

Clean Water Initiative

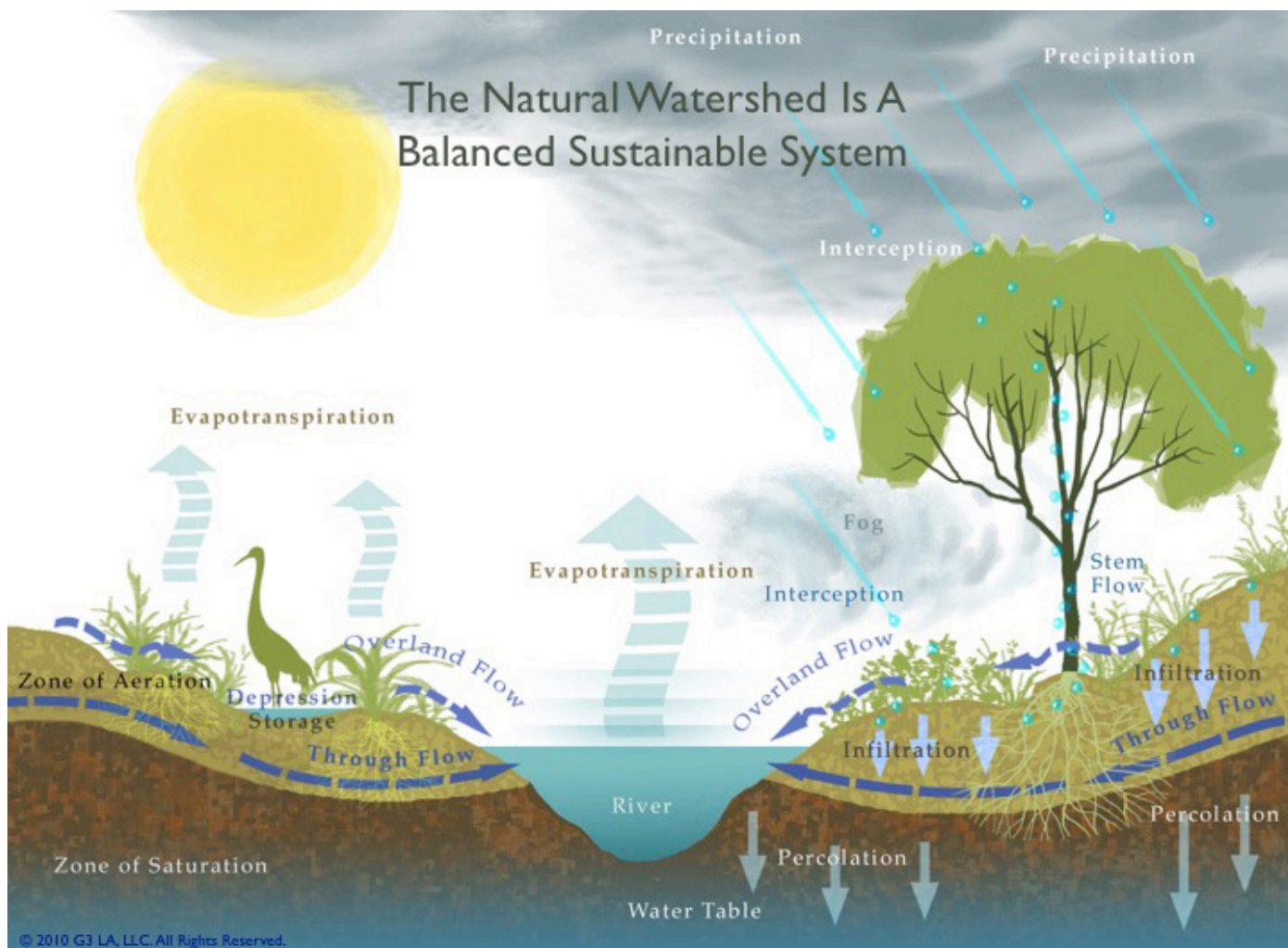
The goal of Surfrider's Clean Water Initiative is to reduce ocean pollution so it is safe to surf, swim and play in the ocean. Surfrider chapters and activists are building awareness of local water pollution problems and advocating for solutions that can protect local water supplies and prevent pollution from reaching the ocean.

Chapters support the Clean Water Initiative by engaging with their communities through clean water programs: [Blue Water Task Force](#) (BWTF), [Ocean Friendly Gardens](#) (OFG) & [Rise Above Plastics](#) (RAP). They also run campaigns against projects that will cause pollution and advocate for wise management of our land and water resources.



What is the problem?

The urbanization of our coasts has altered and polluted the natural water cycle. In undeveloped, natural areas, rainfall is absorbed by soil and plants, percolates through the soil to underground aquifers or flows into local streams. Rooftops, pavement and other impervious surfaces in urban and residential areas prevent rain from soaking into the ground and instead direct polluted runoff straight towards the ocean. At the same time, we are wasting valuable freshwater by using it once, mixing it with waste, and then discharging it, partially treated, into the ocean. This is threatening the long-term security of our water supply and polluting our coastal waters. Watch the short film [The Cycle of Insanity](#) to learn more.



A *watershed* is a geographic area in which all sources of water, including rainfall, snow melt, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and ground water, all drain to a common surface water body, generally the ocean in coastal areas.

Protecting Clean Water throughout the Watershed

The Surfrider Foundation advocates for solutions that can restore the water cycle and natural functions of coastal ecosystems to protect local water supplies and prevent pollution from reaching our ocean, waves and beaches. This watershed-based approach also helps support resilient and healthy coastal communities and economies.



1 Water Quality Monitoring

Testing the water at the beach lets us know where it is safe to swim and surf, and helps identify pollution problems so they can be fixed.

2 Ocean Friendly Gardens

Applying CPR - Conservation, Permeability and Retention - to your garden conserves water, creates habitat for wildlife, filters and reduces runoff from your landscape, and absorbs carbon dioxide.

3 Green Streets

Capturing rainwater in vegetated areas next to streets and paved parking lots allows water to soak into the ground, which recharges groundwater supplies, reduces flooding and prevents polluted runoff from reaching the beach and ocean.

4 Reuse & Recycle Water

Recycling wastewater reduces ocean discharge from sewage treatment plants while creating a local, reliable and safe fresh water supply. Greywater from our homes can also be re-used for yard irrigation.

5 Watershed Restoration

Natural rivers and creeks maintain stream flows for wildlife and transport sand to our beaches. Wetlands are natural sponges, filtering out pollution and reducing flooding by helping water soak into the ground for our use later.