

# HOW YOUR CONGREGATION CAN BECOME WATER STEWARDS



## STEWARDSHIP

"A steward is someone who is entrusted with the preservation and protection of a natural area over a long period of time. We are all stewards of the land, air and water around us. By living responsibly and being aware of the impact we have on our environment, we can improve and protect the natural wonders around us."

## WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a lake or river. As rainwater and melting snow run downhill, they carry sediment and other materials into our streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater.

## WHY IS YOUR WATERSHED IMPORTANT?

We all live in a watershed. Watersheds are the places we call home, where we work and where we play. Everyone relies on water and other natural resources to exist. What you and others do on the land impacts the quality and quantity of water and our other natural resources.

Healthy watersheds are vital for a healthy environment and economy. Our watersheds provide water for drinking, irrigation and industry. Many people also enjoy lakes and streams for their beauty and for boating, fishing and swimming. Wildlife also needs healthy watersheds for food and shelter.

Managing the water and other natural resources is an effective and efficient way to sustain the local economy and environmental health.

Scientists and leaders now recognize the best way to protect the vital natural resources is to understand and manage them on a watershed basis. Everything that is done in a watershed affects the watershed's system.

A partnership among all who live, work or play in the watershed can help identify concerns, educate those involved and encourage them to take action. Watershed management plans focus on prevention of pollution. This is easier and cheaper than trying to cleanup a watershed after the fact.

Understanding your watershed is the first step in protecting the water and other natural resources.

Source: <http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/KYW/Brochures/GetToKnow.html>

## FIND YOUR WATERSHED

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

Surf Your Watershed is a service to help you locate, use, and share environmental information about your state and watershed.

<http://www.epa.gov/surf/>

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
**Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns**

## WHAT IS A WATERSHED COUNCIL?

Watershed councils are locally organized, voluntary, non-regulatory groups established to improve the condition of watersheds in their local area. In Oregon, the 1995 Legislature unanimously passed House Bill 3441 providing guidance in establishing watershed councils but making it clear that formation of a council is a local government decision, with no state approval required. Watershed councils are required to represent the interests in the basin and be balanced in their makeup. Watershed councils offer local residents the opportunity to independently evaluate watershed conditions and identify opportunities to restore or enhance the conditions. Through the councils, partnerships between residents, local, state and federal agency staff and other groups can be developed. Through these partnerships and the resulting integration of local efforts, the state's watersheds can be protected and enhanced. Source: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

## FIND YOUR WATERSHED COUNCIL

Click on a map at Network of Oregon Watershed Councils Web site (listed below) to find your watershed council and who to contact. (<http://oregonwatersheds.org/oregoncouncils>)

## WHO'S DOING WHAT IN WATERSHED RESTORATION?

### WAYS TO GET INVOLVED...

#### **Network of Oregon Watershed Councils**

This organization is dedicated to supporting the work of watershed councils throughout the state by increasing council capacity, improving key relationships and promoting public awareness of watersheds and watershed councils. They can help you and your congregation get connected to your local watershed council.

Phone: (541)-682-8323; Web site: <http://www.oregonwatersheds.org>

#### **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board**

Offers grants program for watershed restoration, enhancement and education projects. Any landowner, organization, institute of higher education or local government may apply. For education projects, priority is given to grants that involve cooperative ventures between local groups (e.g. Soil and Water Conservation districts and watershed councils) and school districts.

Phone: (503) 378-3739; Web site: <http://www.oweb.state.or.us>

#### **Oregon Association of Conservation Districts**

The goals of the OACD are:

- To promote the conservation and wise use of the natural resources of the state of Oregon by serving as the state association of member soil and water conservation districts and water control districts.
- To serve as spokesman for those who are committed to the belief that Oregon's soil, water, air and renewable resources must be used in accordance with the needs of the people of the state while maintaining a quality environment and a productive economy.
- To cooperate with public and private organizations with similar purposes towards the adoption of statewide policies and programs that will effectively contribute to a quality environment and a productive economy.
- To inform the public of the value of soil and water conservation, flood prevention, proper land use planning, orderly economic development, recreation development, fish and wildlife enhancement and other benefits.

Web site: <http://www.oacd.org/>

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**SOLV – Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism**

Builds community through volunteer action to preserve this treasure called Oregon. SOLV is a non-profit organization that brings together government agencies, businesses and individual volunteers in programs and projects to enhance the livability of Oregon. SOLV conducts many native plant plantings each year (particularly in the winter and often in collaboration with other nonprofit or municipal groups) and is involved in restoring public lands, which may include removal of exotics and maintenance of native plant plantings. SOLV also has grant money for small scale restoration projects. Phone: (503) 844-9571, (800) 322-3326. Web site: <http://www.solv.org>

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Offers backyard conservation booklet and kit. Phone: (503) 231-2270 x104

**NATIONAL LINKS TO WATERSHED NETWORKS**

**The Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN)**

Lists links to other watershed education Web sites on the Internet. It provides a list of specific watershed sites as well as water education sites. Web site: <http://www.green.org>

**River Network**

A national non-profit organization that offers consulting, publications, acquisition of riverlands and small grants to help people raise money, build organizations and monitor and protect rivers and watersheds. Web site: <http://www.rivernet.org/>

**LEARN TO NATURESCAPE!**

**Hardy Plant Society of Oregon**

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon is a non-profit volunteer organization for gardeners of all levels: beginning through experienced, amateur through professional. Our primary focus is on hardy herbaceous perennial plants in the Pacific Northwest, but we're interested in all kinds of gardening, at all skill levels.

Phone: (503) 224-5718; Web site: <http://www.hardyplantsociety.org/>

**Native Plant Society Oregon**

Has frequent field trips and events regarding native plants and occasional classes or workshops on naturoscaping. Provides a quality, free access on-line bulletin. For a complete list of hikes, classes or related events visit their Web site and click on both Publications to find the Bulletin and Chapters to learn more about local happenings. Web site: [www.npsoregon.org](http://www.npsoregon.org)

**PlantNative**

"How to Naturoscape" resources. PlantNative is a collection of individuals dedicated to moving native plants and naturoscaping into mainstream landscaping practices. They believe this promotes biodiversity, preserves our natural heritage and enhances livability. PlantNative's goal is to work with nursery owners, landscape professionals and consumers to increase public awareness of native plants and related landscaping practices and to increase both the supply of and demand for native plants. Web site: [http://www.plantnative.com/how\\_intro.htm](http://www.plantnative.com/how_intro.htm)

**GET INVOLVED!!**

For more information and to learn how you can join and learn from other faith-based watershed stewardship efforts, contact Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns, a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, 0245 SW Bancroft, Suite B, Portland, OR 97239. Phone: (503) 221-1054, ext. 278. E-mail: [inec@emoregon.org](mailto:inec@emoregon.org)