

River Voices



Watershed Approaches: What Have We Learned?

Highlights from the Watershed Innovators Workshop

by Peter Lavigne

Environmental protection and management efforts in the United States and Canada are in the beginning throes of revolution and reinvention. At least two contradictory forces drive this turmoil. First, for at least the last 15 years many environmental protection activists have, in varying ways, called for more comprehensive approaches to environmental protection and management. During the same period of time many extraction industries, developers, government officials (notably the agriculture and transportation agencies and their clients), big and small businesses and some landowners have coalesced into an anti-environmental protection revolution that has captured the majority of the U.S. Congress. This "brownlash" movement is campaigning to radically roll back our existing legal and regulatory environmental protection structure.

Turmoil often creates major opportunities for change. Creative individuals in environmental protection across the continent are meeting these opportunities for change with responses that are proactive, fair, understandable, comprehensive and cumulative. Many of these approaches focus on an old environmental concept—the watershed approach to environmental protection.

Acknowledging the value of the watershed approach is the first step. Figuring out how to do it is more

difficult and perhaps daunting. In an attempt to gain a better understanding of what is happening in watershed conservation, Ted Smith, executive director of the Henry P. Kendall Foundation in Boston, made an informal request to River Network in June 1994 to "consider organizing an East-West gathering to talk about how to plant and cultivate grassroots watershed councils." The concept evolved into identifying individuals, both in and outside of government, who are 'making things happen' in

comprehensive, ecosystem based, watershed protection, restoration, or management programs. The nominated individuals held positions that ranged from line staff to chief executives.

About 40 individuals from regional, state and federal agencies, tribes, and leading non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as business were identified by their peers. Twenty-six individuals accepted the invitation to join three charitable foundation representatives, one small business, and one *continued on page 5*

Watershed 2000

River Network's 1996-2000 Strategic Plan

River Network is pleased to present our 5-year strategic plan, Watershed 2000. The plan is based on a vision of citizen watershed action to reverse the decline of rivers and watersheds. Our long-range goal is to have vigilant and effective citizen organizations in each of America's 2000 major watersheds.

Watershed 2000 is a national strategy for building on the American river conservation movement. We see River Network as a catalyst to bring this vision into a working reality. The *vision* for Watershed 2000 has the following elements:

- An active citizen watershed council in every one of America's 2,000 watersheds.
- Each watershed council with a definite, science-based strategy for watershed action resulting in a healthy stream.
- Each watershed council engaged in a working relationship with key interest groups that affect land use within the watershed.
- Strong, technical support for these watershed councils.
- Networking among these citizen groups so that they can support each other.
- Active campaigns by watershed councils to persuade the public that their own well-being depends upon the health and productivity of rivers and watersheds.

See page 22 for more details.

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River Network is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to help people organize to protect and restore rivers and watersheds.

We support river and watershed advocates at the local, state and regional levels, help them build effective organizations, and promote our working together to build a nationwide movement for rivers and watersheds. River Network also acquires and conserves riverlands that are critical to the services that rivers perform for human communities: drinking water supply, floodplain management, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and open space.

River Network's program includes the following six strategic initiatives:

- Identify and support active **citizen watershed councils** — 400 by the year 2000, and 2,000 by 2020.
- Build a **River Source Center** to provide state-of-the art information to river and watershed advocates.
- Implement a **LEADERS Program** to support and organize strong **river councils** in 30 states or major river basins to work on statewide river issues and support local watershed councils.
- Assemble **five regional networks** of state river councils and local watershed councils through annual rallies to address common regional river issues.
- Conduct **Safe and Sustainable Watersheds Campaigns** to help watershed organizations increase public awareness of the value of rivers to their communities.
- **Working Rivers Campaign** to help the public acquire riverlands that serve vital functions to communities.

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From the President

Sometimes I feel nostalgic for the days when saving rivers meant beating the Corps of Engineers. It wasn't easy to stop a big dam, but at least there was a single obvious target.

But now the era of big dams is over, and we find that our rivers are dying from a million small wounds. Herbicides, acid mine drainage, farmland erosion, urban runoff, loss of streamside vegetation, channelization, road-building — the list goes on and on. How can a citizen activist get a handle on this myriad of problems, rooted as they are in land-use decisions and charged with “property rights” issues?

That's what this issue is about. Watershed action requires a fundamental alteration of the way we approach rivers. It requires looking at whole systems. It requires “constructive engagement” with a whole range of private interests and public agencies. It requires integrating river conservation into the economic and social life of human communities.

This is not to say there is no place for litigation, legislative battles, confrontation. There will always be a need to confront bad actors. Rather, it is to say that adversarial tactics cannot in themselves save rivers. We have to achieve voluntary changes in behavior (and specifically land-use practices) that are compatible with people's values and livelihoods. When we confront the bad actors, we have to do so in alliance with all the people of good will who share the values of watershed health.

River Network has taken on a five-year campaign called Watershed 2000. Our long-term goal is to see an active, informed citizen watershed council in every one of America's 2,000 major watersheds. We have developed a six-point program to bring that goal within our reach. It is a goal worthy of extraordinary efforts. We invite your participation, and your support.

As always, the play goes on but the cast of players changes. As of January 1, Kevin Coyle, our vice president for partnership programs, will be leaving River Network to serve as the president of the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation in Washington, D.C., a job closer to home and family than his “circuit riding” role at River Network. I also suspect that Kevin wanted to know, before he died, what it's like to give away money rather than perpetually ask for it.

River Network will be hiring the very best replacement for Kevin we can find. We invite your help in that search. The other good news is that Pat Munoz will be shifting full time to helping our Partner organizations fundraise and build their memberships. Her former role as River Network's director of development will be taken by Maureen O'Neill, who formerly held that position at the Land Trust Alliance. Maureen will coordinate our efforts to raise the funds to carry out our Watershed 2000 campaign.

Our special thanks to all the people who participated in our “Watershed Innovators Workshop” and to the Henry P. Kendall Foundation for funding that workshop. Kendall is one of a growing number of foundations who are putting their resources behind the watershed stewardship movement. Thanks also to the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program for its support in producing this issue of *River Voices*.

Sincerely,



Phillip Wallin
President

Our long-term goal is to see an active, informed citizen watershed council in every one of America's 2,000 major watersheds.

ATTENTION *RIVER* *VOICES* READERS

This issue of *River Voices* will be the last issue you receive unless you are a River Network partner, member or donor.

Please see pages 22-23 for information on joining River Network.

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The Swift River Principles

by Kevin Coyle

The following principles emerged from the Innovators workshop (see cover story). The workshop was attended by a combination of state, local, private and federal watershed “innovators” who discussed general rules and a number of specific cases of success (and set-backs) in watershed conservation in America. The workshop was held at the Swift River Inn in Cummington, Massachusetts.

The two days of discussion were sometimes theoretical and sometimes specific. The participants were neither afraid to state their own views, nor to challenge the viewpoints of others. As with most discussions occurring among 20 or more intelligent people, the ideas flowed freely and the topics ranged widely. But what came out of it all? Were there any themes or basic rules that could be identified? Indeed, as the smoke cleared, a few distinct principles emerged and are presented below.

1. INCLUDE A MIXTURE OF TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP STRATEGIES:

Extensive discussion ensued regarding whether watershed conservation strategies should evolve from the people or from a more centralized source—such as a government agency. Consensus in the group was that top-down strategies no longer work, as they might have 20 years ago; however, reliance on bottom-up approaches alone will not work either. Instead, emphasis must be on local actions and management, combined with partnerships and incentives provided by federal and state programs. Having the right partnership is the goal.

2. ENCOURAGE CONSENSUS APPROACHES, NOT BOMB-THROWING:

We seem to be in an age of consensus more than political bomb-throwing. This is particularly important to understand regarding watershed management; we are seeking to change the land use

behaviors of individual landowners and local officials and to promote an ethic of conservation. Watershed planning and management creates opportunities to build partnerships and consensus among potential adversaries, including businesses, landowners, farmers, and environmentalists. The emphasis is on balancing uses and creating sustainability.

3. “REINVENT” WAYS TO CONSERVE RESOURCES:

Conference participants agreed that the concept of watershed conservation must be to remove it from the clutches of “big government” and place it in the hands of local people. Government must develop a more flexible set of tools to respond to each situation; it must provide funding and incentives that empower local people and overarching nonregulatory guidance. Government must also learn to trust local partnerships. There will be a larger role in the future for non-government organizations (NGOs) in this reinvention if they work as brokers in establishing partnerships for balanced watershed management.

4. A ONE “COOKIE-CUTTER” APPROACH WILL NOT WORK:

There are significant differences in the nature of watershed issues between urban and rural areas and a clear need for more regionally specific approaches. Watershed conservationists must learn to recognize and work with these differences, and with different government “infrastructures” (e.g., local land regulations or the lack thereof) in designing appropriate strategies for their watersheds.

5. INVOLVE KEY “STAKEHOLDERS”:

By stakeholders, the conference participants meant those parties or individuals who have a real stake in the long-term management of a given

watershed. The group agreed there should be significant emphasis on being inclusive. Gathering all the parties to the table when possible is important—even if their views and interests are somewhat opposed. Beware of stakeholder “blind spots” (e.g., people of color). It is important to avoid making important stakeholders feel “on the outs.” It is wise to get key stakeholders involved at the very first meeting of any watershed conservation effort or program.

6. FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS AND WORK ON “RETAIL” APPROACHES:

We must learn to focus on the behavior of the individual through all our programs: watershed awareness, purchasing decisions, and so on. Great reliance on hands-on activities is needed and more involvement of volunteers is one great strategy for achieving this.

