

# Learning about Stormwater Pollution!

In this activity, you will create your own watershed to learn about stormwater pollution. First, there are some terms to learn. Discuss the following terms with your child.

## What is a watershed?

Separated by high points of land, a watershed is the land surrounding a body of water that collects stormwater runoff and drains it into a certain body of water. Everyone lives in a watershed. For most of us in Blount County, we live in the Little River Watershed.

## What is stormwater?

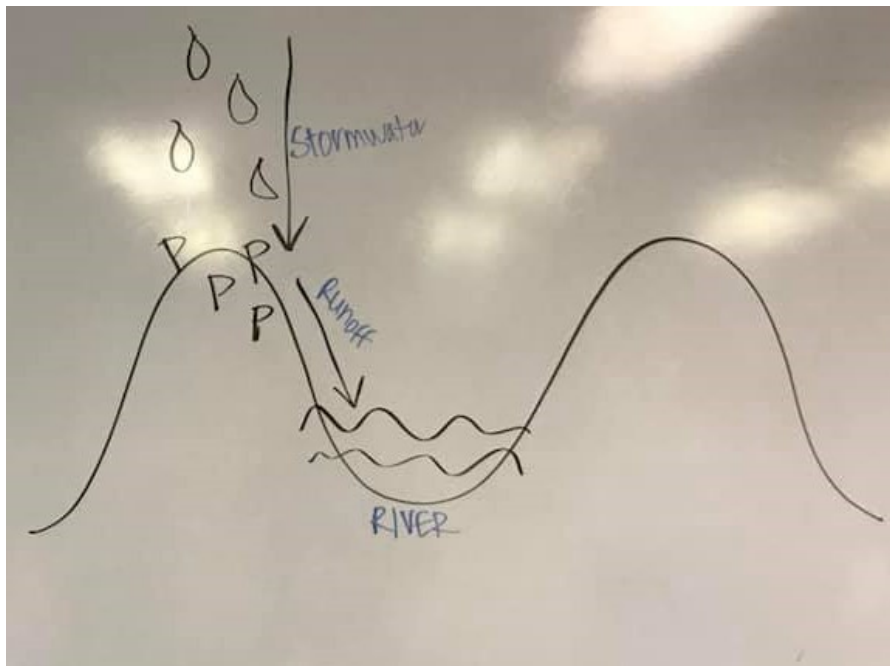
Stormwater is all water that comes from the sky, such as rain and snow.

## What is stormwater pollution?

Stormwater pollution is the polluted runoff gathered by stormwater. As stormwater travels down our land, it carries the pollutants with it, ultimately ending up in the Little River. Remember, all water is connected! The pollution in Blount County may first be to the Little River, but can eventually drain into bigger rivers, bays, and eventually the ocean.

## What is a storm drain?

A storm drain is the drain we see on our streets and parking lots that collect stormwater. These drains lead right to our rivers and lakes. Remember, **ONLY RAIN IN THE STORM DRAIN!**



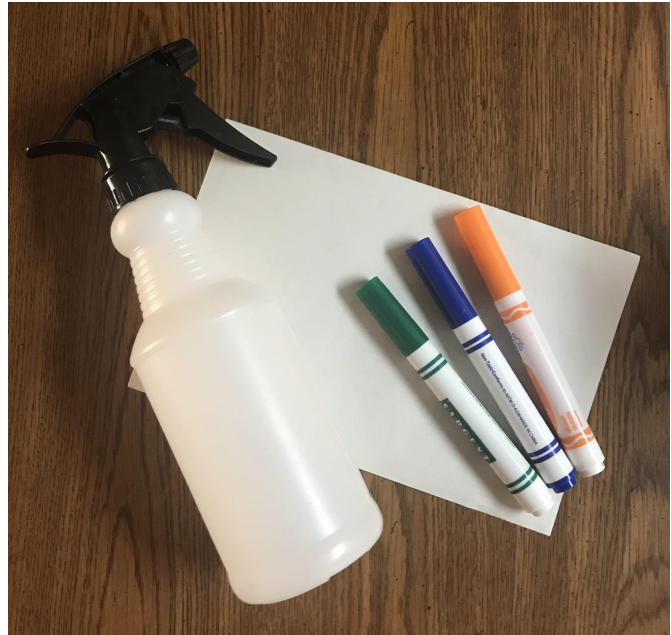
# Making your own watershed

Activity overview: Using three simple materials, you will make their own watershed to visually observe the physical characteristics of land and the effects of stormwater runoff.

