

Illinois River

The Watershed Game!

Cut out the game pieces below for the game board to the right.

<p>Your dog pooped in the yard and you didn't pick it up. Move back two spaces!</p>	<p>You washed your car on the grass instead of the driveway. Move forward one space. Great idea!</p>	<p>You dumped your old car oil along your fence. Move to the eddy and skip two turns.</p>
<p>While taking a walk, you pick up litter along the road. Move forward one space. !</p>	<p>You build a rain garden instead of a cement drainage ditch. Move forward one space.</p>	<p>You plant native plants (Sycamore, <i>Platanus occidentalis</i>) along a tributary. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You apply fertilizers precisely. Move forward 1 space.</p>	<p>You get your soil tested at the local county Cooperative Extension Service office. Move ahead 1 space.</p>	<p>You take your hazardous materials to a Household Hazardous Materials collection site. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You begin a group, such as a Stream Team, to monitor a stream in your area. Ahead 1 space!</p>	<p>You throw away plastic, paper or cans that could be recycled. Move back 1 space.</p>	<p>Your town decides to build a HUGE parking lot and you suggest permeable pavement. Move ahead 1.</p>
<p>You see a pipe dripping a strange substance into Mud Creek and you report it! Ahead 2.</p>	<p>Your friend's car leaks fluids and you don't encourage her to get it fixed. Move back 1 space.</p>	<p>You learn about your city's stormwater runoff regulations. Way to go. Ahead 1.</p>
<p>Your Mom buys you a membership to the Illinois River Watershed Partnership. Ahead 1. Congrats!</p>	<p>For his birthday, you buy your friend a rain barrel for his house. Move ahead 1. What a cool friend you are!</p>	<p>You convince your Dad to compost the yard clippings. Way to go! Ahead 1.</p>
<p>Your Mom asks you to drain the swimming pool and you drain it into the ditch. Back 2 spaces!</p>	<p>You campaign for a City Council person who supports watershed protection. Ahead 1 space!</p>	<p>The meds you were taking expired and you dump them in the toilet instead of the trash. Move back 1.</p>
<p>You help your neighbor plant native Redbud and oak trees in his lawn. Move ahead 1.</p>	<p>You write to your Representative and oppose the damming of a tributary in your watershed. Ahead 2.</p>	<p>You convince your Grandpa to build a pond, keeping his cattle out of the Illinois River. Ahead 1!</p>
<p>Your family maintains the riparian area (vegetation) along the stream on your land. Ahead 1!</p>	<p>You witness illegal gravel mining taking place on Clabber Creek and you don't report it! Skip a turn.</p>	<p>While filling your jet-ski with gasoline, some spills into the lake and makes an oil "sheen." Move back 1.</p>
<p>You get tired of your refrigerator and dump it in a ditch. Move back 2 spaces. Try to recycle it!</p>	<p>Your car dies and you can't sell it so you push it into a sinkhole caused by karst topography. Back 1.</p>	<p>You vote to protect watersheds and their ecosystems. Take another turn.</p>

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.