Sustainable CT
Local Actions. Statewide Impact.®

3.3 Engage in Watershed Protection and Restoration

15 Points | 30 Points | 45 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

Implement projects that conserve, protect, and improve the health of the watershed.

Complementary Action:

- Create a Watershed Management Plan

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

Watershed Protection and Restoration (up to 45 points)

1. Complete a priority project as outlined in your Watershed Action Plan (as part of Sustainable CT Action Create a Watershed Management Plan (may require cooperation with your local water company). If not included in your plan, provide justification for the project. Projects might include, but are not limited to: monitoring, riparian restoration, research studies (nutrient management, etc.). **(15 points per project, up to 30 points)**

   Note: Watershed protection and restoration projects may not receive credit for other Sustainable CT actions.

   Submit: Documentation of the completed project (including justification if not part of your Watershed Action Plan). You may submit up to two watershed protection and restoration projects.

   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).

2. Adopt regulations to help protect your watershed, source water, and or riparian corridors, such as: **(15 points)**

   - Overlay zones, zoning setbacks, or other mechanisms to protect ecologically important areas such as source waters, tidal wetlands, riparian corridors, vernal pools, critical habitat areas, or other areas identified by your Natural Resource Inventory;
   - Regulations focused on protecting water quality such as septic inspection and pump-out ordinances; and/or
   - Road standards.

   Submit: A description of your regulations, noting the specific watershed resource they protect and/or threat that they address. Provide a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s) for any materials that can be found online, as well as PDFs of any web-based materials.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions"

(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, 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
- Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Watershed Based Plans and Watershed Management Plans"
- Checklist for plans eligible for CWA Section 319 funding
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "Handbook for Developing Watershed Management Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "Watershed Plan Builder"
- 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)
- 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
- Connecticut Conservation Districts
- US Environmental Protection Agency, Climate Ready Estuaries
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "Healthy Watersheds Protection"
- National Estuary Program
- US Environmental Protection Agency, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program
- Center for Watershed Protection

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 citizens 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

- Wilton - Oct 2019 Certification
- Old Saybrook - Oct 2020 Certification