

# **WETLANDS FACT SHEET # 26**

## **Wetlands and Watersheds**

Water resource protection measures need to be better coordinated to reflect the interconnected nature of water resources and to make current efforts more efficient and more effective. Wetlands and traditional surface and ground water quality protection programs should be integrated with each other as well as with other resource management programs, such as flood control, water supply, protection of fish and wildlife, recreation, control of stormwater, and nonpoint source pollution.

### **Background**

The quality of the waters of the United States, including wetlands and other aquatic resources, is related to the quality of the environment adjacent to these waters. Current programs have historically been organized around separate goals. Given that the larger point

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*A watershed, also called a drainage basin, is the area in which all water, sediments, and dissolved materials flow or drain from the land into a common river, lake, ocean or other body of water*

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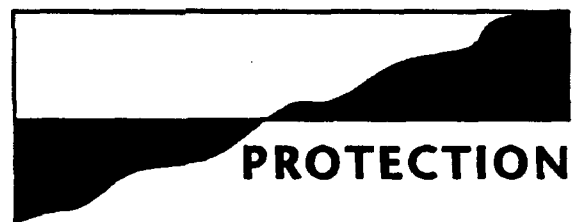
sources of water pollution are now identified and controlled to some degree, remaining water quality problems require an approach which addresses the interconnections between water resources and the land, air, and water environment surrounding the resources. A watershed based approach to water and wetlands protection considers the whole system, including other resource management programs addressing land, air, and water, to successfully manage problems or solutions for a given aquatic resource. It should be noted that a watershed encompasses not only the water resource, but

also the surrounding land from which the water drains. This can be an area as large as the Mississippi River drainage basin, or as small as a backyard.

### **Current Activities**

EPA's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds (OWOW) is actively pursuing a Watershed Protection Approach within the Office of Water and with other Federal agencies. One of OWOW's activities was to convene a national conference in March, 1993, bringing watershed management experts from across the nation together to discuss methods and directions for watershed approaches. OWOW's Wetlands Division incorporates a watershed approach in much of its work with other agencies, States, and organizations. Current activities include integrating a watershed approach into Federal floodplain management activities, funding State watershed projects through State Wetland Protection Grants and Nonpoint Source Grants, and supporting a series of national and regional meetings on wetlands and regional watershed planning.

## **W A T E R S H E D**



• An Integrated, Holistic Approach •

**For more information, contact the EPA Wetlands Hotline at 1-800-832-7828 \***

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