

# Working Together

## Protecting Natural Resources & Their Functions

Water and related natural resources have value—for our economy, the environment and for people, generally.

Our activities on the land impact the health and sustainability of natural resources and can threaten how much water we have available as well as how well we can adapt to the impacts of climate change.

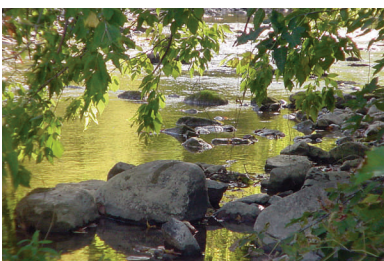
The best way to protect resources is on a **watershed basis** using **integrated watershed management**. This approach allows us to address multiple issues and objectives; and enables us to plan within a very complex and uncertain environment.

**Integrated Watershed Management** is the process of managing human activities and natural resources on a watershed basis, taking into account, social, economic and environmental issues, as well as community interests in order to manage water resources sustainably.

## Integrated Watershed Management Provides Multiple Benefits

Through integrated watershed management (IWM), all community interests work together to identify what issues and actions are impacting the watershed's resources, and then map out different strategies and plans to address those issues.

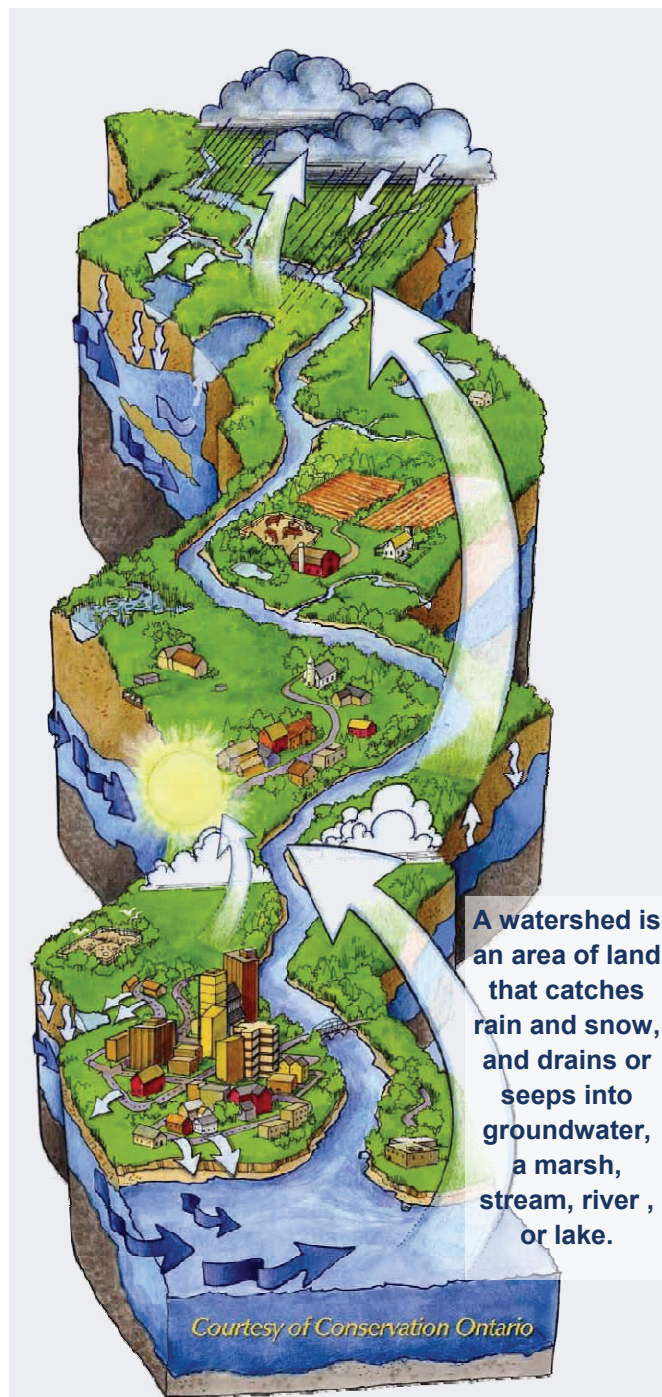
These plans and strategies are implemented, monitored, reported on, and updated — on a regular basis— in order to adapt to changing land uses, new or increasing stressors, new information, or different management approaches.



