

WHERE IN THE WATERSHED?

A watershed is an area that drains to a common waterway, such as a stream, lake, river or wetland. No matter where you live, you live in a watershed! Our individual actions can directly affect the health of water resources. Water resources are managed by either a watershed district or watershed management organization, which are special units of local government that work together to solve and prevent water-related problems. Determining which watershed you live in can help you learn how you get your water and where it goes after you use it.

Outcomes

- Participants will determine which watershed they live in.
- Participants will learn which waterways are connected to their watershed.
- Participants will learn actions to protect water resources.

Audience

Youth (ages 10+), adults

Time

Variable

Concepts

- A watershed is an area that drains to a common waterway such as a stream, lake, river, or wetland.
- Understanding which watershed you live in can help you learn how you get water and what happens after you use it.
- Our actions can directly impact the health of water resources.

Supplies

- Construction paper
- Markers, paints or crayons
- Ruler
- Watershed map from the Appendix



WHERE IN THE WATERSHED?

Preparation

Gather enough supplies by asking participants to bring their own or soliciting supplies a few weeks before doing the activity.

Procedure

- Use the watershed map in the Appendix to identify which watershed each participant lives in.
- Have participants identify the lakes, streams and rivers in your watershed. Analyze how the water resources are connected.
- Have participants think about how the water that falls on the property of your home, school, or organization travels to nearby lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands.
- Read about what individuals and families can do to conserve water and reduce pollution in the Background Section of this chapter. Think about both small and large actions they can take. Some examples:
 - Small: don't rake grass clippings and leaves into the street, clean up after your pets, etc.
 - Large: replace turf with native plants, plant a rain garden, etc.
- Encourage participants to commit to changes they want to make and write these on their watershed picture.
- Display the picture on the refrigerator or another "public" place.
- Make a plan to track the participants' commitments and encourage them to continue to take action to protect water resources.

Discussion questions

- What watershed do you live in? Did you know this prior to the activity?
- Why is it important for participants to know what watershed they live in?
- How can the behavior of people living in one watershed affect the people in another watershed?
- What are other actions you could take to protect water resources? (look at the "10 things you can do to improve Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams" brochure)

Additional activity ideas

Watershed map

With the watershed map from the Appendix and a set of pushpins, have each participant pin where they live on the map to show which watershed everyone lives in.

Identify where water flows

Walk around your home, school, organization or workplace and identify sources of water and where the water flows on the property. Look for gutters, driveways, sidewalks, grass, gardens and other areas that water might flow through. Then, look for stormdrains or nearby water bodies that water flows into.

Sandbox watershed

Allow children in your program to create hills and mountains in the sand play area. Use a hose with a sprinkler attachment or a watering can to "rain" on

the sandbox. Watch how the water creates rivers and streams through the sand and collects at the lowest point.

Watershed game

The Watershed Game helps students understand connections between land use, clean water and their community. Working in teams, students apply practices, plans, and policies to decrease water pollution while juggling financial resources. Successful teams reduce water pollution without going broke. Hennepin County staff is available to facilitate the watershed game with classrooms or youth and community groups or to train educators in using the game. Contact Stacey Lijewski at stacey.lijewski@hennepin.us or 612-348-9938 for more information.

Resources

Handout: 10 things you can do to improve Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams brochure