7. BE CREATIVE ABOUT WHO FOOTS THE BILL:

We need to be more innovative about who pays for the costs of watershed conservation. We need more partnerships with different levels of government and with the private sector. Less emphasis should be placed on raising expenses for taxpayers by expanding regulatory programs, and greater emphasis on providing incentives that encourage desirable actions at all levels and increase partnerships.

8. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EMERGING SCIENCE—BUT DON'T EXPECT IT TO BE PERFECT!

It is important to base decision-making about watershed management on sound science. Remember that watershed science, however, does not have to be perfect to be reliable. We can make sound decisions on adequate science. It is vitally important to look expansively at science in the watershed context. For

example, people rely on watersheds for jobs, food and drinking water, and so we should seek to join natural and medical science in addressing watershed issues.

9. REMEMBER THE NEED FOR WATERSHED EDUCATION:

The professional conservationist is not served well by an all-too-common tendency toward denial about how little the public really knows about the natural world and watersheds. It is difficult for professionals in the field to accept this fact. Fewer than 1 in 20 Americans have any understanding of the functioning of the natural world, and an even lower percentage know what a watershed is.

10. IT'S ABOUT BROKERAGE AND GAP FILLING:

All successful watershed conservation programs have a leader or groups of leaders. Sometimes called "fixers," these people are adept at looking at a process, identifying the weak links in the chain and strengthening them. Leadership is the key ingredient and should never be overlooked.

The above principles have great strength in their wisdom. They reflect more than 300 years of watershed management accumulated by some of the most accomplished experts in the nation. The above principles are also quite simple. They can be summed up by saying that watershed conservation is about partnerships. It is perhaps also about an emerging age of environmentalism in the nation that looks at our environmental problems through the lens of land use and land management. 🐟

Watershed Approaches: What Have We Learned?

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major corporate funder for strategy discussions about the current status and future prospects of watershed approaches. Their challenge involved discussing five tough issues facing anyone taking a watershed approach: key players, role of science, promising strategies, innovation and reinvention, and measuring success.

"I Don't like the word 'stakeholder'. When I hear that I know who has been excluded."

Bill Redding, Sierra Club Ecoregions Program

Key Players

Of all the themes and concepts discussed by the group, the role and selection of key players provoked the most disagreement and discussion.

In an effort to transform specific anecdotal information into general principles, Steve Born, president of Black Earth Creek Watershed Association in Wisconsin posed the following outline:

1) Know that you have to have a variety of people involved: both those who live in the watershed and are directly affected; and those who are indirectly affected or can affect the watershed.

2) Understand that watershed projects involve a wide variety of socio-economic issues.

3) Identify roles and functions: Who speaks? Who represents? How do you get in?

4) Effect behavioral change in target populations through regulation, signal pricing, technical change, education and information sharing.

5) Identify what we are concerned about in terms of influencing behavioral change.

Ted Smith of the Kendall Foundation summarized the discussion with guidelines on several points:

1) Some players should represent the interests of future generations.

2) There should be enough representatives in the process to make the outcome stick.

3) Ways must be found to balance power at the table using money, technical help, and voting and veto structures.

The Role of Science

Public understanding of watershed processes and their importance in our everyday lives is minimal. This lack of understanding was starkly demonstrated in a "Study of the Public's Awareness and Attitudes Towards Environmental Issues Related to America's Rivers," presented to American Rivers in 1994 by the survey research firm D'Arcy, Masius, Benton and Bowell. Less than one in 20 people considered themselves "very knowledgeable" about river issues (3%). Only one-third of those surveyed thought rivers were the major source of drinking water supply in the U.S. (Approximately 70% of the nation's drinking water comes from rivers.)

These findings illustrate the critical role of science and science education. As Steve Born states, "The role of scientists is critical in many of our watershed management issues. For instance, atmospheric circulation models are an important part of the answer to water quality problems in the Midwest.... We are looking for the application of science, in a compressed kind of way, for action-oriented programs, which gets the best of what's there and moves ahead."

Several participants touched on the role of government and NGOs in performing, recruiting, and explaining science. Ed Himlan, executive director of the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, explained: "The NGOs' role is raising community awareness and bringing the sense of meaningfulness of science to everyday people so they can use it in their daily decision-making." ▶

Watershed Approaches: What Have We Learned?

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Mike Domenica of Water Resources Associates acknowledging the importance of public knowledge and awareness, added “If we’re going to change the behavior of a person, we need to pay attention to terminology. If we can’t explain clearly what a watershed is, how can we get people to relate to eutrophication or dissolved oxygen sag?”

Promising Strategies

What does a watershed approach mean on a practical level? It means redirecting our work. An effective watershed approach involves a step-by-step process, allocating precious resources and limited staff. It means identifying the critical issues—the global issues for the watershed. For citizen groups it means making tough choices. It means spending less time fighting whatever comes in the door and more time and effort on political change and embracing comprehensive approaches to solving broad issues. Watershed approach means educating decision-makers about regional issues and discovering useful and innovative methods to adapt existing governmental boundaries to river basins.

Some of the identified strategies are:

- 1) Communicate both the crisis and ongoing problems in clear, plain language;
- 2) Involve opinion leaders and watershed residents early and throughout the entire process;
- 3) Develop an ethic of “servant leadership” by government agencies;
- 4) Use market-driven incentives;
- 5) Develop education programs to teach watershed values to decision-makers;
- 6) Build implementation actions into planning processes about the value of watersheds.

“We’ve brought our rivers back to life. We need to bring them back to health.”

Jerry Schoen, Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership

Innovations and Reinvention

If you could reinvent your agency, what would you do? What kind of changes would you make? The reinvention of agencies and citizen efforts to protect and restore natural systems is what the watershed approach is all about. It is clear that trying to deal with water quality issues without considering land use, air quality or water quantity issues will not suffice to protect natural systems.

Reorienting and reinventing agencies and nonprofit citizen groups is a big challenge. Bureaucratic inertia, human

Basic Elements of Local Watershed Conservation Plans

by Kevin Coyle

What does watershed conservation really mean? It can be difficult to determine how such a broad-based concept—looking at the impact of land use in a given basin on water supplies and ecosystems—applies in the real world. Perhaps the easiest definition of a watershed is to describe it as “that land area which drains rain water (or snow) into a certain river or stream.” Watersheds are also sometimes described as “drainage areas.” They range in size from the Mississippi (41% of the land area of the lower 48 states) to your local stream valley, which might be just a few hundred acres. Everything that goes on within the boundaries of the watershed can affect the stream that drains it. Priority activities within most watershed conservation programs are as follows:

- ★ A good map of the area and an effort to make the public and community leaders aware of the boundaries and what tributary drains into what;
- ★ A professional resource assessment of what resources exist within the watershed (from rare natural habitats to prime development sites) and overlays of where there might be conflicts;
- ★ An effort to locate and address the major pollution outflows coming from factories, sewerage plants and other “point sources”;
- ★ A program that identifies the key polluted run-off sources in the watershed (such as farming, suburban parking lots, timber cutting, lawn spraying, etc.) and attempts to work with landowners to minimize the impacts of judicious management;
- ★ A program to protect and restore natural vegetation along streams (riparian areas), to serve as buffers to polluted run-off, and to serve as a habitat for stream cooling and aquatic species food;
- ★ A program to protect as refuges the very best natural areas that remain in the watershed, and to conserve higher elevation headwaters areas;
- ★ A program to have adequate water flows with a natural hydrograph that corresponds as closely as possible to historic flow patterns.

A watershed plan that has these basic elements and local advocacy to support them will be highly successful. ➤

nature and resistance to change, as well as clients with a specific interest in the way business is currently done, inhibit drastic reform. Despite these obstacles, a number of state and federal agency initiatives are forcing changes in the traditional organization of environmental protection. Efforts in Massachusetts and U.S. EPA Regions 1 and 5 lead the way.

Reinvention ideas came down to a series of questions, answers and wish lists:

1) Why watersheds? Message development is key and message marketing is critical. The ability to reach people on their terms and where they live is essential.

2) How do you reach your constituency? Advertising companies have expertise in message development and delivery, but the ability to retain experts in message delivery does not exist in most current agency efforts.

3) Reinvention efforts need to show quick results. Reorganizing agencies for one-stop information and permit shopping is one way to accomplish quick results.

4) Train scientists in cooperative programs with the agencies. Groom scientists with communication and social science skills in addition to their scientific expertise.

5) Simplify lines of authority and regulation throughout the agencies.

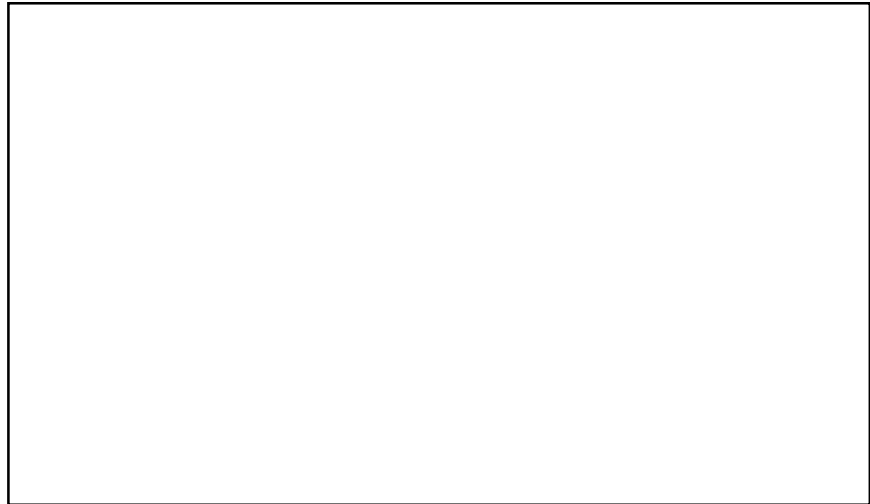
6) Mike Domenica put it best, "If bottom up processes—watershed councils—really set the goals, that means authority, funding, training, resources, and rewriting regulations to meet the goals they want to obtain."

