

# Manasquan River Watershed

The Manasquan River watershed encompasses approximately 82 square miles and hosts a river that flows for nearly 23 miles to the Atlantic Ocean. The upper reaches of the watershed find their way into Freehold and Freehold Borough. Along the way, numerous tributaries feed the River such as Mingamahone Brook in Earle, Timber Swamp Brook in Howell, Sawmill Creek in Brielle, and Stockton Lake in Manasquan. These tributaries and the mainstem of the River are influenced by ocean tides west of the Garden State Parkway crossing which is nearly seven miles from the Manasquan inlet.

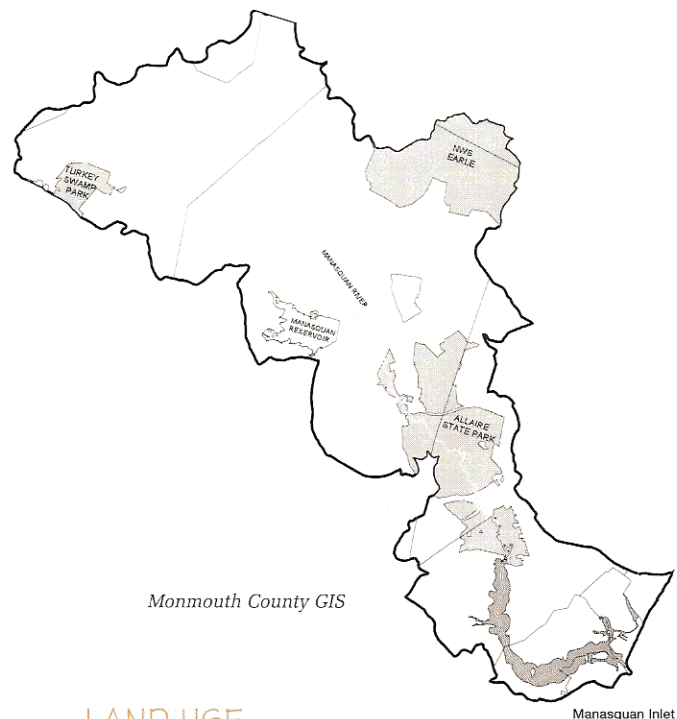
Manasquan River Near Inlet



Shaun O'Rourke

The Manasquan watershed, the land area that drains into the Manasquan River, is very large compared to the receiving water body. The Manasquan River is only 3% of the total area within the watershed which leaves the River vulnerable to many land based uses. Anything placed, spilled, sprayed, drained or buried in the watershed drainage area may eventually end up in the River having a significant cumulative effect.

Manasquan Watershed



## LAND USE

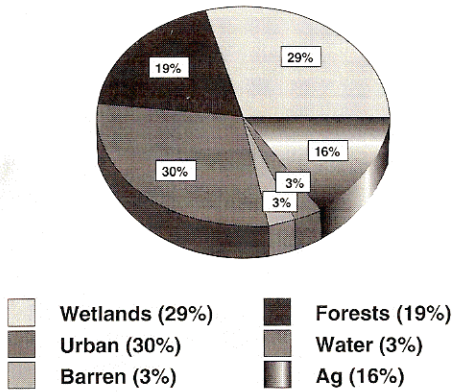
Land uses within the watershed determine the types and amounts of chemicals entering the River. The watershed is almost divided evenly between natural landscape and development. Upland forest and wetlands together make up 48% of the land area and Urban and Agricultural uses make up 46% of the land area. The remaining area is comprised of the River itself and barren land which is classified as disturbed vacant land or transitional land.



Manasquan  
Watershed  
Management  
Group

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### Watershed Land Cover



### EARLY SETTLEMENT

The Manasquan River watershed is rich in history and cultural diversity. The area was first settled by the Paleo-Indians about 11,000 years ago or 9,000 B.C. in an area just south of Squankum Yellowbrook Road in Howell Township. This is one of the oldest settlement areas located in eastern North America.

Thousands of years later, the Lenape Indians discovered the endless resources in the Manasquan watershed. During summer months, Lenape would migrate to the shore from the Delaware River Valley and northern New Jersey to fish, farm, and barter with Dutch settlers and other Indians. The Lenape would gather mollusks and other marine delicacies to be dried and smoked for winter use.

Settlers moved into the area to take advantage of the resources found in the region and were engaged in logging, brickmaking, mining, fishing, and the bog iron industry. These various industries led to the development of hamlets and towns throughout the region. As these various operations expanded, the need for improved transportation was necessary. A series of Lenape trails were used as the basis for the earliest roadways such as County Route 537, New Jersey Route 9 and eventually the Old Squan Bridge in 1768.

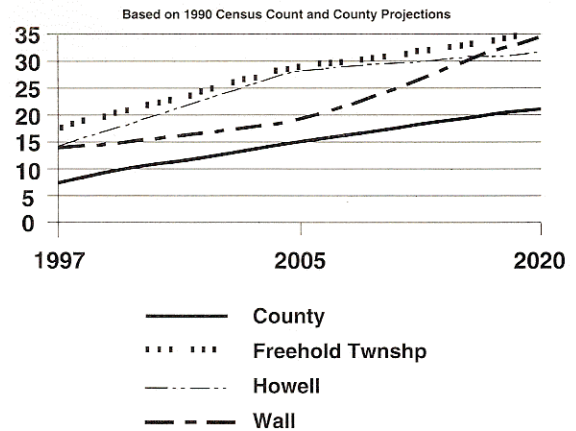
As development continued in the region during the 1800's, more activity was found along the banks of the Manasquan River. Grist mills, saw mills, boatyards, taverns, villages, and churches could be found along the River providing

facilities for visitors from the region to begin touring the area. Railroad lines, already exporting marl, recognized the significance of tourism and offered summer excursions to people seeking recreation on the coast. In a short time, the Manasquan area blossomed with the construction of hotels, bathing pavilions, and other infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the summer visitors.

### GROWTH IN THE WATERSHED

County-wide population projections for Monmouth County show a steady increase carrying us into the next millennium. Most towns in the Manasquan watershed will experience less than a 10% increase in population by the year 2020, but several others will experience significant increases by that time. Based on the 1990 Census count, Freehold Township, Howell, and Wall are all expecting more than a 30% increase in population by the year 2020. Given the size of these towns, a 30 percent increase in population will significantly impact the Manasquan watershed. Being prepared for these changes will be more important than ever if water quality goals are to be achieved.

### Percent Change in Population



### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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