



Create a Watershed

Explore how watersheds work by making a model!

A watershed is an area of land where all water flows to a specific stream, river, or lake, and from there to the ocean.

Materials Needed:

White paper (one-sided scrap paper works well), piece of recycled cardboard (about 10 inches by 10 inches), tape, markers, spray bottle (or eyedropper)

Instructions:

Step 1: Gently crumple a sheet of paper. Crumple it loosely, not tightly wadded together.



Step 2: Uncrumple the paper and place it on the cardboard piece. Tape the edges of the paper on the cardboard.

Step 3: Imagine the paper is a landscape, with mountains, valleys, and plains. If it rained on this landscape, where would the water go? Use a marker to draw where you think the rivers, lakes, and oceans are. *Hint:* Start from the top of a mountain and pretend to be a drop of water slowly moving downhill.



Step 4: Test your predictions! Use the spray bottle to mist the paper. Observe where the water goes. Did it flow where you expected it to? Try misting lightly to represent a gentle rainfall, or spraying more heavily to mimic a storm!

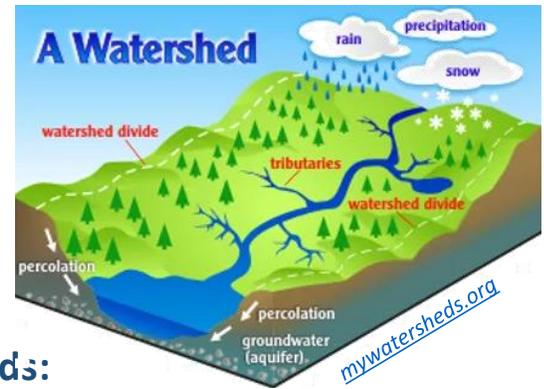


Step 5: Let your watershed dry!

Activity adapted from Oregon Museum of Science and Industry:
oms.edu/sites/all/FTP/files/expeditionnw/4.E.1.Crumple.pdf

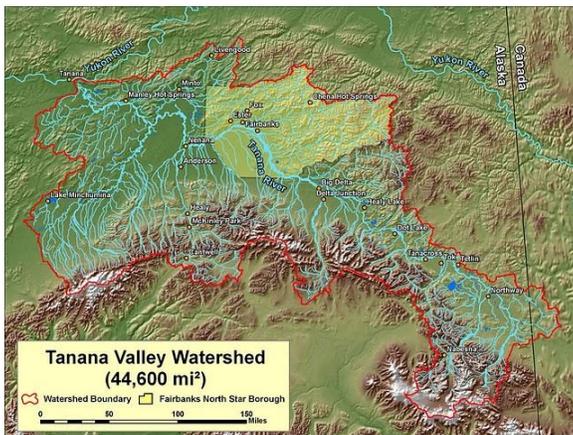
What is a Watershed?

A **watershed** is an area of land where rainwater and snowmelt flows to a central point like a lake, river, or stream, and from there to the ocean. The boundary of a watershed is determined by the landscape, such as hills or mountain ridges. Every piece of land on Earth is in a watershed.



Watch a short video to learn more about watersheds:

pbslearningmedia.org/resource/ket09.sci.ess.water.wshed/what-is-a-watershed/



Tanana Valley Watershed Association: www.tvwatershed.org

Larger watersheds contain many smaller watersheds. Fairbanks is in the Chena River watershed, which is part of the Tanana River watershed, which flows into the Yukon River watershed. The Yukon River watershed is the fourth largest in North America, at about 300,000 square miles!

Which watershed do YOU live in? Go to this site to find out:

water.usgs.gov/wsc/reg/19.html

(Hint: Hold the mouse over the map to see the name of each watershed.)

Healthy watersheds are important for a healthy environment. They provide habitat for plants and animals; water for drinking, irrigation, and transportation; and opportunities for recreation, including swimming, boating, and fishing. We all need to help take care of our watershed.

Go to this site to discover ways YOU can help protect watersheds:

www.cwp.org/watershed101/