Measuring Success

Agencies, nonprofits, and voluntary associations need to better communicate their successes early and often. It is also important to recognize and reward the people who made the successes possible.

Tools to measure success include:

1) Outcome—measuring resource and communication outcomes as well as constituent satisfaction, i.e.. Is the water clean? Is there improved participation?



Watershed Innovators Workshop-June 1995

Back row: Ed Himlan, Peter Lavigne, Jerry Schoen, Dave Fierra, Mike Domenica, Gary Tabor, Ted Smith. Second row: Ralph Goodno, Jack Imhoff, George Constantz, Ed Schmidt, Bill Redding, Kevin Coyle, Steve Born, Chuck Padera, Jan Brown, Chuck Fox, Paul Hoobyar, Jan Marsh, Carl Gustafson, Bob Zimmerman. First row: Janet Taylor, Maria Van Dusen, Sharon McGregor, Elizabeth Ainsley-Campbell, Arleen O'Donnell, Joy Huber, Trudy Coxe, Suzi Wilkins. Not pictured: Cecily Kihn.

"When the irrigators start doing things for the fish because they know it's the right thing to do—and they know it intuitively and no one has to sue them to do the right things...Success is people taking responsibility for their behavior...That's the goal in 10 years."

Janice Brown, Henry's Fork Watershed

Are the players happy with the outcomes?

2) Surveys—a fundamental way to measure public understanding and the effectiveness of education programs. Surveys can often be conducted at low cost through distribution with utility bill and other road reach mailings.

3) Common environmental indicators—U.S. EPA and other agencies have made efforts to develop useful indicators.

4) Report cards on compliance

with environmental standards— used successfully by both NGOs and government agencies throughout New England. Report cards create competitions to do better and media focus on successes and failures.

5) Defining economic values of naturally functioning river systems— valuing the "free work" that river watersheds do in flood control, food production, etc.

River Network and the Kendall Foundation hope that the long-term results of the Watershed Innovators Workshop are more than the sum of its parts. Like many similar gatherings, the details of the discussion are perhaps less important than the cross-fertilization of ideas and the connections made by bringing together environmental NGOs, government agency representatives, philanthropy, and representatives of the private sector. It is our hope that this meeting will influence and greatly expand the development of watershed-based approaches to ecosystem protection for many years to come. 🐟

For a complete copy of the proceedings, contact River Network.

Watershed Counties

by Theodore M. Smith

In an address to Montana's Constitutional Convention in the summer of 1889, Major John Wesley Powell, 19th century scientist-explorer of the American West, recommended that the new state's county boundaries be drawn on the basis of watersheds that could be self-governed. This step, he implied, would establish a model for other states forming in the West. The Montana Territory delegates, many of them horsetraders by nature, ignored Powell and formed counties on the basis of "political drainages." Consequently, none of Montana's 56 counties is a "watershed county" today.

Political boundaries drawn across the vast land often severed watershed arteries, either down the middle or straight across. Statehood founders said they did not like the way God "organized" the resource base, and decided that a higher "logic" of human organization would dominate. The early decision to ignore the integrity of watersheds when forming boundaries makes watershed management an extremely complicated task today.

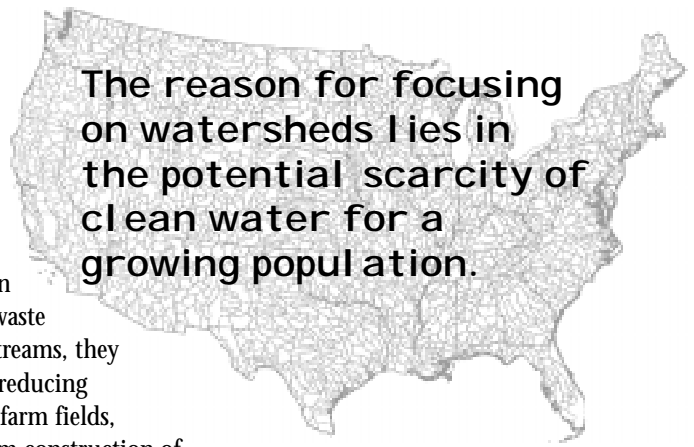
Rivers, streams and lakes were surprisingly slow to gain standing in the environmental movement's portfolio of issues. Various crises helped to raise awareness, but their impact is ephemeral. The Cuyahoga River once burned its way through Cleveland; Love Canal, unbelievably poisoned, provoked outrage; sewage from Boston Harbor's watersheds became a presidential campaign issue; and dams on the mighty Columbia River are extinguishing salmon species. We appear to need *sustained crises* to command even modest public attention for watersheds. We are so insulated from nature that few of us understand that we live in a specific watershed area and that the watershed is our personal ecological address.

The reason for focusing on watersheds lies in the potential scarcity of clean water for a growing population. Although federal and state agencies do well in controlling industrial waste piped into rivers and streams, they are much less adept at reducing chemical run-off from farm fields, sediment from upstream construction of roads and buildings, and multiple *nasties* from urban street, lawn, and sewer run-offs. These are local challenges that fit smoothly with the general mood in America today of favoring governance closer to home; however, local governments are not staffed, funded, nor legally mandated and empowered to protect watersheds adequately.

As a foundation officer, my first task is to piece together patterns of social, political, economic and ecosystem change. Once this picture is drawn, the challenge is to define an investment strategy that will "make a difference." "Doing good" is not good enough.

The Kendall Foundation is dedicated to furthering *ecosystem management*. As a comparatively modest environmental funder (\$1-\$1.5 million annually), the Foundation is seeking to define its market niche. While funding individual watershed conservation efforts in 50 states is not possible, the foundation seeks to provide funding for:

- grassroots organizations with innovative, field-based entrepreneurs;
- regional approaches to river basins (partly because they inspire measured contempt for current political boundaries); and
- public policy analysis that generates ideas for incentives to alter



individual and organizational behavior.

The contribution of network organizations lies in the value-added ideas and efficiencies they offer.

Where does the Kendall Foundation stand? We like Major Powell's 19th century perspective and are seeking to understand how the watersheds of this country can be protected—in some cases restored—to provide abundant clean water. In striving to see a decade ahead, we believe that :

- new forms of public/private partnerships are part of the strategy;
- increased citizen stewardship is essential;
- agencies must surrender elements of their "sovereignty" over resource decisions; and
- new mechanisms must be designed to bring untied funding to forums established and "owned" by watershed stakeholders *at the watershed level*.

If we fail to invent high-performing watershed organizations and are unsuccessful in generating the relatively modest funding they require, nature will lose and, eventually, so will we. ➤

Theodore Smith is the executive director of the Kendall Foundation in Boston, MA.

Letters from the Network

A note from the National Park Service

On behalf of all the staff of the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance programs of the National Park Service, we are pleased to collaborate with River Network in producing another issue of *River Voices*. This is indeed a “watershed” issue — a collection of dynamic conservation efforts from across the country that are working to integrate resources and people in a comprehensive, equitable, and sustainable manner.

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program is currently assisting similar undertakings — from promoting greater public understanding of resource management in Santa Margarita River Watershed in California to providing technical support for new watershed councils to develop action plans in rural Pennsylvania.

Readers of *River Voices* wishing to learn more about how the RTCA programs might be able to assist their river corridor/watershed conservation efforts are encouraged to contact one of the regional NPS offices listed on this page.

Michael Linde
Chief, Partnership Programs/NPS Seattle, WA

River Voices Summer 1995 Using the Information Superhighway to Save Rivers

Just read your article on “Using the Information Superhighway to Save Rivers.” Great job with good ideas.

Here in Montana, Desktop Assistance, working with the Brainerd and Bullitt Foundations, has developed WestNet, the “information service for people with a passion for this place.” The end result is supposed to be an environmental network to encompass the Pacific Northwest.

Please place me on your list of potential participants. Perhaps we can help each other out.

Don Kern, Montana River Action Network
dkern@desktop.org

Chuck Hoffman responded: We are aware of the WestNet and its beginnings. It is a model that we can draw from in designing something for the rivers movement.

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Henry's Fork Watershed Council

by Kirk Johnson

The Henry's Fork Watershed Council is a consensus-based forum composed of diverse interests. The Council has citizen leadership in the form of co-facilitation by two former adversaries, Henry's Fork Foundation and Fremont - Madison Irrigation District. The Council's mission is to advance the ecological health of the Henry's Fork Basin and the economic sustainability of its communities. Participants include farmers, conservationists, agency and community representatives, elected officials, and others who "reside, recreate, make a living and/or have legal responsibilities" in the 1.7 million-acre basin in eastern Idaho.

In the early 1990s, the Council was formed as an alternative to the conflict and polarization that had marked resource management debates in the basin for at least two decades. The Council's founders drafted a charter and mission statement that was adopted by the Idaho Legislature in 1994. That mission statement highlights the following goals for the Council:

- to serve as a grassroots, consensus-based, problem-solving forum;

- to better understand and manage the watershed and its resources;
- to cooperate and coordinate with one another and abide by all local, state, and federal laws.

The charter identifies four related, major duties of the Council:

- to promote cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries;
- to review and prioritize proposed watershed projects;
- to identify and coordinate funding for research, planning, implementation, and monitoring programs; and
- to serve as an educational resource on the Henry's Fork Basin.

