



What is a Watershed?

Hint: You're standing on one right now!

A watershed is...

A watershed is an area of land where streams, rainfall, and snowmelt flow to a common outlet—such as a creek, river, lake, bay, or ocean. Water begins at the highest points of the landscape and moves downhill, traveling through forests, hills, valleys, farms, cities, wetlands, streams, soils, and before reaching its final destination.

Watersheds connect everything around us. The water we drink, the food we grow, the wildlife we protect, and the places we live in all depend on healthy watersheds. What happens upstream—such as wildfires or land-use changes—directly affects people and habitats. Pollution and soil erosion degrades water quality that downstream cities depend on. A watershed works like a giant funnel where all water flows downhill to the same place. Everyone lives in a watershed, and everyone can have a role in keeping it healthy.

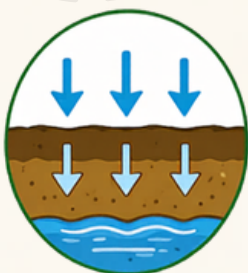


Water takes many paths...

Every drop has a journey



Some water flows over the land as runoff into streams and rivers.



Some water seeps underground to recharge aquifers.



Some water is stored in lakes, ponds, or puddles (delayed runoff).



Some water is held in plants and returned to the air through evapotranspiration.



Some water evaporates back to the atmosphere.

To Be WISER About Water!