



Sail on
WARDSHIP
Water

SAMPLE

Where Does Your
Water Shed?

Did you know that you live in a watershed? Our actions, habits and decisions impact our watersheds. Every inch of the land on planet Earth is part of a watershed. You can define a watershed as, "All of the water under or draining off of a particular watershed goes into the same place." They come in all shapes and sizes, and cross county, state and national boundaries. There are 2,100 watersheds in the continental U.S. If we include Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico, the count rises to 2,267 watersheds.

Your drinking water depends on the flow of the water through a watershed to a body of water or groundwater. Just think, a water molecule you drank today could have also been used by a dinosaur! The water cycle helps to recycle water every day. Some of the natural elements found in watersheds (like wetlands) also work to provide us clean water by filtering out pollutants. Healthy watersheds and clean water are vital to a healthy you.

In your community, you might have a watershed organization. These watershed groups assist communities by receiving training to monitor the water and record the data. They also help educate citizens about the importance of taking care of our water. Check with your local conservation district to see how you can become involved with a local watershed group.

Education programs can help raise awareness of easy steps citizens can take to protect the water in their community. For example, did you know that by cleaning your driveway with a broom instead of a water hose you can save water and help prevent pollutants from washing into storm drains? In many communities, you may notice markers by storm drains that read, "No dumping in this stream." Leaves and grass clippings dumped into storm drains or a nearby body of water can decompose and take oxygen out of the water for fish and other creatures. If you have a pet, it is important to pick up its waste so that it is not washed into nearby bodies of water.

Each citizen can also take the responsibility for not littering. This keeps our water bodies clean and also benefits our roadways. It is extremely important for everyone to properly dispose of trash. Take a look at a parking lot in your community; do you see oil and litter? Where do you think it goes when it rains? It could be a nearby river or stream. Help educate your community about proper trash disposal and automobile maintenance.

Less than 1% of all the water on our planet is fresh water. The average U.S. citizen uses 70 gallons of water every day. And this does not include the water it takes to manufacture automobiles, clothing and food. We depend and need fresh water every day. Take time to learn about your local community's water-supply sources, and volunteer for river, stream or beach clean-ups. You can make a difference!

To learn more about your watershed and information on an app for your smart phone visit www.epa.gov/mywaterway. Additional natural resource education materials can be found at: www.nacdnet.org/education/resources/.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship Week is one of the largest conservation-related observances. The 3,000 conservation districts that make up NACD manage soil and water conservation programs in virtually every community in the United States. Since 1955, NACD has sponsored the national Stewardship Week program by selecting a theme and developing materials for schools, communities and churches of all denominations. Stewardship Week, celebrated annually between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, reminds us of our personal responsibility to care for the natural resources on which we all depend. The celebration and observance of Stewardship continue throughout the year—not for just one week. The concept of Stewardship involves personal and social responsibility. We have a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely. To find your local conservation district, visit: www.nacdnet.org/about/districts/locate/.