

Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Watershed Planning and Stream Enhancement:

This list is meant to provide watershed residents with a better understanding of some of the terms that are often used when watershed planning and stream enhancement takes place. It is a collection of definitions from *A Technical Manual for Stream Improvement on Prince Edward Island* (Morell River Management Co-op Inc. March 1994.) and *A Guide to Watershed Planning on Prince Edward Island* (Prince Edward Island Department of Environment, Energy & Forestry, 2007.).

Anoxia/hypoxia:

Depleted oxygen levels, often caused by the decay of aquatic plants, which can kill fish, invertebrates and other aquatic organisms.

Biodiversity:

All plant and animal life and the ecological infrastructure that supports it

Brackish Water

Water with a salinity (salt content) mid-way between fresh and salt water. Estuaries where freshwater meets saltwater are considered to be brackish.

Buffer Zone:

The ecologically sensitive area bordering both sides of a stream, river, or pond

Clearcut:

An area of forest, one hectare or greater in size, where all or most of the trees have been removed

Deadfall:

Fallen trees, usually conifers or evergreens, often crossing the stream

Drainage Basin:

The area in which all the run-off collects to flow through one river. Also known as a catchment or a watershed.

Estuary:

A semi-enclosed body of water, connected to the ocean, where salt water and fresh water from the land mix.

Eutrophic/eutrophication:

The gradual increase and enrichment of an ecosystem by nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus

Forest Cover Type:

The tree species forming a majority of the composition across a given area

Geographic Information System (GIS):

A computer information system that can input, store, manipulate, analyze and display geographically referenced (spatial) data to support land use decision making processes.

Global Positioning System (GPS):

A system of computers, satellites and receivers that calculate, coordinate and determine the factors such as position, altitude, boundaries and other mapping features.

Gradient:

The slope of a river

Head of Tide:

The upper limit of tidal influence on a river

Hydrological Water Cycle:

The cycle by which water passes from the atmosphere onto the earth's surface, into the ground, and back again

Impoundment:

Water contained by a man-made or natural dam (eg. A beaver dam)

Land Conversion:

An area of forest where all of the trees have been removed and where the site will be permanently converted to another use

Meandering:

The process by which a stream winds or snakes its way across a floodplain

Non-Point Source Pollution:

Pollution which arises from many sources (car exhaust, lawn chemicals,) rather just a centralized source (city sewage)

Nutrient Enrichment:

A process which increases nutrient inputs into a water table or aquatic system causing excessive production of organic matter (plant growth) in the aquatic system.

Stewardship:

The act of caring for the land through responsible land ownership and management

Over Enrichment:

A situation which occurs when high concentrations of nutrients (eg. Nitrates, phosphorous) reach watercourses and often cause a dense growth of algae. In some instances, dissolved oxygen can become reduced.

Riparian Zone:

Pertains to the area of land immediately adjacent to a water body

Watershed:

The area of land where runoff and groundwater flows into a specified body of water such as a river, lake, sea, or bay

Watershed Management:

Managing forests, fields and human activities to ensure the ongoing health and supply of the water resource and the people who depend upon it

Wetland:

A lowland area, such as a marsh or swamp that is saturated with moisture, especially when used as a natural habitat for wildlife