



The Lower Grand River Watershed

What is a Watershed? A watershed is an area from which all precipitation flows to a single stream or set of streams. For example, the total area drained by the Grand River constitutes its watershed.

How Large is the Lower Grand River Watershed? The Lower Grand River Watershed includes all of the subwatersheds in the Grand River Watershed west of and including the Thornapple and Flat River Watersheds; it is approximately 3,020 square miles and includes the 10 counties outlined in red below.



Did you know there was once a Native American gathering camp for mussel collection along the Grand River dated from 100 B.C. to 1300 A.D.?

Did you know that the Grand River was used to generate power for Grand Rapids' first furniture factory and provide transport for logs from hard and soft wood forests upstream?



Did you know that the Grand River was once called "Owashtenong-sipi" (River from a Far Away Place) and that the Ottawa and Ojibway tribes called it "O-wah-to-nong"?

Land Use in the Lower Grand River Watershed:



- Land use in the Lower Grand River Watershed is 53% agricultural.



Agricultural Land may be broadly defined as land used primarily for production of farm commodities.



- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has categorized the riparian habitat of the Lower Grand River as 25 – 50% forested.



Forest land are lands that are at least 16.7 percent stocked (approximately 25% crown cover) by trees of any size, or formerly having such tree cover, and not currently developed for non-forest use.



- Urban land use within the watershed is concentrated in the major metropolitan area of Grand Rapids, which now has a population of over 1 million.



Urban and built-up land comprises areas of intensive land use with much of the land covered by structures. Included in this category are cities, towns, villages, strip developments along highways, transportation, power, and communications facilities, and such isolated units as mills, mines, quarries, shopping centers, and institutions.

Some things YOU can do to help reduce the watershed pollutants entering the Grand River:

Maintain and upgrade septic systems regularly

Compost yard waste

Dispose of pesticides and fertilizers as its label directs



Clean-up pet waste

Apply pesticides as a last resort

Recycle used motor oil

Recycle hazardous chemical and household waste through a licensed contractor or recycling agency