

Campaign to Protect and Restore the Taunton River Watershed

A Homeowner's Guide to Protecting Water Quality in the Taunton River Watershed

A Cleaner Taunton River Begins in Your Own Backyard!

Lawns/
Gardens

Car Care

Pet Waste

Clean
Dishes/
Clean
Streams

Rooftop
Runoff

Household
Hazardous
Waste

Pervious
Surfaces

Stream
Buffers

THE TAUNTON RIVER WATERSHED is a drainage basin that includes all the land over which rain and snowmelt flow to the Taunton River. The Taunton River Watershed Campaign is a partnership of ten organizations working to protect the land and water resources of the watershed. We're working with homeowners, business owners, developers and local decision makers to all do their part. Together, we can all help to protect and restore the Taunton River watershed.

Introduction:

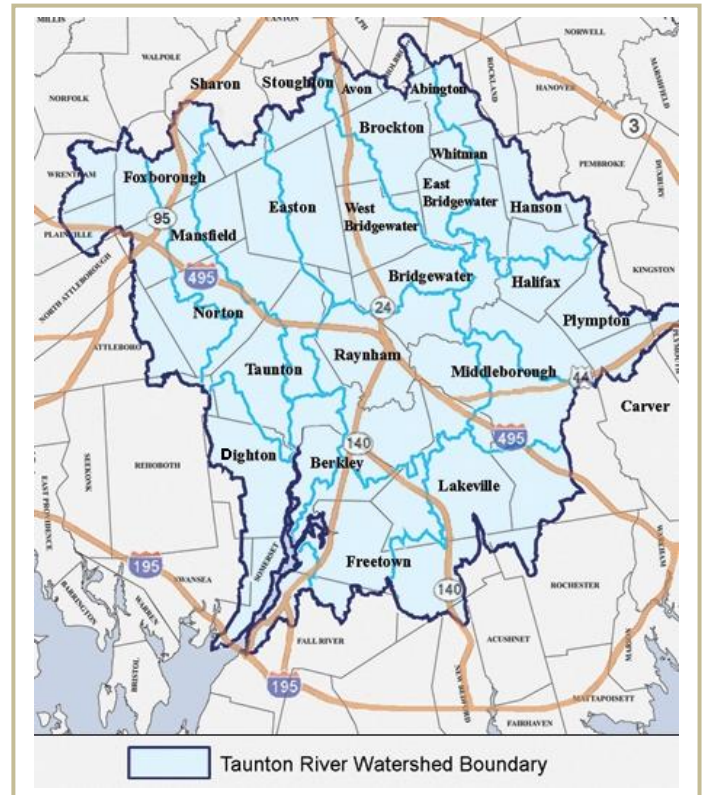
WE DRINK IT, flush it, bathe in it, and much more. Water is an integral part of our every day lives. The water you use to drink, wash, and cook comes from a watershed near your home. Every community, whether it is hilly or flat, urban or rural, is part of a watershed. Ours is the Taunton River's watershed, with many sub-watersheds for the tributaries that drain to it. Within each watershed, all water drains to the lowest point, carrying with it soil particles, oil, road salt, organic materials, pesticides, and fertilizers.

THE TAUNTON AND ITS TRIBUTARIES define our landscapes, yet their beauty hides the fact that beneath the surface, those streams and rivers are not entirely well. Runoff from roads, parking lots, lawns, and farms can carry oil, metals, bacteria, pesticides, and nutrients into streams, making them unhealthy places for critters like fish and aquatic insects to live. High bacterial levels can make it unsafe for humans to swim.

BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS...we know the prescription for the Taunton's health, and it starts with us. By each of us developing simple, water-friendly lifestyle practices right at home we can make a huge difference!

What You Can Do....

This guide is designed to help us reduce our impact on the streams and rivers in the Taunton River watershed. To achieve this we need to develop new yard- and home-care practices that reduce our pollution, storm water volume, and water consumption. To learn how, turn the page.



If you live within the shaded area, you live in the Taunton watershed.

Together, we can all help to protect and restore the Taunton River watershed.

Reducing pollutants: Water running off our lawns, roads, and other surfaces picks up nutrients, bacteria, and chemicals, carries them to stormdrains in the roads, and then deposits them directly into streams in the Taunton watershed. These pollutants can cause a variety of problems for living things — including humans — that live in or interact with our streams. For example, extra nutrients from fertilizer cause too much algae to grow, which robs the water of oxygen and makes it a bad place for fish, snails, and other stream critters to live. If the stream isn't a healthy habitat for these critters, this in turn affects animals that are higher in the food chain, like mammals and birds.

Reducing storm water volume: Another major problem for the streams in the Taunton River watershed is the sheer volume of storm water that flows into them. As the land becomes more and more developed, impervious surfaces like roads, parking lots, driveways and rooftops generate more and more runoff. Because there are fewer and fewer vegetated areas, there is less and less infiltration of rainwater.

Storm water from all parts of the watershed is concentrated in the storm drain system and carried to our streams at very high speeds. When the water finally reaches the streams, it blasts adjacent stream channels, causing them to become wider and deeper. The soil eroded from stream banks during storms smothers aquatic habitat in the Taunton River watershed. Over time, this sediment is carried downstream to Narragansett Bay, where it combines with sediment from other urban streams in the Bay. Sediment is one reason that the Bay is unhealthy.

Reducing water consumption: Water that we consume in the Taunton watershed eventually flows back into the Taunton watershed, either through septic systems, wastewater treatment plants, or untreated into our storm drains. Using less tap water prevents unnecessary chemical treatment and disposal from the treatment plant, and saves you money on your water bill. By not overwatering your yard, you can help prevent too much water — and pollutants — from entering the streams in the watershed.

As you decide which actions to carry out, remember this: The actions you learn about will reduce both pollutants and the volume of storm water entering the stream from your yard.



The Taunton River Watershed Alliance is a non-profit alliance of concerned individuals, businesses and organizations who are dedicated to protecting and restoring the Taunton River watershed, its tributaries, wetlands, floodplains, river corridors and wildlife. For more information contact TRWA advocate Priscilla Chapman at 508-828-1104 or pchapman@massaudubon.org.

This guide is adapted from the Blackstone River Coalition's "Tackling Stormwater series, and from the Watershed Approach to Stream Health (WASH) Project.

