

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Goal for this Project :

Support local decision- making that protects the watershed.

- Create 1998 land use/cover database
- Assess land use cover change
- Forecast future land use
- Facilitate environmentally sound land use practices

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We're on the web!

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WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

There is an integral relationship between water resources, water quality, and land use.

Residential land use - people live by water bodies for aesthetics and recreation;

Agricultural land use - water bodies are often part of a farm;

Industrial land use - water from nearby sources is often used for processing and wastewater discharge.

Water resources are vital to guiding land use decisions at many levels. Certain uses require access to water resources, while others require isolation from them.

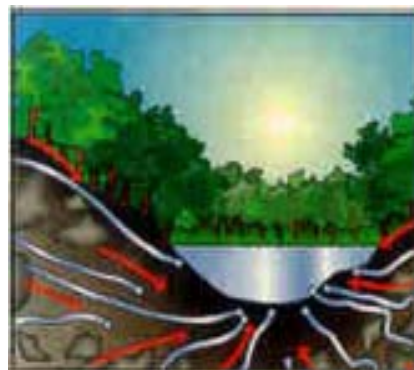
Landowners, whether residential, agricultural, or industrial, are rarely aware of the complexity of the resource, or of the effect their actions may have on it. Every land use activity within a watershed has an effect on the principal water bodies within it. Local planning commissions and legislative bodies do not always recognize the consequences of incremental decision making on water quality. This lack of awareness, coupled with the economic and cultural value of water re-

sources, creates a need for action by local communities.

One of the products to result from the Sustainable Futures Project is the creation of a *Watershed Planning Handbook*. This Handbook was prepared for local units of government within the Muskegon River Watershed to provide guidance on dealing with the complex relationship of land use planning, zoning, and protection of the environment, and more specifically, water quality. It is also intended to provide ideas and suggestions on other education and outreach efforts that go beyond simply passing and enforcing regulations.

The overall objective of this Handbook is to reach those land use decision-makers, including township supervisors, trustees, and managers; city and village mayors, council members and managers; county commissioners; planning commission members at all levels of government; and other community leaders involved in land use decision-making.

Not only do these decision-makers need access to up-



dated information on land use, planning, and zoning techniques, but training on how to use these tools. While the availability of information has obvious implications for future decision-making within local jurisdictions, practical applications may not be apparent to those people in a position to make land use choices. It is important, therefore, that we provide practical examples of how this information and the tools provided can assist decision-makers and ultimately lead to better land use plans, zoning ordinances, and the implementation of innovative land use policies.

THE 3 PARTS TO THE HANDBOOK

Part 1 Watershed Planning: A description and discussion of the general purposes of watershed planning, including the role of the community Master Plan and available regulatory techniques to achieve the objectives of watershed planning.

Part 2 Community Watershed Planning: A “how-to” for involving the public in the watershed planning process, including outreach techniques, education efforts, and participation methods.

Part 3 Planning and Zoning Provisions: Example, or “model” provisions that may be included in local Master Plans, zoning ordinances, or other regulatory instruments.

The Watershed Planning Handbook will be delivered to township officials, planners, and other local decision-makers through a series of regional workshops to be conducted in the month of September 2003.