

WELCOME TO

Your Watershed

Elk Creeks Watershed



We all depend on clean water to live.

Water from rainfall, snowmelt, and lawn maintenance flows through our yards, streets, and neighborhoods to creeks and rivers, taking with it a variety of harmful pollutants. Because this land, the water beneath it, and our creeks and rivers are all interconnected, what goes into the ground near our homes affects us and everyone who lives downstream.

What is a watershed?

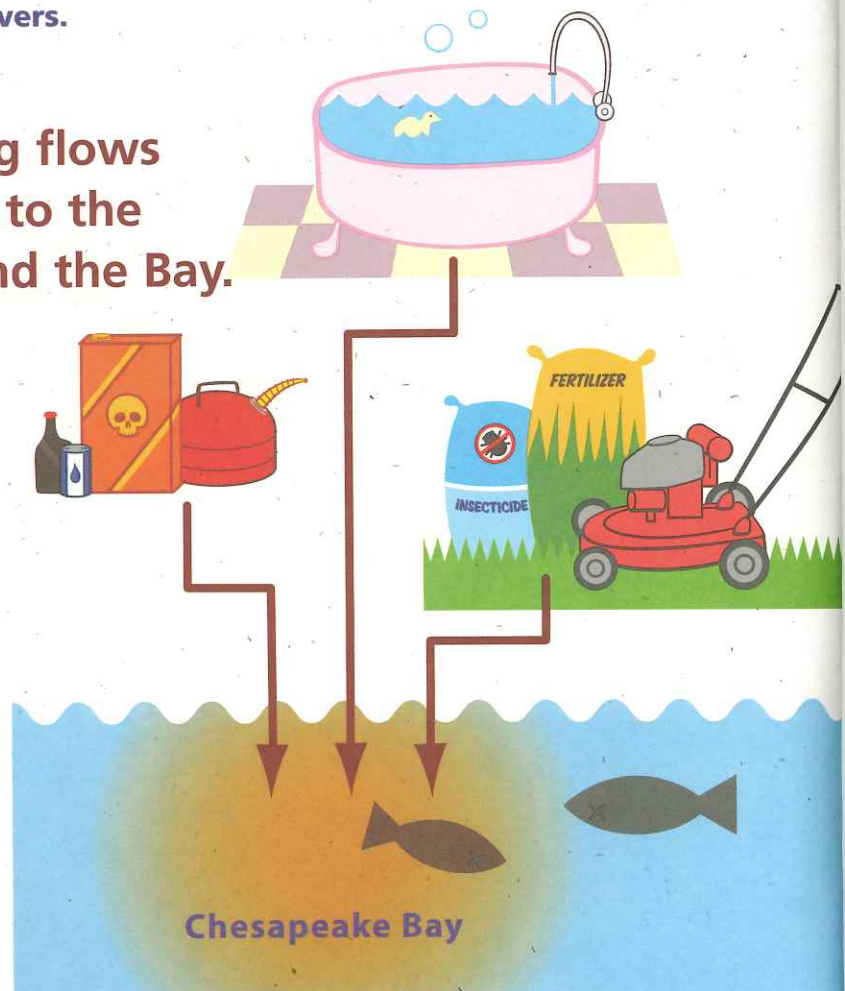
A watershed is the land area from which water flows downhill to form a stream. In our case, the Elk Creeks Watershed is anywhere on the land where water flows to either the Big Elk or the Little Elk. Eventually, much of the water within the Elk Creeks Watershed empties into the Chesapeake Bay and, finally, the Atlantic Ocean.

What can you do to protect it?

There are numerous ways to be good watershed stewards and one approach is to take action right in your own backyard. Use the following sustainable lawn care approaches to make a big difference in the quality and quantity of the Big Elk and the Little Elk creeks. **It is up to us to take care of these streams and their watersheds for the sake of all who use and depend on the creeks and rivers.**

Little Elk Creek, Big Elk Creek, Elkton, the Elk River, and Elk Landing all derive their names from the herds of elk identified in our watershed by early settlers. In December 2006, federal legislation established the Capt. John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

Everything flows downhill to the Creeks and the Bay.



