3.1 Provide Watershed Education

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points | 20 Points | 25 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2020)

Objective

Educate and engage your community in watershed education.

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Resident & Business Owner Education **(up to 20 points)**

   a. Sponsor or host a program to educate residents and business owners in your community about the value of watersheds and the importance of protecting and restoring them. You may earn 5 points for one program or 10 points for 2 or more programs. **(5 or 10 points)**

   Submit: An overview of each of your education programs (5 sentences maximum per program), including target populations (if any) and at least one example from among materials disseminated, which could include flyers, articles, letters, newsletters, presentations, or digital communications. For websites, submit both a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s).

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

   AND/OR

   b. Implement and maintain a signage program that highlights key watershed issues. For example, describe low impact development practices or stencil storm drains in high foot-trafficked areas. **(5 points)**

   Submit: Maps, promotional materials, or photos of educational signage.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Implementation Projects" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

   AND/OR

   c. Promote and encourage residents and business owners to take a watershed health pledge (example). **(5 points)**

   Submit: A blank copy of the pledge.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. Citizen Science **(5 points)**

   a. Institute a local monitoring program related to watershed functions or health to be conducted by citizen groups such as local nonprofits or K–12 students.

   Submit: Description of monitoring program and photos of monitoring in progress.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

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, or 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.

- Municipal Grant Program (MGP)
- Urban Act Grant Program
- 2021 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- Restoration & Resilience COVID Recovery Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Riversmart Resources

- Project WET (Water Education for Teachers)
- LIWater.org, "Support Materials"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, Storm Drain Stenciling
- 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, "Green Infrastructure"
- US Department of Energy, "Net Zero Water Building Strategies"
- Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, "The Backyard Water Resources Guide"
- Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District & North Central Conservation District, "How to Create a Streamside Buffer Garden"

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CT Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO)
- Connecticut Conservation Districts
- US Environmental Protection Agency, Climate Ready Estuaries
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "Healthy Watersheds Protection"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, National Estuary Program
- US Environmental Protection Agency, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program
- Center for Watershed Protection
- Save the Sound

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 residents 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

- Darien - Oct 2019 Certification
- Fairfield - Oct 2018 Certification
- Vernon - Oct 2019 Certification
- Woodbury - Oct 2019 Certification
- Old Saybrook - Oct 2020 Certification