

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A COMMUNITY MEMBER!!

GETTING STARTED

Look around you; do you see any destruction of water bodies near your area? This is actually a way to detect the problems that your area may have and in this way, you can assess the problems and come up with a few suggestions to remedy it.

You, as an individual or a community can help speed up the process by taking actions yourself. At the early stages, an informal group is usually created and soon after a more formal structure can be designed.

GETTING ASSISTANCE

It is also important to have contact with the authorities and other agencies as well. Some of the agencies (or stakeholders which they are usually called) that can partake in the process are your local authorities (KPKT), NGOs, Drainage and Irrigation Department, Indah Water Konsortium, state governments, private sectors, special interest groups as well as your local communities

IDENTIFY ISSUES

- Collaborations from other stakeholders/agencies helps us to look at a broader scope with each partner has a different viewpoint and sets of concerns.
- All members of the committee should have the will and ability to commit to the process of developing a mutually acceptable plan because it is important to recognize that not all interests will be compatible and compromise will be needed at times
- The group should first determine the main issues that they want to undertake and start by building on common ground with mutually agreed actions or projects.
- Major issues or problems should be identified and clarified, listed and prioritized for action. When the group agrees on what can be done to make an immediate improvement in the condition, you're off to a good start.

GETTING FACTS

It is important to determine what kind of information you need and how it will be used. It will be helpful to have a baseline information to work on. Information sharing is essential to create a common data base to be used among group members. Ownership, data maintenance and sharing protocols should be established at the start.

DEVELOPING A WORK PLAN

- Choose a coordinator who understands about the issues at hand and anything that associates with it
- Set up ground rules on process, duties, issues and relationships to prevent confusion and miscommunication, conflicting schedules and overlapping responsibilities

- Ground rules also provide guidelines on the form and regularity of the meetings and settle differences if and when they arise.
- Vision is the big picture of what we want, goals are the specific outcomes needed to reach the vision and actions are the steps we must take to reach our goals and objectives. Therefore, it is essential that we decide on these three before carrying out a watershed plan.
- Goals and objectives may be reviewed and changed over time to reflect the increased knowledge and experience of the group

START UP PROJECTS

Signs of immediate improvements in watershed amenities such as trails, parks and natural areas will encourage the public and political support. A successful start up project will build interest in the watershed plan and maintain the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers.

DEVELOPING A WATERSHED PLAN

To develop a working plan, you have to take into consideration the management options, appropriate options, timeline, budget and resources. A watershed plan should also say what actions are needed to accomplish the objectives. Time frames, costs and responsibility for implementation are related to each action. Action recommendations specify the work need, the desired result, technical and staffing needs, costs and a follow up review of the effects of the action.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Implementation of recommendations show how actions can be carried out, and specify clearly operational and maintenance tasks. An implementation plan provides time guidelines, action priorities, determines who is responsible, and what fiscal and human resources are needed to carry out the actions.
- The implementation should show the relationship of the watershed components to urban drainage, municipal and regional planning, land use and environmental programmes. The plan recommends a monitoring and reporting procedure to evaluate the effect of changes and long term effectiveness of the watershed plan.
- For the public, implementation can be done through volunteer programmes or public sponsorship or remediation projects such as tree planting, stream rehabilitation and monitoring projects.

Now that you know how, you can start taking appropriate actions towards the betterment of your home and community. ALL THE BEST! :

Watershed & You

For more information, please contact:
Dr. K. Kalithasan
Tel: +60 3 7957 2007 Fax: +60 3 7957 7003
Email: kalithasan@genet.po.my



**Global Environment
Centre**

what is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a lake or a river. All of us are actually living in one. It is an ecosystem with a complex system of interacting natural components. It includes all water, water dependent land features (e.g. wetlands), humans and other living things.

Human activities have direct impact on the quality and quantity of surface water, groundwater and other natural resources in the watershed. Activities upstream affect downstream neighbours regardless of municipal boundaries and jurisdictions, and impacts on any part of the watershed can have a profound effect on other parts.

Surface and groundwater systems have a limited tolerance for stress and long-term problems can develop that are costly and difficult to deal with in the future. By understanding the watershed before changes occur, harmful impacts on the ecosystem can be identified so that prevention, remediation or improvements can be incorporated into future plans. The drainage area of the river provides the natural boundary for managing and mitigating human and environment interactions.

Effective watershed planning and management can prevent future community water shortages, poor water quality, flooding and erosion. The initial expense of preparing a plan will outweigh the cost of future repairs, while future economic and environmental benefits may be considerable.

How do you know if you need a watershed plan?

You need a watershed plan if:

- Your rivers are prone to flooding, erosion and siltation
- Your streams, ponds or recreational lakes are degraded or polluted
- Your area is under pressure from developments such as urban growth, building constructions, forestry and mining
- Your community has problems balancing water supply with water demand
- Community residents are concerned about proposed land use changes and impacts (e.g. pollution, flooding)
- Water resources are important to your local economy and environmental quality of life, (e.g. drinking water, irrigation, water transportation, fishing, recreation, etc.)
- Environmentally sensitive wetlands are threatened by proposed land use changes

Who should be involved in watershed planning and management?

Affected parties:

Individuals or group whose land use activities, business or lifestyles may be impacted by watershed management decisions. These may be private landowners, farmers, developers, tourist and recreation operators, realtors and representatives of agri-business and other industries.

Municipal and regional governments:

Local elected officials, decision makers and staff who are involved in preparing the plan, accepting and carrying it out

Conservation authorities and government agencies:

Officials and technical staffs from Department of Environment and other state agencies

Landowners, business interests and residents:

Farmers, developers, forestry, recreation and tourist business interests and residents of the watershed.

Special interest groups:

Citizen's group or non-government organizations responding to issues or needs