



Junction Creek  
Stewardship Committee

Comité d'intendance  
du ruisseau Junction

# Activity 1.2: DIY Watershed Model

In this activity, you will be making a watershed model!

**What is a watershed?** You may not realize it, but you are in one right now! A watershed is not only an area that we all live in, but it is a place that provides a habitat for wildlife on land and in water as well. It is a large area of land that naturally absorbs water from rain and snow before draining into a nearby waterbody like a river, stream or lake. The boundaries of a watershed are the mountains, hills, or other high points where land slopes toward the water. More information can be found in [Activity 1.1](#).

## You will need:

- 2 sheets of paper. *Use paper from the recycling bin if you can!*
- A spray bottle filled with water.
- Watercolour paint so the colours will run when they are wet - you'll need blue, brown, green, and red or orange.\* *Substitute another colour if needed.*
- A tray or towels to catch the water.

**\*The colours are represent various things in the watershed:**

**Blue** = streams, rivers, and lakes

**Brown** = dirt from bare soil

**Green** = grass clippings or leaves

**Red/orange** = pollutants (ex. oil from leaky cars or fertilizer someone spilled on a driveway)



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## Instructions for DIY Watershed Activity

1. Take one sheet of paper and crumple it up in your hands.
2. Open the paper, but do not flatten it. You want it to have some “relief” – some high and low places. *The high places are hills, the low spots are valleys, and the wrinkles are streams and rivers.*
3. With the blue paint, paint on the paper where you think the streams and rivers would be.
4. Check to see if you are right. Place the paper on a tray or towel. With the spray bottle, make it rain in the watershed.
5. Spray a fine mist over the watershed model, enough to make water flow down the “hills”. Did you draw the streams and rivers in the right places? Do you have a lake? *This is how watersheds function, the water is shed by the land into streams, rivers, and lakes.*
6. Now do the same thing with the second piece of paper, crumple it, then open it up but not too much.
7. Draw the streams and rivers with the blue paint. Maybe include a lake or two.
8. Next, use the brown paint and draw along the tops of the hills. With a green marker, you can draw in trees, plants, and grass. Use the red paint to draw houses, cars, businesses, etc.
9. Place the “watershed” on a tray or towels and spray it with water. You’ll see streams again. But you’ll now see a lot of other stuff (colours) running into the streams along with the water. *This shows what happens when things on the ground are picked up by stormwater runoff, they end up in streams or rivers and move down the watershed.*
10. Clean up once you are finished with your watershed models.