

Will your community

WALK THE WATERSHED WAY?

a ten-year covenanted exploration of
faith-based earth-honoring lifestyle change

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**Whether we know it or not, we all live in watersheds
—bounded natural ecosystems that are our home
places.**

These places sustain us.

We depend upon them for our health.

**Those who walk the watershed way know this, and
relate to their natural home places in ways both
reciprocal and reverential:**

Watershed as interconnected parish

Watershed as interdependent community

Watershed as life-giving cradle

Watershed as endangered nest

Watershed as local economy

Watershed as life-change laboratory

Watershed as wise teacher

Watershed as cherished cathedral

Watershed as perennial investment

Watershed as circle of care

Watershed as sacred trust

Watershed as shared home

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THOSE WHO WALK THE WATERSHED WAY...

- **Strive to get their basic needs met from their bioregions**—food, shelter, energy, identity and community
- **Modify their wants to fit their finite environments**, rather than always modifying the environment to fit their infinite wants
- **See themselves as one species among many**, caring for a connected web of both human and non-human neighbors
- **Embody the practice “do unto others downstream as you would have them do unto you.”** This applies to downstream *geographically* as well as *chronologically*—communities downriver and future generations that have no choice but to inherit the byproducts and consequences of our lifestyle today.
- **Are on a ten-year path of continual examination and improvement**, deepening their watershed way daily by taking the next brave step

Todd Wynward is an author, educator, small-scale farmer, wilderness trip leader and Mennonite minister for watershed discipleship affiliated with Albuquerque Mennonite Church. He has been engaged in education reform and social change movements for twenty years. He and his wife Peg founded a wilderness-based public charter school in 2001 and are now creating TILT, an incubator for intentional living in Taos, NM. His 2015 book, *Rewilding the Way: Break Free to Follow an Untamed God*, is published by Herald Press.



This emerging Watershed Way initiative is a new strand within the Mennonite Creation Care Network.

FOUR PRACTICES THAT DEFINE A COVENANTED "WATERSHED WAY" GROUP:

1: Meeting. 2: Learning. 3: Sharing. 4: Committing.

- **Meeting**
 - *Once a month* with your home group. Similar to other 12-step recovery groups, we who walk the watershed way admit we are addicted to earth-destroying habits such as petroleum dependence, dis-placing living, wastefulness and overconsumption. We meet regularly to share victories, confess struggles, name addictions, receive forgiveness, and get the affirmation and support we need to walk another step on our journey toward earth-honoring lifeways personal and social transformation.
 - *Once a year* with several other home groups in your state or region. This is an annual "gathering of the clans," sharing common struggles, noting changes in the world around us, building regional strength, nurturing new home groups in your region, and sharing best practices as you move into a new year.
 - *Every two years* with other state/regional hubs at the MCUSA national convention
- **Learning**
 - *Continuing education.* Choose common education for your home group, and sustain it. This could be discussions with First Peoples in your region, field trips and observational outings, rich course curriculum like MCCN's *Every Creature Singing*, Ched Myers' website resources on watersheddiscipleship.org, or books like *Creation Care: Keepers of the Earth*, *Active Hope: How To Face The Mess We're In Without Going Crazy*, *Soil and Sacrament*, *Rewilding the Way: Break Free To Follow An Untamed God*, *Sacred Ecology*, and *Love God, Heal Earth*.
- **Sharing**
 - *Every six months.* Each home group shares news with their regional coordinator at least twice a year; the regional coordinator, in turn, shares this news with the larger Watershed Way community on mennocreationcare.org. For an example, see Todd Wynward's Summer 2015 *Currents in the Watershed* from Mountain States conference.
- **Committing**
 - *as an individual.* When you commit to walk the watershed way, you commit to a multi-year pledge of your choice—something that significantly transforms your pocketbook, your calendar and your lifestyle. Examples include:
 - A 25/75/100 Bioregional Food Covenant—"By the year 2025, I will source 75% of my food from within 100 miles."
 - Personal Paris Pledge—"By 2030 I will reduce my own carbon emissions by 50%, even as I expect leaders, nations, and corporations to commit to the same"--when they meet through the UN in Paris for climate talks.
 - *as a home group.* Your home group commits to a watershed-wide initiative of their choice that is relational, local, public and prophetic. Examples include:
 - Brother's Keeper CSA—your farm share *and* a share for another family in greater need
 - Sister Watershed Covenant—linking your watershed to another in deeper distress
 - Participation in voluntary Gas Tax initiatives, or join in the Nature Conservancy's Water Fund—downriver urbanites tithe to ensure rural upriver watershed health
 - Facilitating a Local Farm Conversion—a church works with a regional farm to convert it from mono-crop industrial agriculture into a locally-responsive farm focusing on diverse crops, environmental health and food justice
 - Solar Panels on Churches—converting from coal-based electricity with the help of Interfaith Power & Light
 - Consistent riparian stewardship efforts—"adopt-a-watershed"
 - Take Back the Tap—keeping public water potable, affordable, and accessible for all; working in your community, defying the consumer trend to buy designer bottled water
 - Involving your town in the Just Transition movement—a global phenomenon that helps regions transition gracefully toward a localized economy that is energy-lean, locally-sourced, community-rich, and nature-restoring