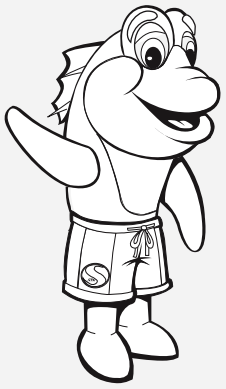

We All Live in a Watershed

When storm water flows over the ground, it picks up pollution and carries it to the closest body of water. Land areas that "shed" water to a specific river or lake are called *watersheds.*

Smaller watersheds connect to bigger watersheds. This means the activity in your watershed will eventually impact other watersheds too. Can activities in your own backyard really affect our streams, rivers and oceans? **Let's create a watershed model to find out!**

You will need:

- 2 sheets of paper, 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Use paper from the recycling bin, if possible.
- A spray bottle filled with water.
- Blue, green, red and brown non–permanent markers. Markers should run when wet.
- A tray or a place that can get wet, such as a bathtub or grass area.

Instructions:

1. Take a sheet of paper and crumple it up in your hands.
2. Open the paper, but do not flatten it. The high places are hills, the low places are valleys, and the wrinkles are streams and rivers.
3. Draw with a blue marker where you think the streams and rivers would be.
4. Lay the paper somewhere you can get wet and use the spray bottle to make it "rain" on the watershed, enough to make the water flow down the hills.
5. Observe. Did you draw the streams or rivers in the right places? This model shows how the land "sheds" water into streams, rivers and lakes. Now, let's add some pollutants that are typically found in our yards and streets.
6. Repeat steps 1-3 with another piece of paper.
7. Use a green marker to draw a forest along the tops of the hills, a brown marker to illustrate exposed stream bank at the water's edge, and a red marker to draw houses and businesses in town. The green symbolizes grass clipping and leaves, the brown represents soil, and the red represents oil, litter, fertilizer, pesticide, and other chemicals.
8. Place the paper somewhere you can get wet and use the spray bottle to make it "rain" on the watershed. You should see the colors running into the blue streams. In real life, these streams and rivers would lead to other streams and rivers eventually depositing into the ocean!

Where did the pollutants go in your experiment and where would they eventually end up if this were a real watershed? How can we all help to prevent pollution from entering our watershed?