



# Raritan River

## WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Raritan Basin, in central New Jersey, is home to approximately 1.2 million people and serves as a source of drinking water for many who live there. Covering 1,100 square miles, the area supports a population density of over 1,000 people per square mile, with several highly urban and economically depressed areas. The watershed itself supports a full spectrum of land uses, from industrial to agricultural. The Raritan River watershed typifies an area that is beset by sprawl, a situation that is endemic throughout the East Coast metropolitan corridor.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant will focus on the following environmental problems:

- Some aquifers are highly vulnerable to drought, and the process of suburbanization has reduced ground water recharge significantly – for some watersheds up to 20% in only ten years.
- Development in the watershed, compounded by the loss of wetlands and riparian areas – reaching upwards of 80% in some subwatersheds – has dramatically increased pollutant loadings and stormwater flows.
- Elevated levels of phosphorus and fecal coliform, chlorides (from road salt) and turbidity, along with reduction in ground water recharge, threaten drinking water and other important watershed uses.

## RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association will use EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to carry out a comprehensive watershed strategy that focuses on restoration, protection, and pollution prevention. Efforts will focus on three types of areas – a semi-rural landscape, a rapidly developing suburban area, and a highly urbanized area.

This approach entails:

- Comprehensive stabilization/restoration of eroded and impaired stream banks and riparian corridors to protect sensitive ecosystems.
- The adoption by all 36 municipalities of new ordinances to protect and preserve natural resources.
- Stormwater retrofits to improve drinking water quality and reduce turbidity.
- Innovative “River-Friendly” pollution prevention programs targeted at golf courses, businesses, and residents.
- Road salt controls to improve water quality and reduce impacts to aquatic life.

“This really validates the work and leadership of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. They are a resource that forward-thinking municipalities can lean on with absolute confidence.”

– Mayor Louise Wilson  
Montgomery Township  
(May 2003)



Downy woodpecker.

## A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Raritan Basin Watershed Management Plan (2003), was developed with the involvement of virtually hundreds of local and regional stakeholders. Working with the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association are the following major partners:

- New Jersey Water Supply Authority
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



Stream restoration projects along the South Branch and Millstone Rivers will improve fish and wildlife habitat and enhance recreation.



Strengthened municipal ordinances will help protect riparian areas and better manage stormwater runoff.



Janssen Pharmaceutic Products, L.P. receives the River-Friendly Award for protecting water quality.



Stream restoration projects will help protect sensitive ecosystems. (Photo by Kathleen Hale)

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## EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHEDS GRANT PROGRAM

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program is a new, competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:  
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>



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