In working to implement these goals during the past two years, the Council has come to be seen as one of the nation's leading experiments in new, more responsive, and potentially more effective ways to manage and maintain healthy ecosystems while integrating the needs and desires of people. These efforts have arisen for a variety of reasons, including pressure to reform how public agencies interact with the public; a growing concern over the long-term effectiveness of traditional interest group advocacy tactics; and a movement among resource managers toward more complex ecosystem or watershed management approaches.

This evaluation of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council assesses the Council's progress in achieving these goals, and in forging a new approach to watershed management that holds lessons for practitioners throughout the country.¹ The evaluation of the Council's progress is based on a series of structured interviews with Council participants and observers, as well as visits to two Council meetings and an

extensive review of written information about the Council.

Findings and Recommendations

The Henry's Fork Watershed Council is an impressive effort. Perhaps its greatest accomplishment has been to encourage once-bitter adversaries to work together, in a non-hostile setting, to develop common goals and objectives for the Henry's Fork Basin.

The Council provides a "safe" and "friendly" forum for discussing potentially contentious issues. Through its process of group education and consensus-building, the Council provides participants a broader understanding of problems—and of possible solutions—than any one individual or group could generate. The process is helping residents of the Henry's Fork Basin expand their capacity to discuss, evaluate, and resolve issues and conflicts on their own—in other words, their capacity for self-governance.

One of the Council's first and most important tasks was developing its "Watershed Integrity Review and Evaluation" (WIRE) criteria. Formatted as a checklist, these 10 criteria of watershed health and vitality are used to evaluate the merits of projects or programs brought before the Council by agencies or other Council members. The important and painstaking process of "WIREing" projects has become one of the main functions of Council meetings. It is an especially effective means for ensuring cooperation and coordination among agencies and the various projects and initiatives undertaken in the basin.

Photo by Kitty Vincent



The Upper Mesa Falls

¹ This article is a modified version of the "Executive Summary" of *An Evaluation of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council*. The complete evaluation is available from the Henry's Fork Foundation, P.O. Box 852, Ashton, ID 83420.

The Council also serves as an educational forum for Council members and the broader community on various complex and contentious resource management issues, from salmon recovery in the Columbia-Snake river system to road access to the Targhee National Forest.

Additionally, the Council is defining a new and innovative role for itself as a facilitator of improved dialogue between local, state, and federal resource and land management agencies and the public. The Council can be especially helpful in encouraging coordination on issues that go beyond the jurisdiction and understanding of any one agency. It has great potential to find voluntary, cooperative, and incentive-based ways to encourage private landowners to take part in ecosystem management efforts, a task many public agencies would find difficult to achieve.

Although agencies have so far been reluctant to hand over what they view as their legally derived decision making responsibilities. In future years, the Council may play a key role in shaping the new, evolving relationship between public agencies (especially federal) and the public that they serve.

Major Challenges

The Council has been quite successful in its work toward establishing a new approach to watershed management; with success, however, also comes challenge. For instance, although the Council desires to build community, find consensus and demonstrate success, Council members must not avoid raising disagreements. Disagreements must be addressed or the Council will risk losing its credibility among its constituents. At the same time, the Council is a young and still fragile institution, and if it confronts issues that are too divisive, it may destroy a highly productive and

valuable process. The Council can address this tension by continuing to solidify relations among Council members, while making sure that Council participants communicate closely with their constituent organizations about the Council's work and perspective.

Another challenge the Council faces is that although the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District is well-represented on the Council, participation among other farmers and farm groups is less satisfactory. Their participation should increase if the Council wants to become a more broadly representative forum for airing a wide range of issues critical to the economic and ecological sustainability of the watershed and its economy. Greater participation in the Council by local community leaders and elected officials would also be desirable. In general, their attitudes appear to be increasingly favorable. Even so, local community leaders and elected officials are still overshadowed in numbers by representatives of the co-facilitator organizations and agencies.

Among some agricultural interests in the watershed, the Council faces a serious perception problem. Some see the Council as an offshoot of the Henry's Fork Foundation and thereby overly concerned with environmental issues. To address these various concerns, the Council should continue working to broaden participation and to project a more accurate image of itself in the community. It should increase its outreach efforts in the local watershed, particularly among farming interests and formal and informal community leaders. Encouraging involvement from a broader cross-

Science-based, collaborative research is conducted on the Henry's Fork.

section of the basin will make consensus more difficult. But it will also help to better root the Council in the basin, ensure that it is truly reflective of the residents there, broaden its scope to include a wider range of agricultural and other issues, and ultimately make it a more influential organization locally, regionally, and nationally.

Conclusion

The Henry's Fork Watershed Council is among the most exciting and innovative consensus-based efforts. It provides an example and specific lessons for other watersheds facing similar challenges. It is helping to shape how this country, and especially the West, will address the interrelated issues of managing complex ecosystems and negotiate the complex relationships between federal, state, and local institutions and their constituents. 🐟

Kirk Johnson is a policy analyst with the Northwest Policy Center at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Black Earth Creek Watershed Association

Building a stewardship ethic for a premier, Midwestern trout stream

by Stephen M. Born

The Black Earth Creek Watershed, only a few miles west of Wisconsin's capital city, Madison, is a microcosm of the many issues and interests involved in river protection, land use development and growth management. The spring-fed creek is a nationally recognized trout stream within casting distance of more than 300,000 people. Its watershed contains an Ice Age Reserve and related scientific areas, important riparian corridors and wetlands, and the unglaciated bedrock bluffs and agricultural valleys of western Dane County. It is a scenic beauty of the first order.

The Madison metropolitan region is the fastest growing region in the state, casting its expanding shadow over the watershed. Growth and development pressures are threatening the creek from its headwaters westerly some 20 miles to its eventual union with the Wisconsin River. The stressed farm economy is adversely affecting farmers in this largely agricultural watershed; selling their land for development is often farmers' only viable financial route to retirement or economic security.

This fragile spring creek, this special place, is under siege. The outcome is anything but certain, despite the efforts of individuals and groups such as a progressive state environmental agency, which undertook its first stream habitat improvement project on Black Earth Creek in the late 1940s; an aggressive local chapter of Trout Unlimited, whose 500 members see the stream as their "home waters"; and concerned local governments, landowners and citizen groups. The watershed "community" is complex and diverse, and no single entity was concerned about the future well-being of the watershed as a whole until 1987.

In 1987 the Black Earth Creek

Watershed Association (BECWA) was formed in response to a number of events including: 1) citizen concern about a soon-to-be designated Superfund landfill in the watershed; 2) a University of Wisconsin workshop which synthesized issues and problems in the watershed and outlined a management framework; and 3) designation of Black Earth Creek as a Priority Watershed Project eligible for substantial state funding to combat water quality problems caused by polluted runoff.

Following a public meeting of citizens and interested groups (and aided by agency and university resource professionals), BECWA was incorporated as a nonprofit organization to promote planning and action for wise, long-term stewardship of the land and water resources within the watershed. The Association serves as an information clearinghouse for citizens, interest groups, and governments. It supports educational programs and tries to better coordinate the many programs and activities effecting the watershed.

BECWA is directed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of local citizens, farmers, officials, conservationists, and business persons. Unlike many hard-core advocacy groups composed of individuals that share values and attitudes, BECWA, from its inception, has tried to provide a neutral and objective forum for the many **unlike** interests in the watershed. This has been a risky strategy. BECWA, with its broad goals regarding long-term protection of the creek and its watershed, has steered clear of divisive local issues, and advocates sometimes have difficulty in passionately committing to entities that provide neutral ground for discussing issues. Nevertheless, during the past eight years BECWA's list of accomplishments include:

- leading public involvement in the planning and implementation of a \$1.7 million Priority Watershed Project to address agricultural and urban nonpoint source pollution problems;

- initiating educational activities, including a watershed signage program ("Welcome to the Black Earth Creek Watershed"), collaborating with UW-Extension in conducting residential well testing programs, holding training workshops for school teachers and community leaders, and organizing an annual stream cleanup event;

- leading efforts to fund and conduct studies of the regional groundwater system and critical wetland and habitat areas;

- coordinating various state and local governmental programs, and preparing a periodic summary of "Who's doing what in the watershed";

- serving as an information clearinghouse for citizens and as a forum for resolving conflicts. (Issues addressed over the years include landfill closing and remediation efforts, floodplain management, fishery management, leaky underground storage tanks and land redevelopment potential, wastewater treatment, sand and gravel mining, transportation projects, urban stormwater management planning, development proposals, hilltop development and scenic resource protection, and reviews of governmental monitoring and survey activities).

While it is difficult to determine what would have happened without BECWA, it seems clear that the Association has played an important role in strengthening long-term "grassroots" stewardship and public awareness in the watershed.

The Black Earth Creek Watershed Association is now facing its biggest challenge and its greatest opportunity to foster long-term resources protection for

While it is difficult to determine what would have happened without BECWA, it seems clear that the Association has played an important role in strengthening long-term “grassroots” stewardship and public awareness in the watershed.

the creek: Development proposals in the watershed have grown increasingly contentious. A flashpoint was reached a year ago in a battle over the location of a \$30 million printing plant and new industrial park in a streamside area proposed for annexation to the village of Cross Plains. Concerns about the impacts on the creek and the community divided residents and others, and the plant was ultimately sited elsewhere. Bad blood still flows from that controversy, but many of those involved now believe it is time to rethink the way development decisions are made. To that end, BECWA, building upon its several years of work and its neutrality credentials, is committed to serve as a convener and forum for a development-environmental protection mediation effort in the watershed. Currently, local units of government are enacting resolutions indicating their commitment to participate in the consensus-building initiative, an accomplished mediator has consented to facilitate the effort, and fundraising is underway.

Warren Myers, consulting engineer for the three villages in the watershed, likens the effort to family counseling. Watershed citizens and interests do not have the option of a divorce—they’re all part of the community of interest. They need to get some help to improve relationships and stop dysfunctional behavior among the many parties in the watershed.

