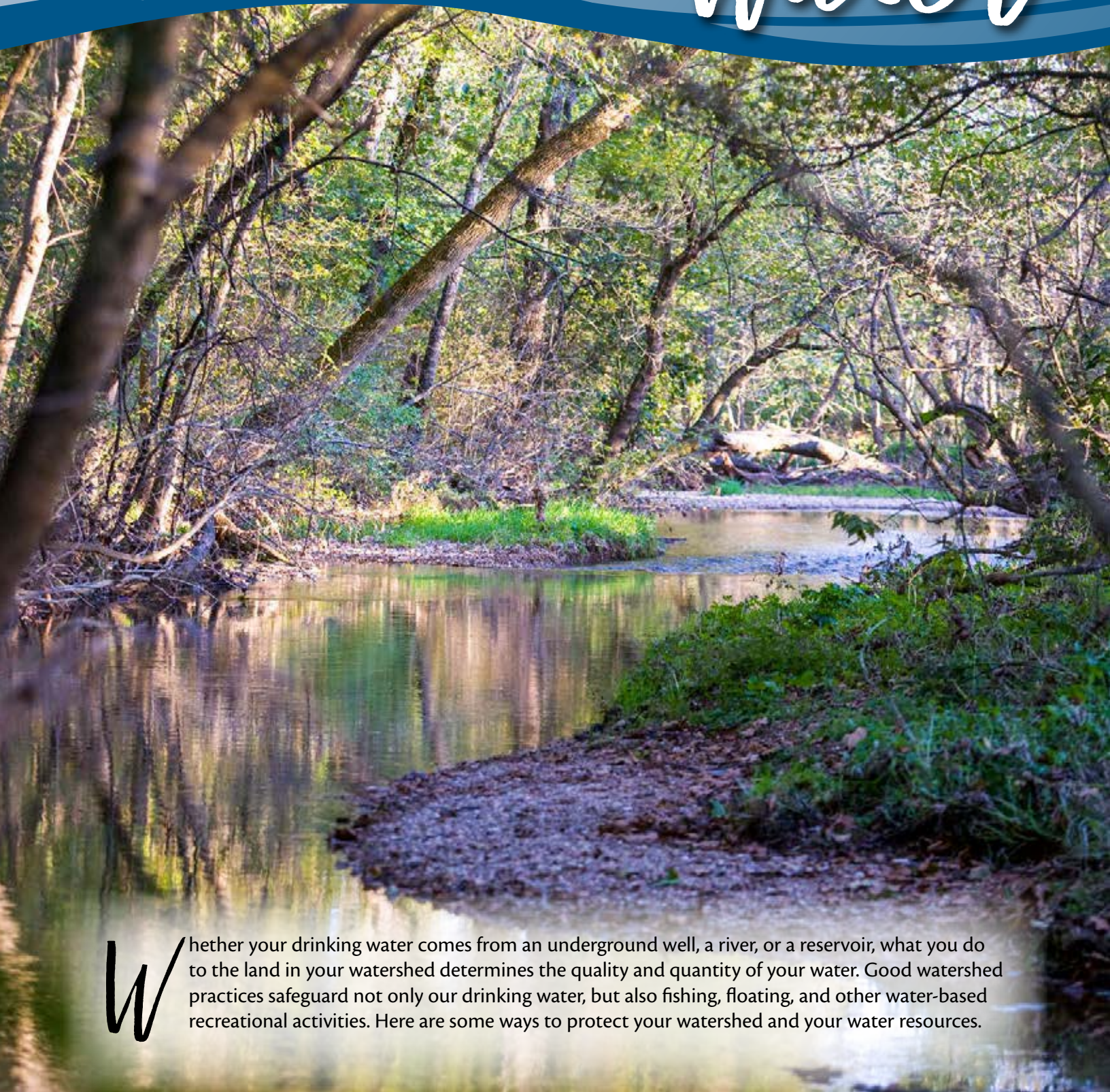


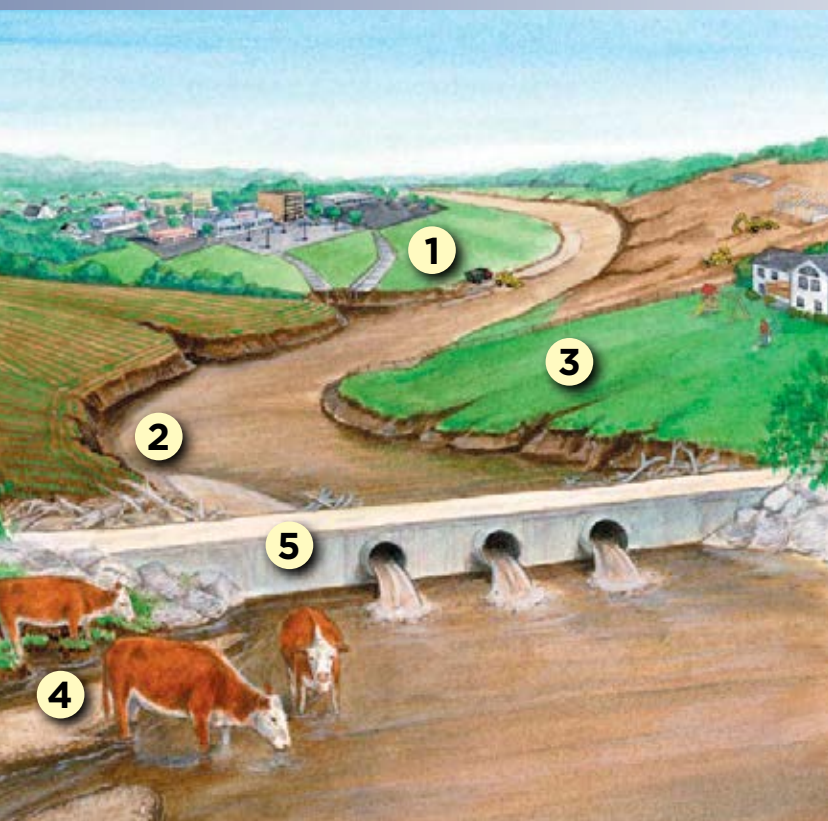
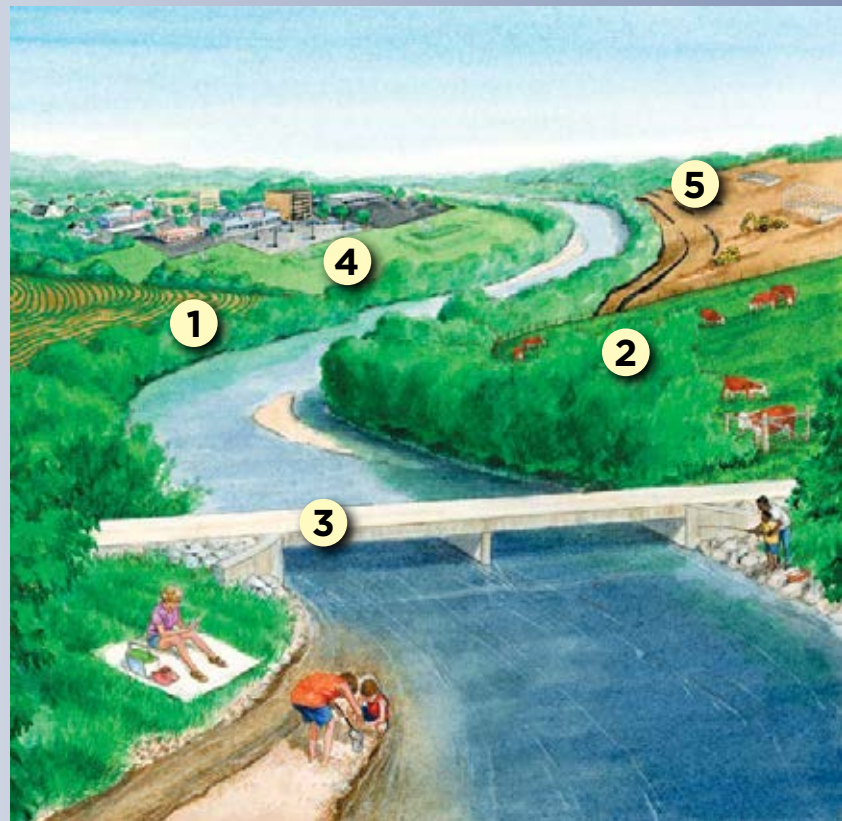
# Understanding Your Water



**W**hether your drinking water comes from an underground well, a river, or a reservoir, what you do to the land in your watershed determines the quality and quantity of your water. Good watershed practices safeguard not only our drinking water, but also fishing, floating, and other water-based recreational activities. Here are some ways to protect your watershed and your water resources.

