

Using Nature to Meet Educational Standards

SCIENCE

Fifth Grade

Activity #1:

Materials: piece of paper (one per group), pencil, colored pencils or markers

What is a watershed? Is it a small shack with water in it? NO!! A watershed is the area where water flows to the lowest point. Watershed can be small (a backyard) or large (the Missouri River watershed covering all or part of 8 states).

As water falls on the ground, it either soaks into the soil or runs-off over the surface of the ground. When water runs-off, it always flows downhill to the lowest point.

Divide into groups of two. Each group will need a sheet of paper and a pencil. Head outside to the outdoor classroom or school grounds.

Using your paper and pencil, draw a map of the outdoor classroom or school grounds. Make note of the building, fence, sidewalks, mulch/plant areas, and other identifiable items.

Next, start looking at the topography. Make a point on your map that marks the highest spot in the classroom or school grounds. Make another spot on your map for the lowest point in the outdoor classroom or school grounds (look for where the water pools). Make topographic lines between the highest spot and lowest spot showing how the ground is sloping.

Draw arrows on your graph indicating how water would flow from the highest point to the lowest point (it may or may not be a straight line!).

Answer the following questions:

What would happen if someone spilled a chemical in the outdoor classroom? What if it rained after they spilled the chemical?

Once water in the outdoor classroom reaches the lowest point, does it stop moving? Where does it go from there?

Where will water from the outdoor classroom eventually go?

How does the water cycle effect the flow of water?