While there is no guarantee of success, watershed interests increasingly recognize the linkages between land use decisions and stream/watershed protection, and the need for a more positive, future-oriented means for making decisions that effect the quality of life in the region. Many observers agree that it is time to reduce conflicts and work together towards a shared vision for the watershed.

BECWA is well established to play the catalytic role. Some of the keys to success in the Black Earth Creek Watershed:

- BECWA has taken the time to build on past relationships and strengthen ties among farmers and fishers, rural and urban citizens, and business and conservation interests. Critical to coalition building is eliminating tendencies to see things in “we-they” terms and facilitating personal interaction among folks with different interests and views.
- From its inception, BECWA has focused on heightening awareness of the watershed and its problems through public events and an active media strategy. Major newspaper stories have focused on the natural resource and community values in the watershed and the efforts at cooperation.

- An active and organized environmental presence, the local Trout Unlimited chapter and other environmental groups, has assured strong representation of these often dispersed concerns.

- BECWA has gained support by serving as an access point for citizens and landowners to agency and governmental staff and programs. The supportive and technical assistance role of an interagency, intergovernmental work group has been essential.

- BECWA has staked out the entire watershed and adjacent areas affecting the watershed as the “problemshed” and has supported integrative approaches to planning and problem solving. These efforts to interrelate the many activities and actors in the watershed have helped distinguish BECWA.

Some of BECWA’s accomplishments are less than tangible. For instance, how do you evaluate the dramatically enhanced citizen and

Photo by Robert Queen

Angler enjoying pursuit of wild brown trout in Black Earth Creek.

community awareness regarding the value and health of Black Earth Creek and its watershed? There has been a substantial increase of involvement—in fact shared stewardship—by civic groups, school kids, business interests and others in projects and decisions affecting the stream. There is also an expressed consensus by watershed citizens and leaders that Black Earth Creek and its vulnerable life-support systems must be protected.

The future prospects for this small pastoral stream filled with wild brown trout have come a long way in the past decade. Fighting complacency and sustaining a watershed constituency are unending jobs, but in the Black Earth Creek area citizen activism—aided by dedicated government natural resource managers—is helping to protect this treasured spring creek from the ravages of “progress.” ❖

Steve Born is a professor of Urban & Regional Planning and Environmental Studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is also the president of the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association.

Building a statewide watershed movement: Lessons from the 62 Watersheds of Washington Campaign

by Joy Huber

In Washington state, we are continuing to experiment with citizens' watershed councils. We are learning that the councils can be more effective than top-down government in shaping a community's relation to water and other natural resources. They seem to be a new form of grassroots democracy and could hold the key to building a sustainable society, linking the political process to the natural ecosystem.

There are 62 major river basins, or watersheds, in Washington state. When the Rivers Council of Washington began to create a state network of watershed councils two years ago, only three of the 62 watersheds had a council. Today, there are watershed councils in at least 26 watersheds.

The Rivers Council of Washington and environmental advocates are not the only people talking about watersheds these days. State legislators from both parties and the professional associations of cities, counties and water utilities are drafting bills to authorize watershed planning. Even the state's agri-business leaders are looking to watershed councils for locally tailored solutions to costly water problems. The issue is not *whether* but *how* watershed planning will be practiced in Washington state.

The existing councils are bringing diverse local interests together and finding common ground for addressing issues of water and land use. The councils have created practical, yet innovative watershed plans. The biggest challenge has been sustaining public support in the face of government delays to implement the plans.

The composition and inspiration of each watershed council is different. The Yakima River Watershed Council, for instance, was started by irrigators. It has about 50 board members, 100 working committee members and 1,000 general members who have contributed nearly \$500,000 in private funding. By contrast, the Nisqually River Council was enacted by the Legislature and is staffed by the state water agency. It is bicameral, with one board for business and community representatives and another board for agency representatives.

Despite their many differences, the watershed councils have come to some common conclusions:

1. The geographic unit for planning and management must be the natural watershed—regardless of political boundaries.

This single characteristic shifts the context of water resource management from strictly human considerations to the whole web of life in the local ecosystem. A shift of this magnitude in governance has profound social and economic implications moving toward a future that is more realistic and enduring.

2. All water interests must be represented at the table.

Every watershed council in Washington strives to achieve the broadest possible representation of local interests, including those with an interest in using water for economic purposes as well as those with an interest in conserving water for recreational or environmental benefits. Tribal interests have always been included because of their extensive senior water and fishing rights. In a few cases, the councils have even reached outside their local watersheds for environmental representatives of the greater public interest.

Several older watershed councils were formed with eight "caucuses"—environment, recreation, fish, business, agriculture, local government, state government, and tribal government. The younger councils attempt to reflect the local population, as skewed as that might seem toward one sector such as business. One example is the group in Yakima, which has equal numbers of representatives for irrigators, growers and shippers, processors, general business, financial institutions, forestry, electric utilities, community organizations, environmental organizations, government and the Yakima Indian Nation. This type of representation has the potential to produce an unbiased result because decisions are made by consensus (see #5 below).

3. Council representatives should be the "best spokesperson" for their water interests.

One way of selecting council members is to accept the people who attend a public meeting and declare themselves to be spokespersons for a particular water interest. Unfortunately, there have been several cases where, at the end of a lengthy planning process, the spokesperson's work is disclaimed by the community leaders they claimed to represent.

The councils work better when members have been carefully selected. Council members must have the ability to analyze data, articulate solutions, work cooperatively, communicate openly and inspire public confidence in the council.

4. The work should be done by community volunteers with financial support from local contributors.

The watershed councils appear to function best when composed of private citizens, with the government providing technical advisors only at the working committee level. Local support and funding is another key to success. When a significant portion of the operational funding is raised from local donations, it is a good indication that the work of the council has been well-communicated to the local community.

We have learned that watershed councils should arise voluntarily from the interested water users in the local watershed; they should not be appointed by a government agency. For this reason, any state legislation to be passed next

Far different from the adversarial emphasis of traditional environmentalism, the focus of the watershed approach is to work cooperatively to build healthy watershed communities.

spring should authorize such advisory councils to create a local watershed plan and interface with a public entity for implementation. However, the Legislature should not mandate creation of such councils nor prescribe their behavior; it should simply describe basic characteristics such as diverse representation and the minimum requirements for comprehensive planning.

5. Decisions should be made by “consensus” rather than “majority vote”.

In Washington, decision-making by consensus is often referred to as “the Chelan process”. This process has been used at the state level to reach agreement on timber, fish and wildlife issues with tribes and to conduct the State Water Resources Forum. Consensus is the process by which a group of people work together until they reach a common solution by mutual agreement.

The consensus method is used, with varying degrees of success, by all the watershed councils in Washington. An expert facilitator is essential for success.

Unfortunately, there is less consensus about consensus, as the legislative session approaches. Some state legislators, county commissioners and business interests believe that the watershed councils should operate by a majority or super-majority vote. While the voting method would ensure that representative views are made known to their constituencies, it would eliminate the participation of tribes at the table, since they cannot put their interest to a council vote without compromising their status as sovereign nations.

The more obvious problem with the voting method is that one or more interests can lose. Water interests, rights, uses, regulatory procedures and jurisdictions are exceedingly complex, and unless the issues can be resolved for all interests, any partial solution simply takes away from another. This produces an adversarial situation that leads to endless litigation and bureaucracy from which no comprehensive and lasting solutions will arise.

The point is to find permanent solutions. Consensus will not bring about permanent solutions if an interest group hides or withholds its fundamental disagreements until later, and then breaks ranks when it's too late for the whole group to backtrack and find another solution.

The Rivers Council of Washington agrees that council members should be held accountable at the end of the planning process for the agreements they've made along the way. Perhaps a solution is to combine the best of both methods—let the decisions be made by consensus, and let each council member make a series of “personal declarations

3-Year Strategic Objectives of the Rivers Council of Washington

The Rivers Council of Washington has adopted the following strategic objectives for the next three years.

1. Change state water policies —

- a. create or empower citizens' watershed planning councils in the 62 watersheds and direct public and private resources to local stewardship groups;
- b. conserve streams and aquifers by asserting the recreational/cultural value of waterways and by protecting riparian and tribal water rights.

2. Create watershed models —

- a. demonstrate economic partnerships outside the environmental movement, especially with agricultural and timber property owners;
- b. develop financial support from new economic sectors such as computer and biomedical technologies.

3. Reach new constituencies —

- a. empower an affiliated network of local stewardship groups;
- b. create a state river registry that promotes public involvement and recognition.

4. Teach watershed values —

- a. consciously invent watershed symbolism and social methods;
- b. promote minimum-impact river recreation. ➡

of support” in writing at critical junctures during the planning process.

Far different from the either-or abstractions prescribed by the usual electoral, regulatory or courtroom procedures of government, the watershed plans created by the watershed councils are locally appropriate solutions to immediate community problems.

The task of the watershed council is not only to develop and promote the implementation of a comprehensive water resource plan for its watershed, but to reinvent government and the environmental movement from the grassroots up.

Far different from the adversarial emphasis of traditional environmentalism, the focus of the watershed approach is to work cooperatively to build healthy watershed communities. ➡

Joy Huber is the executive director of the Rivers Council of Washington.

Integrated Watershed Management: The Massachusetts Experience

by Bob Zimmerman

In the middle 1960s, two women were responsible for fostering grassroots watershed management in Massachusetts. Marion Stoddard took on polluters in the Nashua River watershed, and Rita Barron did the same in the Charles River watershed. They were and remain tough, charismatic people who simply would not succumb to the pressures of the times, and their successes are chronicled in “river rescue” journals written to extol the virtues of grassroots river activism. Much of our success in Massachusetts and New England is a tribute to their efforts, and the awareness of rivers they cultivated.

