



## **What is a Watershed?**

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. Within each watershed, all water runs to the lowest point – a stream, river, or lake. Watersheds can have hills or mountains or be nearly flat and come in all different shapes and sizes. They are typically defined by distinct physical geographic features, such as mountain ridges and can cross county, state, and federal boundaries. No matter where you are, you're in a watershed!

### **How do watersheds work?**

The landscape is made up of many interconnected watersheds and sub-watersheds. As water travels it both moves on the surface as runoff or infiltrates (seeps) into the soil and travels as groundwater. Parts of a watershed can be so rough, rocky, or marshy that they're suited only for certain trees, plants, and wildlife.

There are a total of eight watersheds in Rockland County: Mahwah River, Moodna Creek to Popolopen Brook, Upper Hackensack River, Upper Ramapo River, Upper Saddle River, Wanaque River and two within the Hudson River watershed. The Hudson River watersheds are further divided into the following sub-watersheds: Bear Mountain Doodletown Brook, Cedar Pond Brook, Doodletown, Brook, Minisceongo Creek and Sparkill Creek.

### **We all live in a watershed!**

A variety of land uses exist in a typical watershed ranging from open space, farmland, industrial sites, residential areas and big cities. You influence what happens in your watershed, good or bad, by how you treat the natural resources – the soil, water, air, plants, and animals. What happens in your small watershed also affects the larger watershed downstream. There are many things you and your community can do to keep your watershed healthy and productive. To learn more about the watershed you live in and what you can do to take care for it, call Cornell Cooperative Extension at 429-7085.

### ***Here are few things you can do.***

#### **In your home...**

- Don't let the water run! Fix leaks and install water saving faucets and toilets.
- Choose environmentally friendly household products.
- Maintain your septic tank to prevent leaks from polluting nearby waters.

#### **In your yard...**

- Use hardy plants that need little water, fertilizers, or pesticides.
- Know plant and soil needs before applying garden chemicals.
- For decks, patios, and walkways, use surfaces that allow rain to soak in (recharge groundwater).

#### **In your community...**

- Don't dump used oil or antifreeze into the storm drain or street. Recycle them!
- Pick up after your dog.
- Tune up your car and check for leaks. Try walking, biking and using mass transit.
- Get involved in your watershed!

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