

3.2 Create a Watershed Management Plan

10 – 35 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2026. The previous version of this action is [available for comparison](#). Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Plan comprehensively for watershed management.

Complementary Action:

- [Engage in Watershed Protection and Restoration](#)

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

Watershed Management Plan **(up to 30 points)**

1. Inventory **(10 - 15 points)**

If your inventory was created more than three years ago, include in your submission a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

Parts a and b must be completed to receive credit. Part c is optional and may be submitted for an additional 5 points.

a. (required for 10 points) Conduct a Natural Resources Inventory for a watershed (for more information on natural resources inventories, see Sustainable CT Action [Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory](#)). A watershed is the area of land that drains or sheds water into a specific receiving waterbody, such as a lake or a river. As rainwater or melted snow runs downhill in the watershed, it collects and transports sediment and other materials and deposits them into the receiving waterbody. All waterbodies are part of a watershed.

Submit: Your completed Natural Resources Inventory.

b. (required for 10 points) Map and identify critical watershed resource areas to include: aquifers, riparian corridors, wetlands, vernal pools and headwaters.

Submit: A map depicting all aquifers, riparian corridors, wetlands, vernal pools and headwaters.

c. (optional for 5 additional points) Map land uses and possible locations where pollutant loads may enter the watershed. Include estimates of pollutant loads according to area and type of land use, using formulas available from various sources (e.g. US Environmental Protection Agency, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Conservation Districts). Use information that already exists in total maximum daily loads (TMDL) or watershed-wide management plans developed by watershed organizations. **(5 points)**

Submit: A map depicting land uses and possible locations where pollutant loads may enter the watershed. Possible locations where pollutant loads may enter the watershed can also be depicted on a separate

document, submitted in addition to the map.

2. Regulation Review and Alignment with Watershed Protection Goals **(10 points)**

All elements must be completed to receive credit.

- a. Identify your watershed protection goals.
- b. Review existing zoning and subdivision regulations for alignment with watershed protection goals.

Submit: A list of your watershed protection goals; a summary of your regulation review, including a description of how your regulations align (or do not) with your watershed protection goals; and copies of all complementary regulations edited or enacted to promote watershed protection goals. If your regulation review was completed more than three years ago, include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

3. Action Plan: Based on your completed inventory and regulation review, develop a list of priority actions and projects, including restoration projects, for reaching watershed protection goals, identifying project need, anticipated project costs, timeline and work plan. Your plan could take the form of a “watershed-based plan” required by federal and state agencies in response to a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) designation, but it could also be informally developed by stakeholders. **(10 points)**

Submit: A copy of the action plan and a completed [worksheet](#). If your action plan was completed more than three years ago, include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the “Partners” box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the ["Partners Guidance Document"](#).

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from your community's planning or public works departments, engineering, GIS, water pollution control authorities could be helpful in implementing this action.

In addition, the inland wetlands commission, planning and zoning commission, conservation commission, and watershed organizations could help implement this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the [Sustainable CT Grants Portal](#), which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the [Support for Your Town](#) page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- [Urban Act Grant Program](#)
- [Sustainable CT Community Match Fund](#)
- [Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations](#)
- [State Funding Readiness Project](#)

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- [Aquifer Protection Area Interactive Map](#)
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, ["Watershed Based Plans and Watershed Management Plans"](#)

- UConn CLEAR, [Local Watershed Assessment Tool](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Watershed Plan Builder](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Impaired Waters and TDMLs: Resources, Tools and Databases](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Nonpoint Source: Volunteer Monitoring](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[National Aquatic Resource Surveys](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Tools to Assist States and Tribes to Reduce Nutrient Pollution](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Polluted Runoff: Nonpoint Source Pollution](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, [Watershed Academy](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, [WATERS \(Watershed Assessment, Tracking & Environmental Results System\)](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, [EnviroAtlas](#)

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- [CT Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials](#)
- [Connecticut Conservation Districts](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, [Climate Ready Estuaries](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Healthy Watersheds Protection](#)"
- [National Estuary Program](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency, [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\) Stormwater Program](#)
- [Center for Watershed Protection](#)
- [UConn Stormwater Corps](#)
 - A hands-on, interactive classroom semester with a focus on the local (municipal) perspective, followed by a "practicum" semester where student teams undertake environmental projects in the community

Why This Matters

A watershed is the area of land that drains or sheds water into a specific receiving waterbody, such as a lake or a river. As rainwater or melted snow runs downhill in the watershed, it collects and transports sediment and other materials and deposits them into the receiving waterbody. All waterbodies are part of a watershed. Connecticut has eight major [watersheds](#), but your town or city only needs to plan for local watersheds.

Watershed management is the practice of planning for and implementing strategies to maintain or improve the health and water quality of a watershed system. Since watersheds are, essentially, large areas of land that are the pathways for water flow in a region, there are many opportunities for pollutants to enter the system. Thus a thorough plan that includes an education component is important to protect the long-term health of the system. Watershed health is a barometer for health of the surrounding environment.

Benefits

Your community will have a water quantity and quality that is both fishable and swimmable.

You will help sustain drinking water levels for your citizens and surrounding populations.

By managing stormwater properly and minimizing point-source and non-point source pollution you will be able to sustain healthier watersheds and healthier wetlands, forests, meadows, etc. - creating healthier places for people to live, work, and play.

CT Success Stories

- [Coventry - May 2022 Certification](#)
- [Cheshire - Oct 2022 Certification](#)
- [Stonington - Oct 2022 Certification](#)
- [Waterford - Oct 2022 Certification](#)
- [New Haven - Sep 2023 Certification](#)
- [Greenwich - Oct 2024 Certification](#)
- [Norwalk - Oct 2024 Certification](#)

- [Vernon - May 2025 Certification](#)
- [Coventry - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Southbury - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Waterford - Oct 2025 Certification](#)