

YOUR ROLE

Watershed residents have a key role to play in protecting and restoring Green's Creek and Brown's River. Here are some simple ways that you can help protect water quality in your watershed:

- 1) Have your onsite wastewater treatment system (cesspool or septic tank) inspected, pumped out and maintained regularly.
- 2) Do not dump unused chemicals or yard waste into curbside storm sewers, drains, or cesspools.
- 3) Reduce or eliminate the use of lawn or garden chemicals when possible. Consider using organic lawn care products and slow-release nitrogen fertilizers when absolutely necessary.
- 4) Wash cars and boats using non-toxic biodegradable cleaners.
- 5) Do not dump aquarium plants into water bodies. Aquatic vegetation, such as fanwort (cabomba), may be invasive.
- 6) Maintain and restore vegetation buffers of native plants along riverbanks to provide wildlife habitat, filter pollutants and protect against erosion.
- 7) Pet owners should use "pooper scoopers" to pick up after their pets and dispose waste in proper receptacles.
- 8) Empty vessel sanitary waste water holding tanks at pump-out facilities.
- 9) Collect lawn and garden clippings for compost in your own yard.
- 10) Maintain vehicles to avoid leaking fluids.
- 11) Sweep (don't hose) driveways and other paved areas around the home.

Watershed residents are also encouraged to participate in stewardship activities organized by local watershed protection groups, such as Keep Islip Clean. Call 224-2627 for more information on Keep Islip Clean.

Contact the Town of Islip Department of Environmental Control at 224-2627 for information on seasonally scheduled waste pickups for yard waste, lumber, appliances, and household chemicals.



**Town of Islip
Department of Planning and Development
655 Main Street
Islip, New York 11751**

Town of Islip

Green's Creek and Brown's River Watershed Management Plan



**A Resident's Guide to
Effective Stewardship of the
Green's Creek and Brown's
River
Watersheds**

YOUR TRIBUTARIES

Green's Creek and Brown's River are located in the Town of Islip, within the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve. These two tributaries flow from their headwaters north of Montauk Highway into the Great South Bay.

Tributaries are important because they provide:

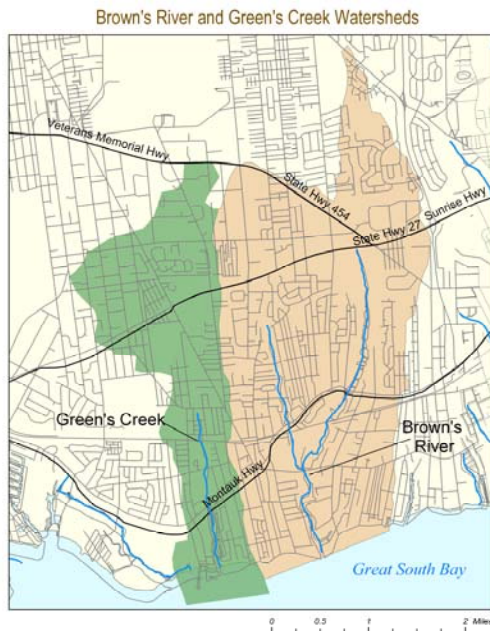
- **Habitat:** Freshwater from tributaries mixes with saltwater from the ocean, creating an ecologically diverse and productive environment in the estuary. Tributaries and their shorelines are important habitat for a variety of species. Ducks, muskrats, and largemouth bass are some of the species that can be found in Green's Creek and Brown's River. Wetlands within the watersheds contain plant species, such as cattails and sassafras, which support a variety of wildlife.
- **Recreation:** Tributaries provide opportunities for paddling, fishing, birding, and observing nature. They act as natural connectors for boaters and paddlers to maritime centers and the bay. Marinas along tidal portions of Brown's River and Green's Creek provide access to bay and ocean waters.
- **Drainage:** Tributaries function to absorb floodwaters and naturally drain upland surface runoff and groundwater into the bay.



WATERSHED IMPACTS

The specific area of land that drains into a particular body of water, such as a tributary, is called a **watershed**. Land-based human activities in the watersheds of Green's Creek and Brown's River can cause significant environmental problems including:

- **Pollution:** Stormwater runoff from roads, parking lots and construction activity carries pollutants such as petroleum products, contaminated sediments, lawn chemicals, and nutrients into tributaries and the bay.
- **Invasive Species:** Introduction of non-native and invasive terrestrial and aquatic vegetation, such as phragmites and curly pondweed, affects habitat quality and impairs growth of native species such as low marsh cordgrass.
- **Barriers:** Dams, culverts and other structures can disrupt the natural flow and temperature of water in tributaries, impairing habitat. Barriers can also prevent fish from accessing their natural habitat.
- **Shoreline hardening:** Additional bulkheads, rock riprap, and other structures built along the banks of tributaries eliminate habitat and natural stream buffers.
- **Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems:** Failing cesspools and septic systems can pollute shallow groundwater which seeps into the tributaries.



MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Town of Islip, with assistance from a local watershed advisory committee, prepared a watershed management plan for Green's Creek and Brown's River. The first of its kind in the South Shore Estuary, the plan provides a framework for public and private actions to protect and improve water quality and habitat in the watersheds, including the following recommendations for actions by local governments and watershed residents:

- Stormwater runoff improvement projects
- Acquisition of land for preservation
- Assessment of barriers to fish passage
- Management of non-native and invasive vegetation
- Tidal wetland restoration
- Animal waste control
- Street sweeping program
- Creation of interpretive exhibits and signs
- Installation of boat pump-out stations
- Public education efforts

The Town of Islip and the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council are working in partnership with community groups and watershed residents to implement these actions, and need your help!

For more information about the Green's Creek and Brown's River Watershed Management Plan, please contact the Town of Islip Planning Department at 224-5450. The plan is available on the Town of Islip website at www.townofislip-ny.gov

For information about the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve, please visit www.estuary.cog.ny.us

Town of Islip



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