Watershed Planning

In a Nutshell

A watershed is the area of land that drains to a single point on a stream or river. Watershed planning is the identifcation of issues related to a watershed and the development of strategies to address those issues. Watershed plans usually only address a certain category of issues such as drinking water supply, water pollution, flooding, or natural habitat protection. Therefore, it is possible for one watershed to have multiple plans associated with it.

The "How To"

Click here to see a map of the region with the location of watersheds.

Watershed Management Plan

This is the most common form of plan and is based on articles of the Clean Water Act to protect waters from non-point source pollution. Funding is available through the EPA to create and implement these plans. Sometimes referred to as "Nine Element Plans", the EPA requires a structure for the Plan to be eligible for funding. The following links from the Environmental Protection Agency provide information on watersheds and watershed planning.

Watershed Management Plans in the St. Louis Area include: American Bottoms, Belews Creek, Big River, Canteen-Cahokia Creek, Dardenne Creek, Deer Creek, Dry Branch, Highland Silver Lake, Keifer Creek, Lower Meramec River, Indian Cahokia Creek, Peruque Creek, Piasa Creek, Sandy Creek, Upper Silver Creek, Lower Silver Creek, Spencer Creek, and Watkins Creek.

Conservation Action Plan

Conservation action planning is a process that uses the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation to plan, implement and measure the success of conservation projects. The 10-step process was developed by The Nature Conservancy and has been by used by other conservation organizations including the World Wildlife Fund, Audubon Society, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. See the full manual here.

The Nature Conservancy conducted a Conservation Action Plan for the Meramec River.

Ecological Restoration Plan

Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. An ecological restoration plan can be applied to any size site, but watersheds are an example of the application of such a plan.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a feasibility study to do ecological restoration in the Meramec

River watershed, with a focus on the Big River. A draft of the study can be viewed here.

Floodplain Management Plan

A Floodplain Management Plan identifies the hazards and impacts of flooding in a study area and recommends options for reducing those impacts. A Floodplain Management Plan takes into consideration all structural and non-structural measures that could help achieve its objectives.

The US Army Corps of Engineers are in the process of conducting Floodplain Management Plans for the Lower Meramec River and Upper Joachim Creek in Jefferson County. Additional activities occur to reduce the impacts of flooding through Floodplain Management.

Other Plans

The unique situation of watersheds and the individuals who choose to work within those watersheds results in a variety of activities and plans that don't find the prescriptions above. As a result, some watershed plans take on unique forms. Within the St. Louis region, such watershed plans include: Columbia Bottoms Conservation Management Plan, Kaskaskia River Watershed: An Ecosystem Approach to Issues & Opportunities, and LaBarque Creek Watershed Conservation Plan.