

## Illinois River

# Watershed ... what?

The Illinois Watershed is in:

- A. Mississippi
  - B. Benton, Washington and Crawford counties in Arkansas and Adair, Delaware and Sequoyah counties in Oklahoma.
  - C. Washington, Crawford and Sebastian counties in Arkansas and Adair, Leflore and Cherokee counties in Oklahoma.
- Answer: B

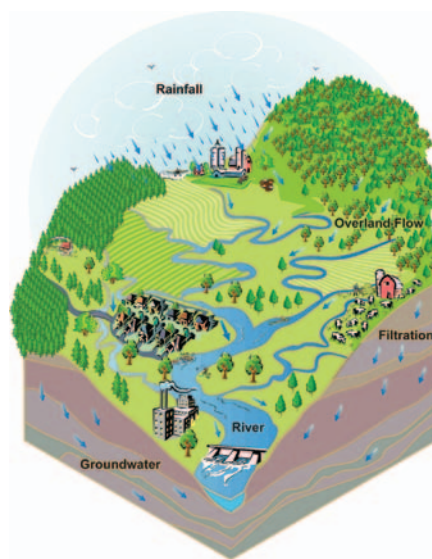
## Have you ever heard of a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that receives rainfall that drains to a river, lake or wetland. You're sitting in a watershed right now!

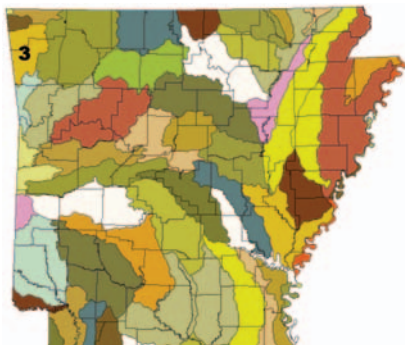
Land use activities can impact watershed water quality because precipitation causes stormwater runoff to wash contaminants (such as soil, fertilizers, bacteria, etc.) into watershed water resources. If you live in Northwest Arkansas or Northeast Oklahoma, you may have impacted the Illinois River Watershed and didn't know it. You've definitely contributed to a watershed, somewhere, in some way.

It is important to think about the potential impact of your decisions and actions. For example, when washing your car in the driveway, the dirty, soapy wash water flows untreated through a storm drain into a nearby creek. It is better to

wash the car on your lawn so the water will filter down through the soil or use a commercial car wash where the water is treated. Simple actions like testing soils to apply fertilizers precisely, fixing automotive leaks, picking up pet waste and retaining soil on construction sites can help protect water quality and aquatic wildlife.



## Watershed Mini Lab



Of the 58 watersheds in Arkansas, the Illinois River watershed was listed third on Arkansas' 1998 Unified Watershed Assessment and Restoration Priorities.

### Materials

Large tub  
Newspapers  
Cotton balls/tissue  
White trash bags  
Spray bottle  
Food coloring (two colors)  
Water  
Notebook paper

### Procedures

1. Wad up newspaper pages and place in tub.
2. Put the tub and crumpled newspaper into a white trash bag.

3. Push the bag down in between the newspaper "mountains."
4. Place two drops of food coloring into a spray bottle full of water.
5. Spray water onto your "landform" and determine where the watersheds are.
6. Place food coloring
7. Place the cotton ball in the landform.
8. Spray the landform.

### Questions

1. What does the spraying represent?
2. What does the newspaper represent?
3. How many watersheds did your landform have?
4. What does the cotton ball represent?

**Analyze this activity for the Illinois Watershed.**