Americans in the '60s and '70s were environmental neophytes, and early attempts to manage natural resources using watershed boundaries floundered. The concept was too big, the political will not present, and the problems our rivers faced too obvious to build any real watershed management constituency. When rivers run in toxic colors, extolling the virtues of managing each of our backyards is likely to be an unsuccessful strategy. Attacking hazardous and toxic pollution at its source is more likely to produce results, and as we all know, the regulatory structure we created over the last 20 years was designed and remains calibrated to do exactly that; identify and attack polluters.

As a consequence, point source discharges are no longer the major cause of pollution to our rivers. They have been replaced by a much more insidious problem, nonpoint source pollution (or polluted runoff) from agriculture, urban streets and other sources. Acknowledging that a watershed approach is necessary to address sources of polluted runoff, in 1992, many watershed associations banded together to push for watershed management. A Watershed Awareness and Policy Initiative was created through the consolidated efforts of the following associations: Charles River Watershed Association, the Merrimack River Watershed Association, the Nashua River Watershed Association, the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, and the Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership. In 1993, others joined the effort to develop a comprehensive watershed management system for statewide implementation, including Environmental Secretary Trudy Coxe, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection as well as state and federal regulators, corporations, cities and towns, and citizens.

As a result, pilot watershed management programs were undertaken statewide. These programs include:

- a collaboration of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Neponset River Watershed Association.

Using local “stream teams” to identify issues, this collaborative project on the Neponset River tested the extent of state agency contributions to comprehensive basin assessment.

- Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management created a partnership with local citizens to determine objectives for pollution abatement efforts on the Parker River, focusing primarily on Best Management Practices for storm water runoff.
- On the Merrimack River, efforts were focused on creating the Volunteer Environmental Monitoring Network, a dispersed network of volunteers monitoring the river for basic water quality data.
- Monitoring and computer modeling capabilities on the Charles River were developed by the watershed association so that a Watershed Council, composed of local officials and citizens, could identify priorities and remediation strategies.

These pilot watershed management programs continue to operate today. Collectively, these efforts and others have been fashioned into a *Watershed Initiative Management Methodology*, and a watershed initiative implementation strategy has been developed to extend watershed management across the state during the next five years. Funding for this effort will come from the Massachusetts Open Space Bond bill, which recently passed the Massachusetts Legislature.

Watershed nonprofits will bid competitively for state matching grants. Once selected, the watershed nonprofit will convene a Watershed Community Council to discuss issues facing the watershed and specific river reaches. Using the Community Council, a river and tributary monitoring plan will be developed, seeking data to understand what is happening and how it can be remedied. In each selected basin, the state Department of Environmental Protection will provide in-kind monitoring and computer modeling support to the data collection and priority identification process. Once issues are understood, the Community Council and state and federal regulatory agencies will work to implement remedial strategies.

From inception to implementation in each watershed, the process will take two years—if our pilot efforts are any indication.

A total of six watersheds will be investigated each year. One watershed will be reviewed as comprehensively as the Neponset River or Charles River pilot projects, while the remaining five will be assessed for a few specific problems as identified by the Watershed Community Council. This management process is intended to continue indefinitely.

Watershed Awareness and Policy Initiative partners will be working to establish strong, independent watershed

Letters from the Network (cont. from p. 9)

I would agree that an online network would be very useful to us...the most important use for me would be for researching information for various issues.

You could have the information on the subject and/or a bibliography on where to get information. One example from Michigan: We have a natural gas boom going on here. The gas industry is fragmenting the watersheds and crossing streams with roads and pipes. An online network may help us find information on what harms this industry is causing to our rivers.

Mike Brock, Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited, mikebrock@aol.com

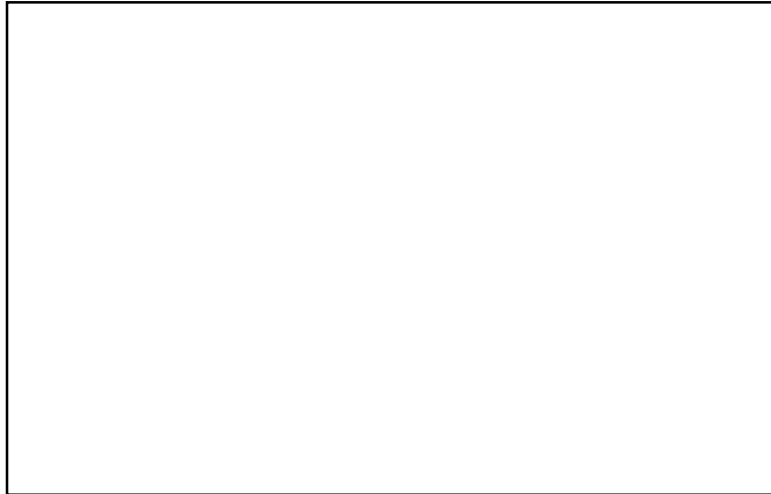
I am very interested in and encouraged to hear about your proposal for a Rivers Online Network. I think it is a wonderful idea! It would be great for me to easily access information on what other groups are doing around the country, both politically and technically, to find out what's working and what isn't. Being able to do database searches and locate appropriate documents and talk to others in the same field would greatly aid in the work we are doing. We would also be more than willing to share our "story" with others, including events, data, technologies, etc.

Deborah McKie, Jones River Watershed Association, jonesriver@aol.com

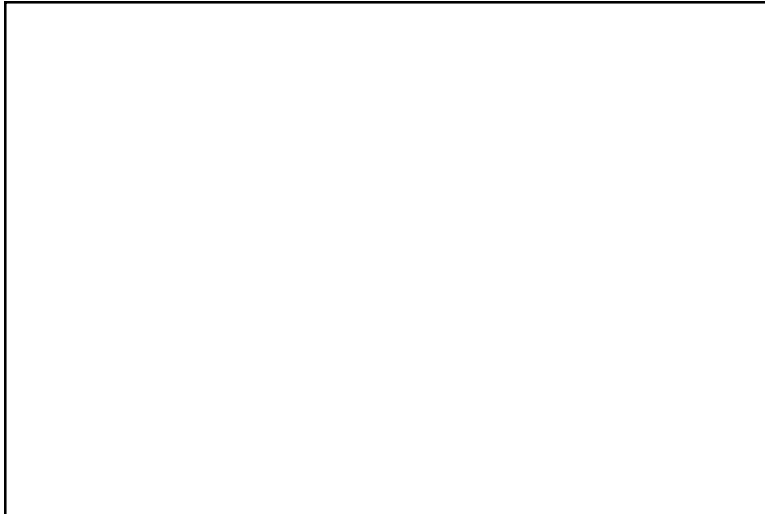
Your Internet edition is very well done, and I enjoyed the analytical approach taken in some of the articles. However, I was surprised that you made no attempt to list existing websites that might interest your readers. A quick search using Webcrawler turned up 3,112 entries containing the word "Rivers." I suggest that someone take a couple of hours to look as such sites, and that you publish a "Top 10" list.

Matt Chew, Arizona State Parks, mchew@prpo01.pr.state.az.us

It is a great idea. River Network is developing a web page that will include links to other web sites of interest to river activists. Please send recommendations to rivernet@igc.apc.org



The meandering upper reach of the Charles River, parts of which are known for their natural valley storage capacity, an alternative flood control strategy.



The intensely urbanized Charles River as it flows through Boston.

associations in each of Massachusetts 27 basins in the next few years; many associations already exist as volunteer organizations. It is our intent to raise their capabilities so that they can convene and oversee watershed management efforts.

The challenge before watershed advocates is considerable. Something similar to the recycling revolution we have witnessed during the last decade must occur if we are to manage our water and natural resources effectively, allowing for human and environmental needs, as well as protecting the quantity and quality of water flowing in our rivers.

The Massachusetts experience has shown that it is now possible to move into this next stage of the clean water effort at local, state and federal levels. Like the first efforts of Marion Stoddard and Rita Barron 30 years ago, it will be led by grassroots organizations raising awareness and building the constituency to succeed. ➤

Bob Zimmerman is the executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association.

Diversity and Watershed Management: The Mississippi River Basin Alliance Experience

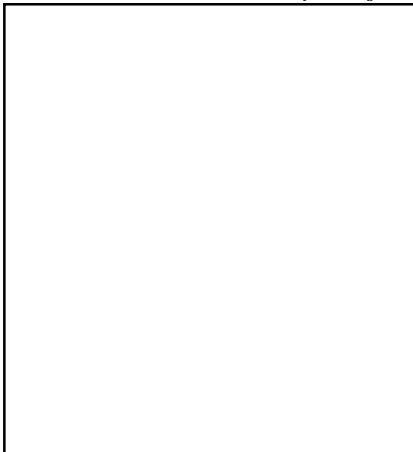
by Suzi Wilkins

People and resources have shaped the Mississippi River Basin Alliance since its inception in 1992. The Alliance is a coalition of organizations and individuals that joined together to protect and restore the Mississippi River. The citizens who helped form the Alliance knew that if the organization were to succeed, it must comprise a richly diverse group of citizens. They knew that only an organization that reflected the diversity of the river and its basin could begin to address its diverse and complex problems. Some keys to the success of the richly diverse MRBA include the following:

Leadership

The Alliance today is composed of more than 40 organizations from both the traditional conservation community and the environmental justice movement. Many will say that the Alliance exists today thanks to the persistence of one person—Bill Redding. A staff member of the Sierra Club's Midwest Office in Wisconsin, Bill has long noted that the conservation community's

Photo by Ransburg Studio



Bill Redding at MRBA's Mississippi River Conference in Memphis, TN.

constituency has been too narrow. His vision has been one that moves resource conservation beyond middle class suburbia to embrace the interests of the urban poor. Raised in St. Louis on the banks of the Mississippi River, Bill has always cared about the future of this river.

