

The Watershed Institute Values Statement

The Watershed Institute holds the values described below in all aspects of what we do at our Watershed Center and Reserve as well as in our work in the surrounding communities in central New Jersey and beyond.

We believe that clean water is a fundamental human right. In working to advance this goal, we

Welcome our visitors, members, volunteers, and staff with enthusiasm, kindness and respect.

Strive to create a place at the Watershed Center and Reserve where everyone, from diverse backgrounds – culture, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, and physical and mental ability – feels comfortable and safe exploring and enjoying natural spaces.

Pledge to work for clean water and a healthy environment, including in communities that have been unjustly affected by systematic racism and environmental pollution. Environmental justice will be achieved when all people enjoy strong and effective protections from environmental and health hazards, access to green spaces, and equal access to the decision-making processes for creating healthy environments in which to live, learn, and work. We will work in partnership with other organizations towards this goal.

Provide environmental education, with a focus on water, which instills wonder about the natural world and its biodiversity. We hope that by teaching others about the interconnectedness of all living things, we will help participants embrace diversity and biodiversity in their own communities.

Steward our 950-acre reserve with the goal of preserving the land and water so it continues to provide healthy habitats for many generations to come. It will also provide a natural place of refuge and sanctuary for all visitors. We recognize that the land and water now under our care is the traditional and ancestral territory of the Leni-Lenape. We pay respect to Lenape peoples past, present, and future and their continuing presence in the homeland and throughout the Lenape diaspora.

Involve people from our local communities in important scientific data collection to help us monitor the health of our waterways, watersheds and plant and animal habitats.

Empower people to advocate for clean and healthy water and the conservation of watersheds and nature in the towns and regions where they live.

Listen to our local communities so we can be better partners working towards shared environmental goals. We recognize that too often the voices of low income and communities of color are not heard.

Acknowledge that human behaviors are responsible for the recent changes in our planet's climate and loss of biodiversity. We will strive to create authentic partnerships to support communities that are and will become disproportionately more impacted by climate change. We will continue to educate people of all ages about how to protect and preserve the environment and how they can spread truthful information in their communities.