

## Everything Flows to the Bay

The entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed encompasses 64,000 square miles, the largest watershed on the eastern seaboard. The District of Columbia and parts of including New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia drain to the Bay. The contribution of each source may be small, but the collective effect of millions of small contributions can create the potential for serious environmental problems for the Bay. Each of us can help minimize the potential for such problems.

The responsibility of all landowners, large and small, is to understand the concept of living in a watershed, where **everyone's contribution has an impact**. That impact can be either positive or negative. Two common examples of attitudes that can contribute to negative impacts are: "The little bit of pollution from my property won't make a difference"; or, "Those other guys (developers, farmers, industry, etc.) are causing all the problems." In order to make a positive difference, all landowners must accept responsibility for proper and sustainable management of their land, even if it is just a small backyard.

Through the efforts of thousands of people and the expenditure of several billion dollars over the last quarter century, the condition of the Bay has begun to slowly improve from its critically degraded state. However, much more needs to be done by everyone in order to continue our progress toward a healthy, stable ecosystem. Every resident in the Chesapeake Bay watershed can do something to help.



*Image credit:*  
*Chesapeake Bay Watershed*  
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## How Do Pollutants Get In the Water?

Water bodies become polluted through two sources: point sources and non-point sources. A point source is a concentrated discharge. For example, point sources include pollution through a pipe from an industrial operation or a sewage treatment plant. A non-point source is stormwater runoff from non-specific sources such as parking lots, lawns, and agricultural fields. Over the last 30 years, many advances have been made in technology to reduce and control point source pollution. Point sources are easier to monitor because they come from identified sources. Polluted runoff, however, can result from stormwater flowing over large areas, making it substantially more difficult to locate and control the source of the pollutants picked up by runoff.