

**League of Women Voters of Mountain Lakes  
Streams and Watershed Consensus  
April 2004**

The League of Women Voters of Mountain Lakes acknowledged in 2002 that the Borough's streams are important to our ecosystem and require protection beyond our current ordinances. Our borough currently monitors the health of lake water; however, no comprehensive program exists to monitor the water before it enters our lakes or as it leaves our lakes and enters other municipalities.

The League supports creating a comprehensive watershed management plan to encompass all water that falls within the Borough's borders. This plan should include:

- Testing and monitoring our streams for water health and biodiversity,
- Reviewing Borough ordinances regarding streams and watershed, and enhancing them where needed,
- Providing an accurate stream map,
- Programs to educate our citizens about our streams and watershed, and
- Stewardship programs to encourage citizen involvement in streams protection.

Our natural resources are all interconnected and require our protection. For example, the woodland understory damage caused in part by deer has increased runoff. The watershed management plan should be comprehensive, taking into account other efforts that affect water quality.

**Testing our streams** – The League recommends that the Borough of Mountain Lakes implement a stream-monitoring program. A stream monitoring program would help maintain our aquatic biodiversity and enable the borough to adequately address issues of water quality before the water enters our lakes system.

**Borough Ordinances** – The League strongly supports the creation of a riparian buffer ordinance. The League acknowledges that new regulations are forthcoming from the NJDEP and Mountain Lakes aspires to be a model for progressive environmental protection.

**Citizen education** – There is support for a multi-faceted education campaign to include disseminating riparian buffer information to homeowners and landscapers, offering enrichment courses in our school system and listing do's and don'ts in the Home and School Association Bulletin. Information could be made available on the Borough's website to educate citizens. Educational efforts should be aimed at all citizens in the Borough, not just those whose properties border water.

**Stewardship programs** – The League supports the formation of a stewardship program based on models from other organizations. Naming streams, adopting streams, and a student-initiated watchdog program were mentioned. Briarcliff might want to offer an environmental stewardship PEP (Personal Enrichment Program) course for its students.

The League supports a joint-committee approach to stream and watershed management. Several committees and commissions in the Borough would be able to send representatives to a joint meeting to discuss how the watershed management plan should be initiated. The League recommends that Borough Council appoint one committee to be the point of contact for stream and watershed issues.