3.1 Provide Watershed Education

5 – 30 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2025. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

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

   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. **(5 points)**

   Submit: An overview of your education program (5 sentences maximum), including target populations (if any), and at least one example of materials disseminated in the last three years, 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).

   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. Signs must have been installed or updated in the last three years. **(15 points)**

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

   c. Promote and encourage residents and business owners to take a watershed health pledge (example). The pledge may be ongoing or long-term, but at least one outreach activity must have taken place in the last three years. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A blank copy of the pledge and at least one example of how the pledge was disseminated, including approximate dates.

2. Community Based Research: 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. **(5 points)**

   Submit: Description of monitoring program, including a description of how the program is current and active at the time of submission.

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.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

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

- Coventry - May 2022 Certification
- Lyme - May 2022 Certification
- Southbury - May 2022 Certification
- Darien - Oct 2022 Certification
- East Lyme - Oct 2022 Certification
- Vernon - Oct 2022 Certification
- Windsor - Oct 2022 Certification
- Branford - Sep 2023 Certification
- Bristol - Sep 2023 Certification
- East Haddam - May 2024 Certification
- Old Saybrook - May 2024 Certification
- Glastonbury - Oct 2024 Certification
- Greenwich - Oct 2024 Certification
- Groton - Oct 2024 Certification
- Litchfield - Oct 2024 Certification
- Preston - Oct 2024 Certification
- West Hartford - Oct 2024 Certification