

# EPA's Healthy Watersheds Initiative



## Protecting our nation's remaining healthy watersheds

### *About Healthy Watersheds*

The Healthy Watersheds Initiative (HWI) works with state and other partners to increase the protection of healthy waters and promote the protection of the chemical, physical and biological integrity of our nation's waters. The HWI acknowledges that our waters and aquatic ecosystems are dynamic systems that are interconnected in the landscape. Many efforts exist to protect independent parts of these ecosystems (e.g. water chemistry of stream segments). The HWI represents a systems approach to protect aquatic ecosystems as whole, interconnected systems that include hydrologic, geomorphic and other integral processes. Protection and restoration of healthy watersheds are cost-effective strategies that prevent future impairments and costly restoration efforts.

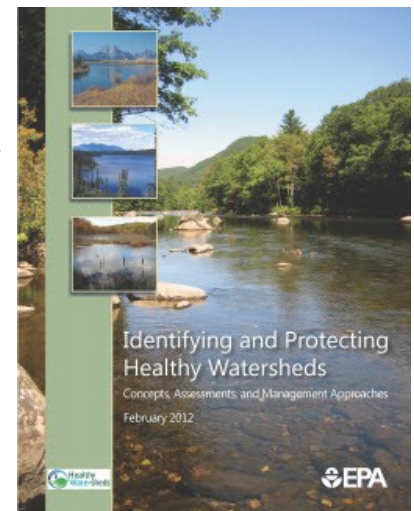
### *A Healthy Watersheds Strategy Approach:*

- *Establishes partnerships to identify and protect healthy watersheds and meet shared goals*
- *Conducts scientifically sound integrated assessments of watershed health to identify healthy watersheds*
- *Strategically protects and restores healthy watersheds*
- *Tracks, maintains and increases the number of healthy watersheds over time*

### *EPA Releases Technical Document: Identifying and Protecting Healthy Watersheds: Concepts, Assessments, and Management Approaches*

This document summarizes many examples of the work states, local governments, and other organizations have done to assess, identify and protect healthy watersheds utilizing a holistic, systems approach. While a systems approach to aquatic ecosystem protection has been recognized for some time by the scientific community, it is only recently that assessment methodologies and technology have been made available to allow for state and watershed level applicability.

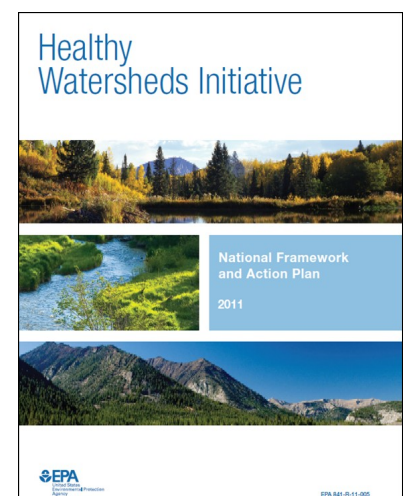
This document provides examples of approaches for assessing components of healthy watersheds, integrated assessment methods and options, examples of management approaches and some assessment tools and data resources. It is intended to be used by state water quality and aquatic resource scientists and managers as a resource for building healthy watersheds programs and strategies to protect and restore aquatic ecosystems.



### *A National Framework and Action Plan*

The Action Plan presents a clear, consistent framework for action, both internally among EPA's own programs and externally in working with our partners. The Action Plan describes the HWI, including its vision, guiding principles, goals and objectives; and presents an implementation framework for actions by EPA headquarters, Regions, and States. This Action Plan is a living document that will guide EPA and our State partner efforts to meet EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 2 Objective of protecting and restoring watersheds and aquatic ecosystems.

These documents and additional useful information is available on our website [www.epa.gov/healthywatersheds](http://www.epa.gov/healthywatersheds)



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