



GrayIsGreen

Who are we?

Gray Is Green is an online gathering of older adult Americans aspiring to create a green legacy for the future. As environmentally conscious elders, we respond to a generational call: to co-create a future of economic justice, ecological sustainability and social justice.

We hold next generations of humans in mind and consider the future of ecosystems and other species. We are alert to the historic challenges facing our planet. And we are aware of the question arising from descendants generations hence:

What did you do, when you knew?

What do we do?

We aspire to embrace our eldership, living beyond consumerism and ageism. **Our Curriculum for Gray-Green Living** offers a variety of ways to join—and re-engage with—the elder movement.

We offer a periodic newsletter, a speaker's bureau, online resources, a [Facebook page](#) for relevant updates. In partnership with congenial organizations, we serve as a central clearinghouse of ideas and communications for older adults interested in greening their lives, learning about sustainability, advocating for sound public policy, being creative stewards or grandparents, emerging as elders, and mentoring young people.

*We invite **you** to get involved!*

www.grayisgreen.org

Community Resilience Watersheds and Local Conservation

Do you know what watershed you live in¹ or where the closest river crossing² is?

Would you like to learn more about your area's water resources?

You can become more involved in your local watershed by joining a local watershed group³. These groups celebrate their waterways with varied actions such as sponsoring boating and fishing recreational activities, monitoring water quality, organizing trash cleanups, and building and maintaining trails. Members act as advocates for protecting and improving the nearby rivers and land.

Home for Wildlife

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find that it is hatched to everything else in the universe."

— John Muir

Your watershed also provides water for other species—plants and animals. It is crucial for water managers and the public to remember that water is required for every living thing, from the tiniest organisms to the largest. All animals need water to drink and to support the vegetation for their habitat and food source⁴. Also, many of these species add to our human enjoyment of areas set aside for recreation and education.

If there is a drought, or if we remove too much water and make a river or stream dry, fish and other aquatic organisms cannot survive. Similarly, plants and trees require a certain amount of water to grow. When a wetland is drained, its vegetation will change and the birds and animals that depend on the trees, plants and moist environment will be forced elsewhere in order to survive.

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act⁵ was originally implemented in 1972 by the federal government, and has been instrumental in stopping pollution and cleaning up our water ways⁶. Our waterways were severely polluted in the late 1960's prior to the Clean Water Act; but public outcry over several incidents, including the infamous Cuyahoga River in Cleveland catching on fire⁷, prompted the government to act. Because of this regulation, we have cleaner drinking water, places to swim and fish, and a more supportive habitat for wildlife.

Types of Pollution

In the United States, the Clean Water Act divides pollution sources into two categories: Non-point source pollution and point source pollution⁸. Point source pollution comes from a specific source, such as a pipe from a factory, a sewage treatment plant, a pipeline, or waste pond. Non-point pollution is from

(continued on back)

Community Resilience: Watersheds and Local Conservation

many places and cannot be traced back to one source. Regulations now prevent most point source pollution, but non-point source pollution is more difficult to regulate because its sources are dispersed, and individually very small. For instance, an oil leak from your car

may only leave a few drops on the ground, but when you combine leaks from all cars it becomes a substantial amount of oil. It's estimated that Americans spill 180 million gallons of used oil each year into our waterways⁹.

1 <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

2 <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

3 <http://water.epa.gov/action/adopt/network.cfm>

4 <http://www.rivernet.org/connecting-flow-water-quality-habitat>

5 <http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>

6 <http://www.americanrivers.org/initiatives/pollution/clean-water-act/>

7 http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2009/01/after_the_flames_the_story_beh.html

8 <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/whatis.cfm>

9 <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/watersheds/nonpoint-source-pollution-education-motor-oil.html>



GrayIsGreen