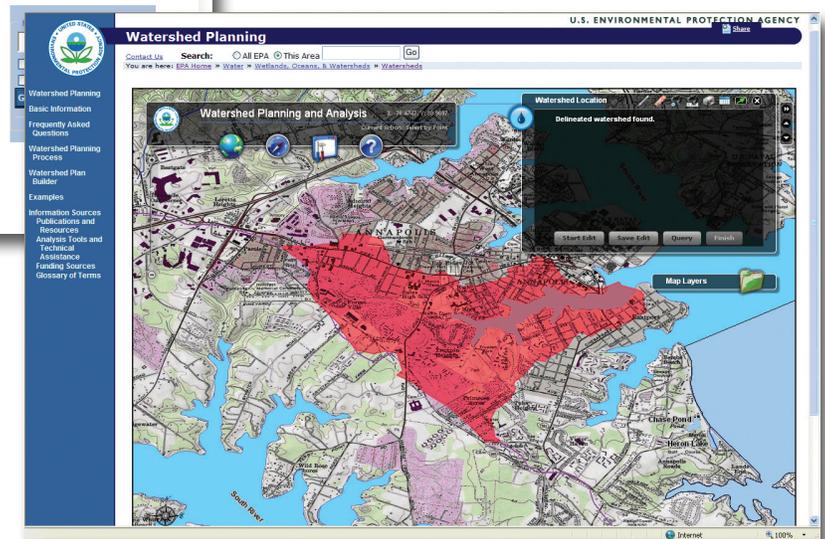
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EPA's Watershed Plan Builder <http://iaspub.epa.gov/watershedplan>

EPA's Watershed Plan Builder is a simple-to-use online tool that allows you to create a customized, annotated watershed plan outline. It provides a consistent, comprehensive approach to watershed planning and is designed to be used at any watershed planning stage, whether you are just beginning the planning process or are updating an existing plan. The tool guides you through a series of screens similar to the ones below and asks you questions about your watershed.

Want to see Plan Builder in action?

View EPA's free, online Watershed Plan Builder Webcast seminar at www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts/archives.html#20070502 for a detailed look at how Plan Builder works, and to see samples of the types of information you can expect it to generate for your watershed outline.

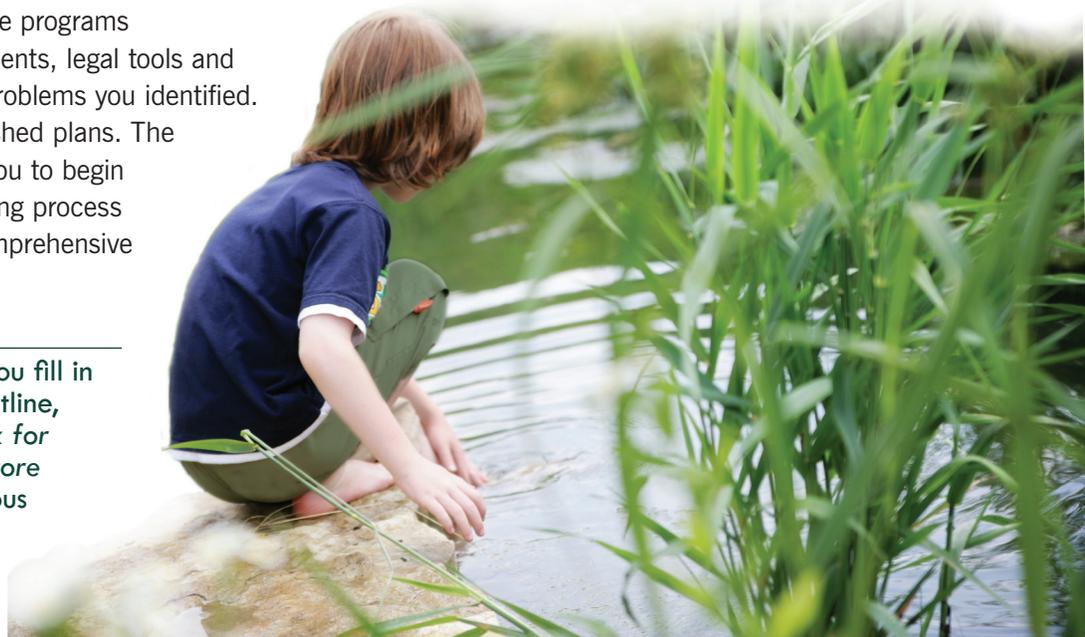


The screens will help you identify

- past or existing watershed plans,
- factors that are driving your watershed plan,
- your watershed's location,
- ongoing watershed activities, and
- current issues of concern.

Using the information you enter, Plan Builder creates a customized watershed plan outline that includes details about federal and state programs that might offer program tools, documents, legal tools and funding sources to help address the problems you identified. It also provides links to sample watershed plans. The outline serves as a starting point for you to begin working through the watershed planning process with your stakeholders to create a comprehensive watershed plan for your watershed.

If you'd prefer to work offline as you fill in your customized watershed plan outline, you may download EPA's *Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters* (see previous page).



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Watershed Central and Watershed Central Wiki

www.epa.gov/watershedcentral

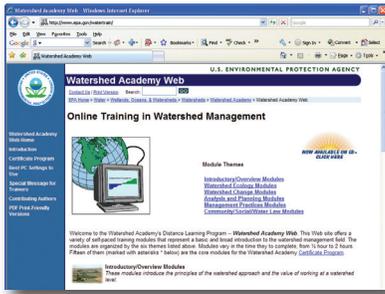
Watershed Central is a dynamic, evolving Web site that links users directly to watershed information resources, guidance documents and decision support tools offered by EPA and other organizations. It also includes a collaborative application called a Watershed Central Wiki that allows watershed practitioners to submit and edit watershed-related information, including case studies and success stories, details about watershed organizations and their efforts, experiences with watershed planning tools, and personal commentary on local approaches to watershed management and planning. Content is constantly being expanded and updated by the watershed community.



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Training @ the EPA Watershed Academy

www.epa.gov/watershedacademy



EPA's **Watershed Academy** provides online learning modules and Webcasts to teach stakeholders how to implement watershed approaches and conduct watershed planning. The free, self-paced online training modules (see www.epa.gov/watertrain) provide a basic and broad introduction to watershed management. The modules are appropriate for a wide array of audiences—from government employees to interested citizens. The Watershed Academy also offers periodic Webcast seminars, which can be accessed live or downloaded later (see www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts).

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Funding for Watershed Projects

www.epa.gov/owow/funding.html

EPA's **Watershed Funding Web site** lists numerous tools, documents and databases that can help you identify funding options that might be available to support your watershed planning efforts. The site links to useful information from both the public and private sectors, as well as to EPA's Catalog of Federal Funding for Watershed Protection (see www.epa.gov/watershedfunding). The catalog is a searchable database that contains information on more than 80 federal financial assistance sources that provide grants and loans to support watershed protection and planning efforts.