Plant flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees native to the Elk Creeks. Native plants rarely need additional water, fertilizers, or pesticides and can survive weather extremes. They provide wildlife habitat and four-season interest to your home landscape. Native plants hold soil so it does not erode into wetlands and streams where sediment can suffocate fish, frogs, and other important creatures.

Don't spend so much time mowing, #1! Mow your grass but not so short and not so often. Taller grass means deeper roots which mean less watering. Where shade and cover are desired, or in steep or other difficult-to-mow areas, plant native trees and shrubs. Connect the beds so they are easier to mow around.

Don't spend so much time mowing, #2! Replace the native landscape that existed prior to your house by creating a meadow, a woodland grove, or a wetland. Taller vegetated natural areas slow the flow of rainwater and filter pollutants that come from roads and lawns before reaching underground drinking water supplies. Natural areas provide a place for songbirds to live.

Treat your lawn like the ecosystem it is and minimize chemical dependency. Allow clover to grow; it creates its own nitrogen, decreasing fertilizer needs. Let lawn clippings stay or apply them as compost to your lawn. This also reduces the need for fertilizer. Choose a lawn care company that uses natural, organic, and/or slow release products and practices Integrated Pest Management.

You, too, can practice Integrated Pest Management. Monitor pest and weed invasions. Accept the small invasions and control the larger ones with beneficial insects, amphibians, and birds. Weeds can be controlled by corn gluten or other organic materials, and some pests can be scared away with water or noise. Chemicals upset the balance of nature and may cause more harm than good.

Make every raindrop count! Use a rain barrel. Create a rain garden in poorly drained areas. Native wetland plants help to clean the water as it returns to underground drinking water supplies. Rain gardens attract critters that eat unwanted insects.

Get involved! Educate yourself and local decision makers. Contact local officials and insist on sustainable development practices. Join or create an Environmental Advisory Council or similar group in your municipality that can champion these approaches. Volunteer with your school or local environmental organization. Become a member of the Elk Creeks Watershed Association (www.elkwatershed.org), comprised of people who live in the watershed and promote its protection.

For more information about how to implement these ideas, see our resource list on the back page.

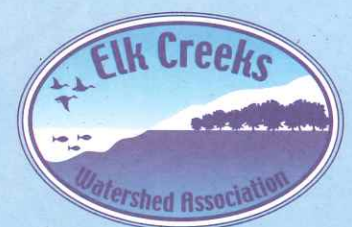


We all have two addresses – a street address and a watershed address.



Look at the map inside to find your watershed address.

Please share our goal of keeping the Elk Creeks Watershed healthy *all the way to the Chesapeake Bay.*





Use the following resource list

for help, advice, and encouragement in making your home and watershed a healthy, happy, and beautiful place to live for generations to come.

Thank you from the Elk Creeks Watershed Association!

www.elkcreekswatersheds.org

P.O. Box 111, Oxford, PA 19363: 484-667-0487

Backyard Habitat National Wildlife Federation: www.nwf.org/backyard/

Watershed Protection The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay: www.allianceforthebay.org
Center for Watershed Protection: www.cwp.org
Chesapeake Bay Foundation: www.cbf.org

Cooperative Extension Service **In Maryland:** www.extension.umd.edu
In Pennsylvania: www.extension.psu.edu

Elk Neck State Forest and Park www.dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/central/elkneck.aspx

Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area:
www.dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/central/fairhill.aspx
Nature Center: www.fairhillnature.org

Historical Resources Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission: www.phmc.pa.gov
Maryland Historical Trust: mht.maryland.gov

Integrated Pest Management <https://extension.psu.edu/ipm>

Rain Gardens www.cbf.org (Search rain gardens)

Runoff, Dumping and Environmental Emergencies **In Maryland:**
Cecil Soil Conservation District: www.cecilsd.com; 410-398-4411
Department of Environmental Protection: 866-633-4686 (866-MDE-GOTO)

In Pennsylvania:
Chester County Conservation District: www.chesco.org/205/Conservation-District;
610-925-49
Department of Environmental Protection: 484-250-5900



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