

Where's My Watershed?

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the location of local water supplies including rivers, streams, and lakes that form a watershed.

Students also learn that all streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands eventually flow into the ocean.

MATERIALS

- ❑ local topographic maps that show waterways, elevations, towns, and cities. (Travel or tourist maps also work.)
- ❑ yellow, green, blue, red, and black markers or crayons

BACKGROUND

A *watershed* is a land area into which all water drains. Many small watersheds come together to create *drainage basins*. As smaller streams meet larger rivers they join together and eventually flow into the oceans through wetlands or bays or directly flow into the ocean.



ACTION

1. Distribute copies of the maps. Help students find your own town or city and color a red dot there.
2. Have students look around the area for lakes, streams, and rivers. Color lakes blue, streams yellow, and larger rivers green. Be sure to trace stream "branches" to the very beginning.
3. By looking at the colored areas, decide where your watershed is and circle it in red. Where is your town located within the watershed?
4. By looking at their highlighted maps, can students tell which way the water flows? How can they tell? (Hint: smaller streams flow into larger streams.) If your map covers enough area, can students see where their town's/city's small streams meet big rivers? Can they see where the rivers meet wetlands, bays, or oceans? How many city, county, state, or even national borders does your watershed cross?

DEEPER DEPTHS

Have students use the internet to find out what kinds of debris washes down a watershed. Where will this eventually end up? What kinds of plants and animals could be affected by the debris?