



Topic: Watersheds

Optimal Age Groups: Intermediate & Senior

Where does the water in our lakes come from? We may be inclined to say rivers, streams, rain, or even snow (and we would be – partially – right). But only a small amount of rain falls directly into our lakes, so how does the rest of it end up there? The answer is gravity! Watersheds are areas of land where all surface water and groundwater drains to the same location.

But how do watersheds work and why are they important?

In this session, we will talk about the different routes that water can take in order to reach a reservoir. We will also discuss the relationship between water quality and the health of our watersheds. Topics of inquiry include: What watershed are we a part of right now? What is a drainage basin? What is the difference between porosity and permeability? How are open and closed watersheds different? How does water travel underground? And more!

Students will then get to put their knowledge to the test by working in teams to build a healthy watershed. Each group will get a “project budget” which will allow them to purchase materials that they may need. Is your watershed up to the task of filtering dirty water? Or will an unhealthy watershed lead to poor water quality? Students will work together to plan, create, and test their prototype. The group that can produce the cleanest water gets bragging rights!