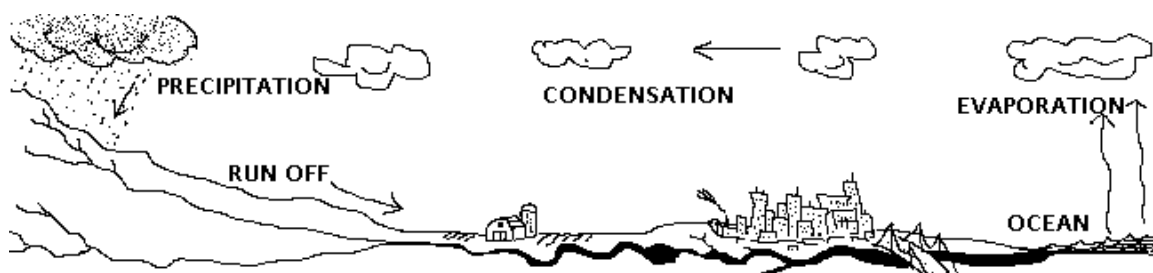


WATERSHEDS and ESTUARIES

- We all live within a watershed.
- A watershed is an area of land where water drains off to a common waterway. You can compare a watershed to a bathtub or sink, with the sink or tub being the land area. Eventually all the water goes down the drain.
- It's important to understand that no matter where you live you are linked to the ocean via the watershed, and that things you do at home (litter, fertilizer, recycle) impact the health of our oceans.
- Nutrients, sediments and pollutants are all picked up along the way and become suspended in the water as the water moves toward the ocean.
- The term "non-point source pollution" is used to describe pollution in a body of water that cannot be traced back to a specific point, or source in the watershed. Lawn fertilizer can be an example of this type of pollution. Rain may wash excess fertilizer into local waterways where, because of the accumulation of introduced nutrients, there is a dense algal bloom that limits sunlight to other aquatic plants, effectively killing them and upsetting the local system.
- Water runs off of impervious surfaces, like parking lots, and quickly carries potential pollutants to local waterways. If the same area were undeveloped the soil and plant life would slow the movement of a potential pollutant and allow the water to soak into the ground.
- Pollutants traveling through a watershed can get trapped in a marsh (like Horseshoe Cove) among the plants and in the soil where sunlight and bacteria are more likely to break them down.
- Sandy Hook Bay is an estuarine environment fed by water from many different sources including the Shrewsbury and Navesink Rivers to the south, Raritan River to the west, and the Hudson, East, Passaic, and Hackensack Rivers to the north. These sources of water (and more) meet and mix with bays and the Atlantic Ocean around Sandy Hook.
- A prime habitat for wildlife is an estuary; where rivers mix with the sea. The collective impact of all the incoming water from its local watershed, an estuary is a location greatly effected by what is happening up stream.



A **WATERSHED** is where water flows in an area of land from higher elevations to lower elevations, carrying nutrients, sediments, and/or pollutants.

Watershed around Sandy Hook, approximately 25 mile radius

