



# **Key EPA Internet-Based Tools for Watershed Management**

**In-Depth Level Course Tutorial**

## **Section One: Introduction to the Watershed Plan Builder Tool**

**Full document available at**

**<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/wacademy/epatools/>**

**Assessment and Watershed Protection Division  
Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

# 1. Introduction to the Watershed Plan Builder Tool

- 1.1 Open the [Watershed Planning](#) site.

The Watershed Plan Builder Tool (Plan Builder) is a Web-based watershed plan development tool that promotes a consistent approach to watershed planning.

The Plan Builder leads users through a series of questions to produce a **customized watershed plan outline** that is populated with relevant data links drawing from EPA water programs, regional and state information, stakeholder contacts, and narrative sections needed to complete a watershed plan.

## What is a watershed plan?

A watershed plan is a document that results from the watershed planning process and provides assessment and management information for a geographically defined watershed, including the analyses, actions, participants and resources related to development and implementation of the plan. The plan provides a road map to help you identify the problems, set goals and implement solutions in your watershed. EPA has recommended developing comprehensive watershed plans, particularly for impaired waterbodies.

- 1.2 Click the [Watershed Plan Builder](#) link.

From here, you move through a series of pages prompting information about the watershed such as reasons for developing a watershed plan, current land use activities and pollutants of concern. The answers provided are used to customize the plan outline output to include information relevant only to that watershed.

- 1.3 Scroll down and click the **Enter the Plan Builder** button.

Start the process by entering contact information. This is stored so that work can be retrieved at a later date as the watershed plan continues to be developed. While developing the plan, the saved project can be updated with new information, or the customized outline can be re-created to see what new tools and information have been added.

- 1.4 On the left-hand sidebar, click [Examples](#).

- 1.5 Scroll down to look at the various types of information on the **Corsica River Watershed** that are accounted for in the plan.

The Plan Builder produces an outline with the different types of information you see in the example.

- 1.6 On the left-hand sidebar, click [Watershed Planning Process](#).

This page shows the steps of the planning process. Each step has more detailed instructions to help you prepare the watershed plan sections.



- 1.7 Click [Characterize Watersheds](#).

At each step, look on the right-hand side to see an inset navigation box for the different subsections under that step. Notice the resources that are listed below the line: EPA, state and tribal programs, and sections of the plan outline.

**More info on Characterize the Watershed**

- [Gather Existing Data and Create a Watershed Inventory](#)
- [Identify Data Gaps and Collect Additional Data if Needed](#)
- [Analyze Data](#)
- [Identify Causes and Sources of Pollution That Need to Be Controlled](#)
- [Estimate Pollutant Loads](#)
- [Results and Next Steps](#)

---

[EPA Programs](#)  
[State and Tribal Programs](#)  
[Plan Outline](#)  
[Plan Examples](#)

- 1.8 On the left-hand sidebar, click [Analysis Tools and Technical Assistance](#).

- 1.9 Click [Analysis Tools](#) from the left-hand menu for a collection of links that might be useful in watershed analysis.

This course covers how to use many of the existing EPA tools that are linked from this framework.