

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake. Watersheds can have hills or mountains or be nearly flat. They can have farmland, rangeland, small towns and big cities. Parts of your watershed may be so rough, rocky or marshy that they're suited only for certain trees, plants and wildlife.

How do watersheds work?

The landscape is made up of many interconnected basins, or watersheds. Within each watershed, all water runs to the lowest point – a stream, river or lake. On its way, water travels over the surface and across the farm fields, forest land, suburban lawns, and city streets, or it seeps into the soil and travels as ground water. Large watersheds like the ones for the Mississippi River, Columbia River and Chesapeake Bay are made up of many smaller watersheds across several states.