Financial Support

In 1992, the Minneapolis-based McKnight Foundation directed a multi-year, multimillion dollar commitment to improving the Mississippi River. Fortuitously, this decision coincided with the Alliance's formation. Foundation support enabled a diverse group of people to gather for the Alliance's initial series of meetings. Funding from the McKnight Foundation enabled the citizens to travel and meet face to face and begin building understanding and trust, the foundation for the MRBA. Indeed, the Alliance and many of its member organizations continue to flourish, thanks in part to McKnight's bold commitment to the Mississippi.

Dialog

A broad cross-section of people came to the Alliance's initial organizing meeting in February, 1992. An incident occurred at that first meeting which tells the story of the Mississippi River Basin Alliance:

One Alliance founder was discussing the need to protect the endangered sturgeon found in the river. Another founder, Florence Robinson from North Baton Rouge, Louisiana, spoke up immediately: "Why should I care about endangered fish; I've got endangered people in my neighborhood." (Florence had long fought toxic conditions in her community that severely impact the health of her friends and neighbors.) As

the meeting continued, Florence gained a better understanding of the relationship between the health of river species and humans. She is now a strong advocate for river critters. Conversely, rural and suburban citizens who had little experience with urban hazardous sites and their resulting human impacts, now had a sober understanding of the pain and havoc that toxics cause unsuspecting citizens nearby.

Skillful Meeting Facilitation

As the Alliance struggled to ascertain its identity, a skilled organization—The Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL)—aided the group. Based in Washington D.C., ICL provides a wide range of citizens with organizational training. With the patient guidance of ICL trainer, Dianne Russell, the Alliance determined its purpose statement and programmatic direction.

The Alliance's purpose is to "protect and restore the ecological, economic, cultural, historic and recreational resources in the basin; and to eliminate barriers of race, class and economic status that divide us in the quest to achieve these purposes."

Governance Reflects Diversity

During its initial meetings, the Alliance drafted bylaws that ensure that its 15-person governing Coordinating Council will reflect the heterogeneous population found in the Mississippi basin. The Council's work is reinforced by seven subcommittees, which hold formal teleconferences to reach consensus on pending issues and matters.

To address the problems confronting the Mississippi River, its basin and people, the Alliance directs its efforts in six areas:

- establishing a communications network;
- training basin grassroots organizations;
- improving water quality and decreasing toxics;
- restoring basin wetlands;
- improving sustainable agriculture in the region; and
- ensuring environmental and social considerations in Corps of Engineers planning.

Technical and Financial Support

Limited resources impeded the Alliance's progress. Despite the significant financial commitment by McKnight Foundation and a few other foundations, most foundations are reluctant to invest in a new entity. Until the Alliance can convince a broader range of funders of the importance of its work, the Alliance's efforts will be limited.

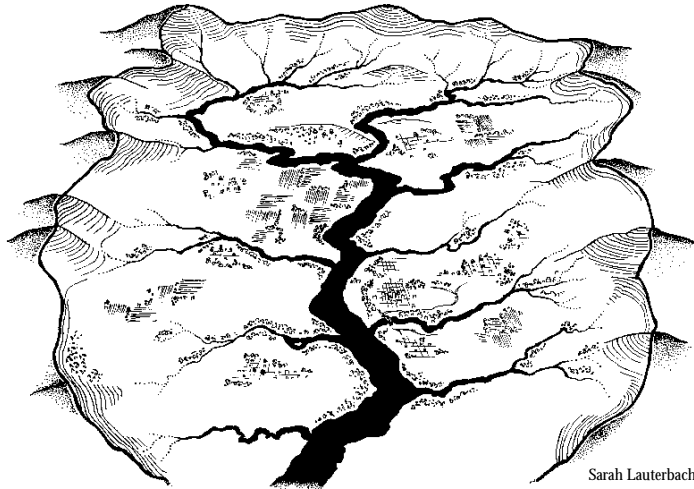
Despite those challenges the Alliance has been able to share its resources with member organizations and empower those grassroots groups. In the past year, the Alliance provided financial support that allowed a wide cross-section of citizens to attend the Alliance's annual conference. This meeting, held in Memphis last May, provided attendees with a wide range of opportunities: organizational skill building (how to fundraise, use volunteers more effectively, and access computer data, etc.) as well as information on river issues. The Alliance appreciates all those trainers, including River Network's Pat Munoz, who worked so diligently with basin citizens at the conference.

This summer, the Alliance also awarded small grants to some of its member groups so that they could participate in tap water testing. This project allowed local groups throughout the basin to obtain information

about pesticide levels in their drinking water and to undertake follow up educational and advocacy work in their communities. This information is valuable to the cities where the data was collected and provides people throughout the basin with an understanding of the interconnectedness of the basin; Pesticides that are spread on agricultural fields in Iowa and elsewhere in the basin appear in New Orleans' drinking water. In the future, the Alliance will also provide funding for additional computer and organizational training for its member groups.

The Alliance will continue to be challenged with a need to keep those involved with this huge watershed (33 states in size) communicating with one another and aware of those issues that connect and tie the mountainous areas with the delta, and the headwaters with the mouth. It is, after all, one resource – one people – one system. ♣

Suzi Wilkins is the executive director of the MRBA based in St. Louis, MO.



Sarah Lauterbach

“...only an organization that reflected the diversity of the river and its basin could begin to address its diverse and complex problems.”

one resource – one people – one system

Resources and References on Watershed Approaches

Toward a Watershed Approach: A Framework for Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration, Protection and Management. A well-written, four-color booklet with great graphics, terminology definitions, watershed approach examples, quotes and statistics. Available from Coastal America, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC 4, Room 11141, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

The Watershed Sourcebook: Citizen-Initiated Solutions to Natural Resource Problems, by the Natural Resources Law Center, University of Colorado. This sourcebook examines the watershed as a geographic and political unit for natural resources management.

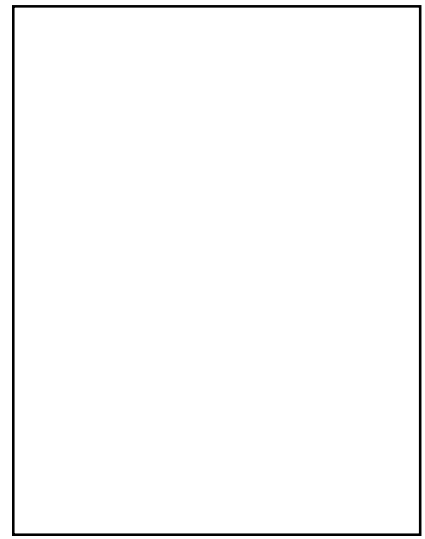
It is written for those first acquainting themselves with the concept of watershed management and those who are familiar with or involved in water management. Available for \$25 from NRLC, University of Colorado School of Law, Box 401, Boulder, CO, 80309, (303) 492-1286.

The Watershed Innovators Workshop Proceedings (Swift River Inn, Cummington, MA, June 1995) by Peter Lavigne. Summary and highlights of a two-day, facilitated gathering of some 30 leaders in watershed work from U.S. and Canada. Major themes addressed

include: key players, role of science, promising strategies, what has not worked, innovations and reinvention, future challenges, and measuring success. Available from River Network: \$6 for Partners, \$8 for others.

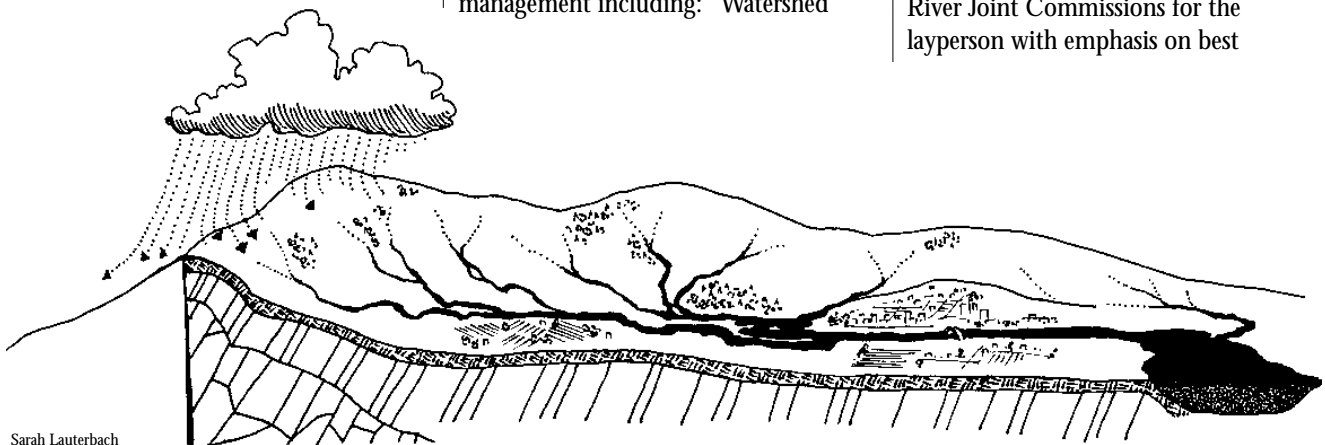
Watershed Management Workshop Summary (Boise, February 1994) A workshop held by the Western Governors' Association and the Western States Water Council to analyze and discuss the potential of using the watershed as a unit for resource management and decision-making. Five detailed case studies demonstrating the diversity of watershed efforts are outlined. Major conclusions try to answer the question: "How can we best govern western water resources?" and are discussed in this report. Available for a nominal fee from Western Governors' Association, 600 17th Street, Suite 1705 South Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5452. (303)623-9378.

