

Make Your Own Watershed Activity



What is a watershed? A watershed is an area of land that is higher than sea level that collects rainwater. In a watershed, the shape of the land directs the flow of rainwater into different bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers, and the ocean. Hardened structures such as parking lots, rooftops, and driveways prevent rain from soaking into the ground and instead flow into our waterways carrying all of the trash, pet waste, oil, chemicals, and other pollutants with it. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate stormwater runoff in a watershed.



List of Supplies:

- White printer paper
- Markers, pencils, or crayons
 - *Optional: toy cars, houses, farm animals, etc.*
- Food coloring
 - *Optional: mixture of cocoa powder and water to represent oil sludge*
- Spray bottle
- Water

Grab a parent and start with a safe surface to perform experiment. Outside works great, just make sure to use environmentally friendly products.

Instructions:

1. Crumple up your paper into a ball, then unfold it.
2. Your wrinkled piece of paper represents the hills and valleys in our watershed.
3. At one end of your paper draw the body of water that can represent either the ocean, sound, riverbank, or lake.
4. On the other end of the paper, create your landscape.
5. Decorate your paper watershed however you like! Feel free to use any coloring supplies and artistic style to draw houses and trees, or swap something out with any miniature toys, houses, trees, farm animals or other such toys. The choice is yours!
6. When you're satisfied with your watershed, angle your paper so that the land portion of your paper is higher than your body of water. A binder, Tupperware, doorstop, or bookends work great to prop up your paper.

7. Next, place a few drops of food coloring and/or cocoa mixture on your watershed. These drops represent pollutants such as fertilizer, pesticides, pet waste, oil, bacteria and debris that exist in our watersheds.
8. Once you've polluted your watershed, fill the spray bottle with water and make it rain over your watershed!
9. Watch what happens. Where does the water flow? What does that water look like now? What happened to all the pollutants?
10. How can we prevent these pollutants from getting in our water? Hint:
 - a. Enable the rain to soak into the ground
 - b. Restore and protect wetlands! (they absorb runoff)
11. Can't wait to see what you create!
12. **Show off your paper watershed activity on social media and tag us @nccoastlfed**



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