



Water Quality: A Citizen's Guide



Everyone Lives in a Watershed

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed. A watershed is the land area that drains to a single body of water such as a lake or river. Watersheds come in many different sizes. A few acres might drain into a small stream or wetland, or a few rivers might drain into a large lake. The actions of people who live in a watershed affect the health of the waters that run through it. Rainfall and snowmelt wash chemicals, fertilizers, sediment, and other pollutants from the land into water bodies. To achieve healthy watersheds we need your help!

The greater Lansing area falls within the Grand River Watershed, where water eventually drains into Lake Michigan. The urbanized area

around the City of Lansing lies within a portion of the Upper Grand River Watershed which can be broken into three smaller watershed areas. If you live in the area, you live in the Grand River Watershed, the Looking Glass River Watershed, or the Red Cedar River Watershed.

Rivers and streams do not recognize political boundaries. It is important that the public and local governments work together to protect our water resources for current and future generations. Twenty of the communities that fall within our local watersheds are participating in the Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management (GLRC), a cooperative effort that seeks to address water quality in our lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands. You can help protect

our water by following the *top ten things we can do to protect our watersheds*:

1. Always conserve and reuse water wisely.
2. Soil test before you apply fertilizers. Use low or no-phosphorus fertilizers.
3. Use native vegetation and reduce turf grass by increasing native wildflowers and grasses.
4. Capture and reuse rainwater to control stormwater runoff.
5. Dispose of pet waste properly in the trash or toilet (not onsite septic systems).

6. Wash your car on the lawn instead of pavement (*if allowed by local ordinance*).
7. Maintain all vehicles, eliminating leaks and spills.
8. Recycle and dispose of household chemicals properly (motor oil, household cleaners, paint, etc.)
9. Inspect and maintain onsite septic systems and sewers.
10. Participate in the GLRC or join a local watershed organization



Having a clean environment is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, and add beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water - and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater clean. For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and streams, visit www.mywatersheds.org.