Time required: 10 min

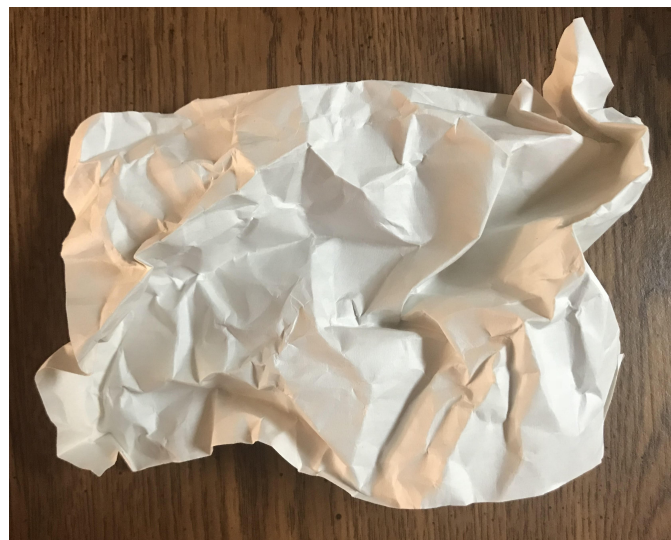
Materials needed:

- ½ sheet of printer or scrap paper
- Washable markers, 3 different colors
- Spray bottle filled with water

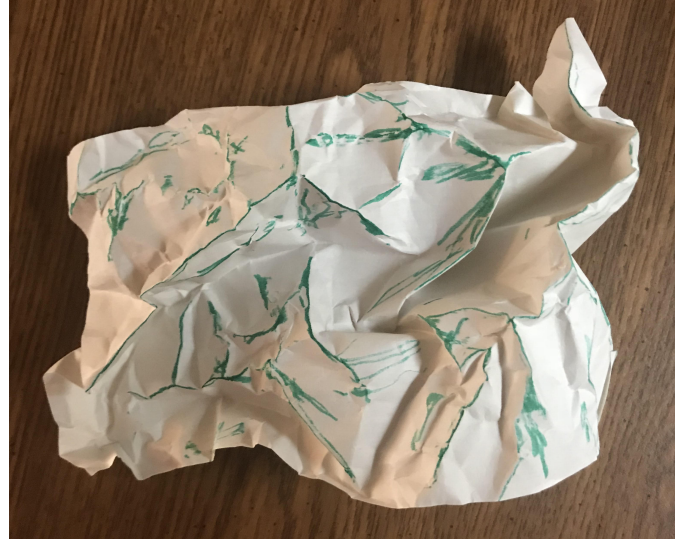


Step 1: Grab your piece of paper and wad it into a ball.

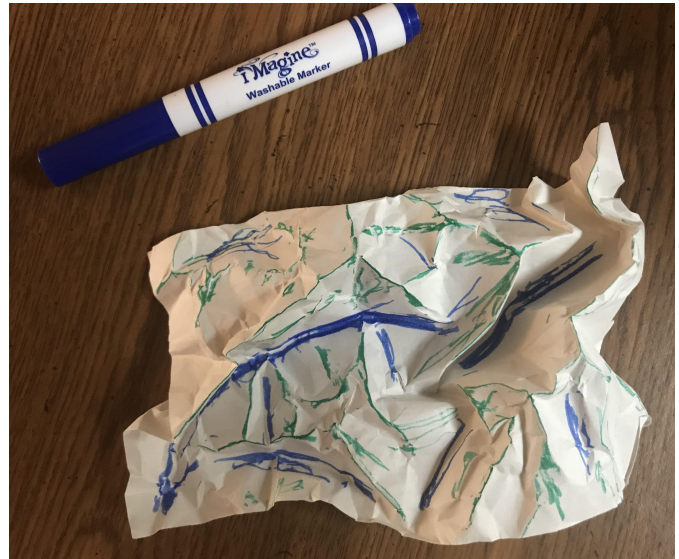
Step 2: Gently pull apart the wad of paper, making sure not to pull it flat. The end result should resemble uneven terrain. This is your watershed.



Step 3: Grabbing one color marker, mark the high points of the watershed. We will call these the mountains. There is no right or wrong way to do this, so use your imagination!



Step 4: Grabbing a different color marker, mark the low parts of the watershed. We will call these the valleys, lakes, and rivers. Rivers can also be drawn down the mountains!



Step 5: Grabbing the last color marker, make marks for pollution all over the watershed.

What could these pollutants be?  
Examples include litter, oil, fertilizer, hazardous chemicals, soap, sediment, or animal waste.





Step 6: Time to create a rainstorm!  
Holding the spray bottle 6-8 inches above your watershed, spray a few sprays times or until the colors start to run.



Discussion:

What is happening to the watershed after the rainstorm?

What does all of the colors running together represent?



All of the colors in your watershed have run together. This represents stormwater runoff. Stormwater runs down our land, carrying pollutants with it. It is very important to understand stormwater pollution and prevent it!



What can we do to prevent stormwater pollution? Some ideas include:

- Not dumping anything down the storm drain
- Picking up after your pet
- Not overusing fertilizers and pesticides
- Disposing of waste properly, no dumping!
- Washing your car at a car wash or in the grass, not the driveway
- Throwing your trash away in the trash can rather than littering
- Covering your loads and outdoor trash cans
- Making sure your car is not leaking oil
- Properly removing spills from pavement using absorption methods rather than washing the spill away

If you have any questions, please contact Keep Blount Beautiful at [keepblount@gmail.com](mailto:keepblount@gmail.com).

We'd love to see your watersheds! You can send pictures to [keepblount@gmail.com](mailto:keepblount@gmail.com).