Know Your Watershed Campaign by the Conservation Technology Information Center. "Know Your Watershed" is a national campaign to increase the awareness of watersheds, ecosystems, nonpoint source pollutants and pollution prevention activities. CTIC produces numerous resources on water quality, agricultural and natural resources management and watershed management including: "Watershed



Management Kit in a Box" which includes five guides (Getting to Know Your Local Watershed, Building Local Partnerships, Leading and Communicating, Managing Conflict, Putting Together a Watershed Management Plan), a video (Partnerships for Watersheds) and brochures. Information is basic and useful, intended to orient the layperson. Available for \$15 from CTIC, 1220 Potter Drive, Room 170, West Lafayette, IN 47906-1383. (317) 494-9555.

The Watershed Guide for Cleaner Rivers, Lakes and Streams: Actions You Can Take to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution. A 37-page publication of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions for the layperson with emphasis on best



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management practices and actions individuals can take. Most useful for New England audience, but helpful to others as well. Available for \$5 from CRJC, P.O. Box 1182, Charlestown, NH 03603. (603) 826-4800.

Clean Water in Your Watershed: A Citizens Guide to Watershed Protection, produced by the Terrene Institute in cooperation with U.S EPA. A 90-page guide full of frameworks and advice for citizen involvement in watershed management. Available from Terrene Institute, 1717 K Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20006. (202) 833-8317.

Conference

Watershed '96: Moving Ahead Together. An interactive forum on the progress and future of watershed management. June 8-12, 1996, Baltimore, MD. The conference will concentrate on how to build capabilities and better focus and coordinate efforts to achieve results that meet community needs. For more information, contact the Water Environment Federation at 1-800-666-0206.

U.S. EPA Watershed Publications
US EPA 401 M Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20460

Watershed Protection: A Statewide Approach. A strategy for effectively protecting and restoring aquatic ecosystems and protecting human health. The approach has four major features: targeting priority problems, incorporating a high level of stakeholder involvement, integrating solutions that make use of the expertise and authority of multiple agencies, and measuring success through monitoring and other data gathering. Office of Water (4503F), EPA 841-R-95-004, August 1995.

Watershed Protection: A Project Focus. Focuses on the development of watershed-specific programs and projects. Provides a blueprint for designing and implementing watershed projects including references and case studies for specific elements of the process. Illustrates how the broader principles of watershed management can be brought to bear on water quality and ecological concerns. Office of Water (WH-553), EPA 841-R-95-003, August 1995.

The Watershed Protection Approach 1993/1994 Activity Report (EPA). Provides a summary of activities EPA has carried out in 1993 and 1994 to support the watershed protection approach and a short discussion on anticipated future direction. In addition, summaries of watershed projects in which EPA is a stakeholder are included. 148 pages. Office of Water (4501F), EPA840-S-94-001, November 1994.

Watershed '93: A National Conference on Watershed Management 890-pages. EPA 840-R-94-002. March 1993.

Watershed Protection: Catalog of Federal Programs. Office of Water (WH-553), EPA-841-B-93-002, March 1993.

The Watershed Protection Approach: An Overview. Office of Water (WH-556F), EPA/503/9-92/002, December 1991.

Nonpoint Source News Notes (periodical). Contact Terrene Institute, 1717 K Street NW, Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20006.

US EPA Watershed Events (periodical). Office of Water, (WH-556F).

For more references and resources on the watershed approach, refer to *River Voices* (Vol. 5, No. 2/summer 1994)

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* individuals, corporations and organizations that have contributed \$100 or more to River Network in the past quarter. Foundation contributors are listed once a year in our annual report.

Renewed Partners

Friends of the Locust Fork, AL
Amigos Bravos, NM
Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy, WI

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Anchorage Waterways Council, AK
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Atlantic Salmon Federation, ME
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Mississippi Whitewater Park Corp., MN
Trout Unlimited - Big Blackfoot Chapter, MT
Hackensack Estuary & River Tenders, NJ
New River Foundation, NC
Utah River Conservation Council, UT
Muffy Harmon, IA
Thomas Emerton, NE
Jeff Bournes, SC

continued from page 1

Here are the strategic initiatives of the Watershed 2000 program:

400 Watershed Councils by the Year 2000

By recruiting citizen groups in key watersheds and Partners in the "Watershed 2000" campaign, we can give these groups a basic guide to watershed action. We will provide information on the principles of watershed science and watershed organizing, and help these watershed councils develop a science-based strategy for stream protection and restoration.

"River Source" Center

River Network is already the nation's leading source of information for grassroots river activists. Over the next five years, we will develop a "Life Support Kit," conduct a message development project, establish a Rivers Online Network and provide other technical support.

Five Regional Networks

A series of River Network surveys has revealed two things. First, that river and watershed groups feel a profound isolation; and second, that they feel they need to work on resource issues at a regional level, as opposed to a national level. River Network proposes to act as the catalyst for regional watershed networks by assembling networks, hosting rallies, and linking networks electronically.

30 Strong State River Councils

River Network can't possibly give one-on-one support to 2,000 grassroots organizations. Our strategy is to help found and support statewide or major river basin organizations and develop their capacity to support the grassroots. River Network has played a major role in building the number of state river councils from five to 20, and plans to bring on 10 more in the next five years.

Safe and Sustainable Watersheds Campaign

River Network intends to play a leadership role in helping local, state and regional organizations conduct effective campaigns to show the public that rivers matter in their lives. We want to help create a broad public awareness of the free work that healthy rivers and watersheds do to support the economies and quality of life of human communities.

"Working Rivers" Campaign

Free-flowing rivers do tremendous work for society by supplying clean water, containing floods and providing places to recreate. River Network is launching a "Working Rivers" initiative to help the public acquire riverlands that are vital to these functions, lands that might otherwise be developed or degraded.

As River Network launches Watershed 2000, we would like to invite and challenge past supporters and new supporters to work with us to make Watershed 2000 a reality. For more information, or a complete copy of *Watershed 2000*, please contact River Network.

Yes, I'd like to support River Network's Watershed 2000 Program at the following level:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Regular Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Charter Watershed Supporter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining Partner | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Charter Watershed Steward |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60-300 River Network Partner
(see form on page 23) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Charter Watershed Protector |

____ enclosed is my check for the entire amount

____ I would like to pay in ____ installments

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION _____

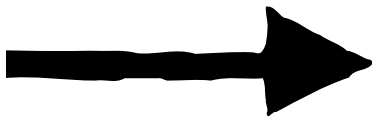
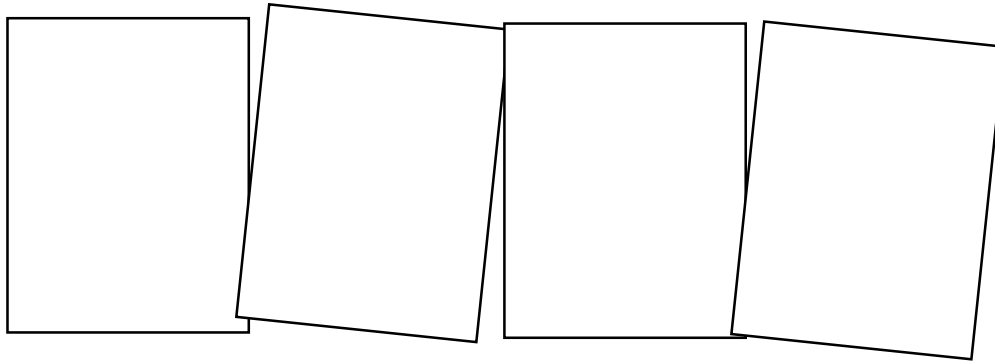
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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (____) _____

Does your river group need help fundraising?

Join the River Network Partnership and you will receive:

River Network's quarterly *River Fundraising Alert*, a guide of funding sources (updated annually), how-to references, sample materials, and other one-on-one assistance.



You'll also receive:

- **River/Watershed Issue Information**, referrals to other experienced advocates and specialists, *River Voices*, one-on-one assistance researching issues, and other issue-specific publications.
- **Organization Building Assistance**, how-to references, model materials.
- **Campaign Strategies**, opportunities to network statewide, regionally, and nationally, *How to Save a River* (one free copy), action alerts.
- and more . . .

Yes, I'd like to be a RIVER NETWORK Partner:

Organizational Partner

Dues is based on a sliding scale budget:

Budget	Annual Dues
\$0-20,000	\$60
\$20,001-\$100,000	\$100
\$100,001-\$200,000	\$200
> \$200,000	\$300

Agency Partner \$100

Agency Partners – Federal, state, or local agencies wanting to be tied into River Network by receiving our publications, invitations to meetings and workshops, etc. Minimum dues: \$100.

Individual Partner \$60

Individual Partners – Individuals committed to taking action or a leadership role to save a particular river or watershed but not yet part of an organization. Dues: \$60.

Amount dues paid \$ _____

New Member

Renewing Partner

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (____) _____

For more information contact:

RIVER NETWORK, P.O. BOX 8787, PORTLAND, OR 97207-8787 (503) 241-3506 • 1-800-423-6747



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**1996 - 1997
River Conservation
Directory**

Produced by
River Network
and the
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance

**Is your river
group listed in the
*1996-1997 River
Conservation
Directory?***

River Network, in cooperation with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, is producing the *1996-1997 River Conservation Directory*. It will include some 3,000 organizations whose primary purpose is river and watershed conservation.

We need your help to ensure the directory is accurate and complete. Give us a call at 1-800-423-6747 ext. 15 to make sure your group is included and the information is correct.

Act now, the Directory goes to print in December 1995.