IWM helps us to focus on priorities and link strategies and actions leading to smarter, science-based decisions that ensure a long and healthy future.

An IWM approach would support:

- Improved water quality & quantity
- Flood and erosion management,
- Resilient biodiversity and habitats,
- Sustainable economic and recreation opportunities,
- Improved quality of life and neighbourhood desirability,
- Greater ability for Ontario's watersheds to adapt to the impacts of climate change, urbanization and other stressors.

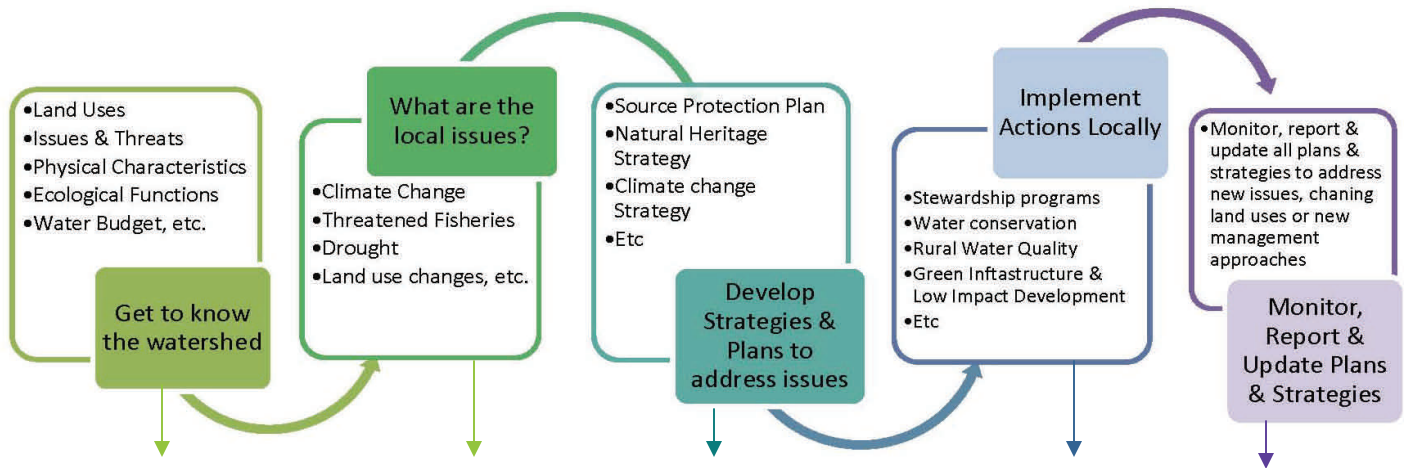


## WATERSHED CONNECTIONS

What we do in our watershed impacts how much water we have and how well our natural environment can help us adapt to climate change impacts. A watershed is an ecosystem with interacting natural systems such as water, plants, animals wetlands, moraines, and forests. Our activities impact the quality and quantity of surface water, groundwater and other natural resources in the watershed. Upstream activities influence river flows and water quality downstream. Surface and groundwater systems have a limited tolerance for stress, and long term problems can develop that are costly and difficult to fix.

Individual Strategies and Plans that address local watershed issues all contribute to the overall integrated watershed management process.

## Integrated Watershed Management Process



**Stakeholder Input**

To be successful, IWM requires collaborations and involvement of a wide variety of community interests and water users including municipalities, businesses, residents, agencies and landowners. They decide on the priority issues that need to be addressed, help to set goals, decide on what actions to take and implement locally.

Each Strategy & Plan is developed, implemented, monitored and updated through a cyclical process which keeps it up to date and responsive to local needs.

All of the Strategies and Plans are developed in relation to each other and to the overall watershed conditions, local land uses, and specific issues.

