

VIEWPOINTS

- ▶ **Viewpoints are the Conservation Authority's point of view on some of the everyday environmental issues and situations people find themselves in along the Rideau.**
- ▶ **Visit our website @ www.rideauvalley.on.ca or contact our Landowner Resource Centre at 692-2390 for more information.**

Watershed Planning

For several years now, the RVCA has been involved in a process called watershed planning. Watershed planning investigates what's happening in the entire river basin. This type of planning isn't constrained by municipal boundaries, but rather it looks at the entire natural unit. A watershed is an area of land that drains into a given river stream or watercourse. It is sometimes known as the river's valley or natural drainage basin. Each watershed is unique and as a result, unique watershed plans are developed for each individual watershed.

With watersheds often stretching over several municipal boundaries, planning gives the coordination and coherent environmental guidelines needed to protect the valley ecosystem. It is a tool that helps make the best possible land use and water management decisions. It results in common goals watershed-wide and cost-savings for the residents.

Watershed plans bring ecological information together and devise an educated plan on the ways and means, acceptable by residents and interest groups, in which the area can be improved, restored, rehabilitated and enhanced.

The plan is intended to be used as a guide for managing human activities that can affect water, land/water interactions, aquatic life and aquatic resources within a particular watershed. The health of the watershed ecosystem will be protected as land uses and management practices change.

It allows municipalities to plan at lower cost and with the full pre-arranged support of all stakeholders. It means seeing what's happening in the entire river basin. It means getting taxpayers, councilors, developers and other stakeholders together as a watershed community to identify development constraints and opportunities. It allows us to deal with issues early on paper where they are much easier and less costly to correct. Watershed planning practitioners have found that this comprehensive approach to watershed management has resulted in overall savings of time and money.

Watershed plans are "living documents" — ongoing and continuous watershed management cycles with four phases:

Plan— identifying issues, setting objectives and targets, considering options and selecting the best course of action

Implement— acting on the results of the planning process

Monitor— observing the watershed's response, and measuring the effectiveness of watershed management efforts

Review — re-examining the objectives and targets and adjusting the plan as required

The RVCA, while initiating new plans, is currently reviewing a number of its older plans. To learn more about the RVCA and watershed plans, visit www.rideauvalley.on.ca.

