When the temperatures soar, our thoughts turn to water: cool showers, iced drinks, chilly rivers. When I think of water, I am reminded of our responsibilities to one another.

Scientists remind us that everyone lives in a watershed, which is another way of saying that nothing is done alone. Small headwater streams begin in the upper reaches of a watershed - for the Mahicannituck, or Hudson River, that’s Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondack Mountains. Headwater streams combine with other tributaries, gaining in size and momentum as they merge, emptying into a river eventually destined for the ocean.

What we do has an impact on everyone downstream. We can decide to act without thought for what the water carries away. Or we can act with a spirit of care for the collective, mindful of the watery threads that weave us all together.

Using the word watershed is another way of marking a turning point in a course of action, a way of dividing time into “before” and “after.” I’ve never understood the reason for using the word this way: water never truly goes away, though it appears in different forms. Water is in constant motion, altering its course and changing direction when needed.

Conservation is much the same.

The prevailing wisdom was once that discussions about land protection were only open to a select few with advanced degrees and scientific knowledge. Projects like the Taghkanic Headwaters Conservation Plan, an effort driven by volunteer stakeholders, upend that notion. Together, stakeholders identified goals and strategies for protecting the Upper Taghkanic Headwaters. Together, they’re spreading that message through their communities and encouraging others to get involved. Visit taghkanicheadwaters.org to learn more.

For a long time, many also believed the only land that “mattered” for conservation was inaccessible and pristine wilderness. We now know better - urban habitats are important for wildlife, water quality, and igniting a love of nature in community members. CLC and the Friends of Oakdale Lake have received $100,000 from the Dept. of Environmental Conservation’s Environmental Justice grant program. These funds will help to improve the water quality at Oakdale Lake by removing weeds from the Lake’s surface, increasing air flow through the water, and testing the use of barley straw to remove extra nutrients from the water. Working together, we can create a more swimmable, healthier lake that benefits the human and wildlife members of our community.

We flow onward towards our goals.

Troy Weldy
President
how you can help

slow it down

Live near a stream? Do your part to improve water quality by providing ways for the flow of water to slow down and be filtered through plants or wetlands. Plant trees and shrubs near streambanks, let trees that fall in the water remain there, and never fill in a wetland.

use less

Taking care of a lawn or garden? Read the labels on pesticides and fertilizers carefully, and avoid using these products if it may rain within 48 hours. Even better: avoid using them entirely, and seek out solutions like compost or manually removing insects from plants.

show up

Get involved! You can volunteer with the efforts featured here through the Friends of Oakdale Lake and the Taghkanic Headwaters Conservation Plan. You can also join the Roe Jan Watershed Community, Trout Unlimited, or DEC’s Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators Project.
Keep swimming.

Your gift to the Annual Fund supports CLC’s work with partners to protect important lands and waters, provide educational opportunities, and support individuals interested in conservation-minded land management.

Visit cctrust.org/give to make your gift today.