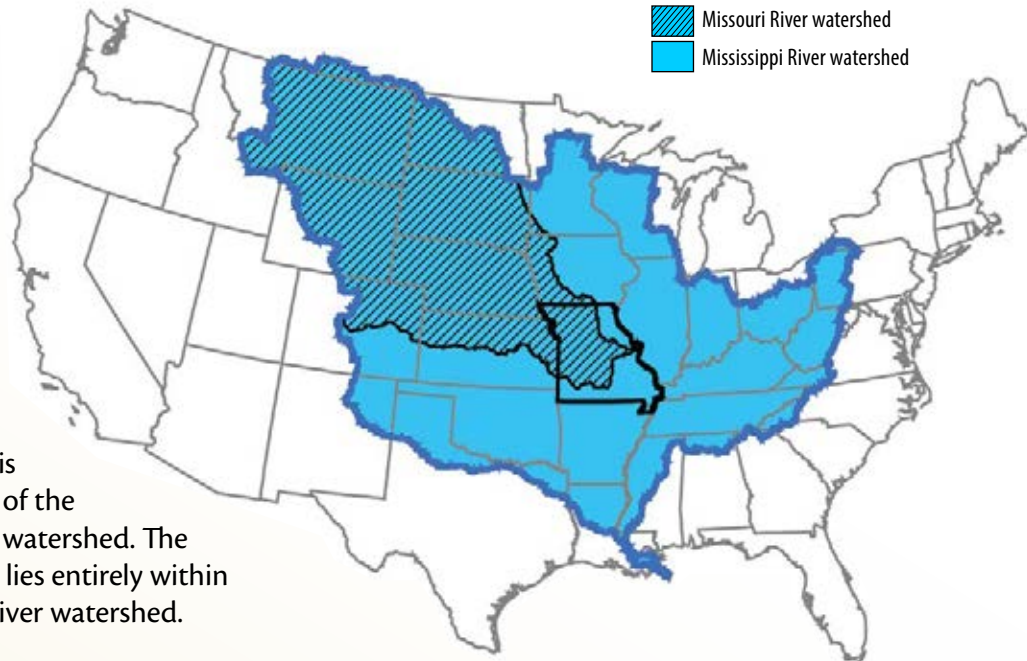
## Use GOOD Watershed Practices

1. On farms, use best management practices — such as contour planting — to protect soil from erosion. Always leave an undisturbed streamside buffer zone between the stream and crop fields, logging operations, or livestock-grazing areas.
2. Fence livestock out of the stream and streamside area to reduce the animal waste that enters the stream and to protect trees and other plants that grow there. Healthy, well-vegetated streamside areas stabilize streambanks, shade the stream, and filter out pollution from runoff that enters the stream.
3. Be sure bridges and stream crossings allow free passage of fish and other aquatic life both upstream and downstream.
4. Impervious surfaces such as parking lots, streets, and buildings prevent stormwater from soaking into the ground and cause more runoff to rush into streams. Use stormwater retention methods to help slow water and capture pollutants before they reach the stream.
5. Protect soil at construction sites with properly installed and maintained silt fences and other best management practices for erosion control. Sediment that enters a stream can smother fish and other aquatic life and destroy habitat.



## Avoid BAD Watershed Practices

1. Do not remove gravel from the stream channel. Improper gravel removal can cause streambank erosion upstream and sediment buildup downstream.
2. Channelizing or straightening a stream increases the speed at which water can flow. This, in turn, increases the power of the water to erode the land and choke the stream with sediment.
3. Too much fertilizer and chemical runoff from lawns, agricultural fields, or golf courses can pollute streams, kill fish and other aquatic life, and cause public health problems.
4. Avoid removing trees and other plants from along the stream. Grazing livestock, planting crops or lawns to the streambank, or building in these areas increases erosion.
5. Improperly constructed or poorly designed bridges and stream crossings can cause major problems for streams — bank erosion, channel instability, sediment deposition, and aquatic habitat destruction, which can also lead to increased infrastructure costs.



The Missouri River watershed is a sub-watershed of the Mississippi River watershed. The state of Missouri lies entirely within the Mississippi River watershed.

**Missouri has 45 major watersheds.  
What is your watershed address?**

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Big Piney River           | 24. Spring River           |
| 2. Big River                 | 25. Moreau River           |
| 3. Black River               | 26. North Fork White River |
| 4. Blackwater River          | 27. Niangua River          |
| 5. Bourbeuse River           | 28. Nodaway River          |
| 6. Chariton River            | 29. North River            |
| 7. Cuivre River              | 30. Osage River, East      |
| 8. Current River             | 31. Osage River, West      |
| 9. Eleven Point River        | 32. Platte River           |
| 10. Elk River                | 33. Pomme de Terre River   |
| 11. Fabius River             | 34. Sac River              |
| 12. Fox River                | 35. Salt River             |
| 13. Gasconade River          | 36. South Grand River      |
| 14. Grand River              | 37. Spring River           |
| 15. Headwater Diversion      | 38. St. Francis River      |
| 16. Jacks Fork River         | 39. White River            |
| 17. James River              | 40. Wyaconda River         |
| 18. Lamine River             | 41. Cache River            |
| 19. Locust Creek             | 42. Lower Kansas River     |
| 20. Meramec River            | 43. Nishnabotna River      |
| 21. Mississippi River, Lower | 44. Lower Des Moines River |
| 22. Mississippi River, Upper | 45. Tarkio River           |
| 23. Missouri River           |                            |

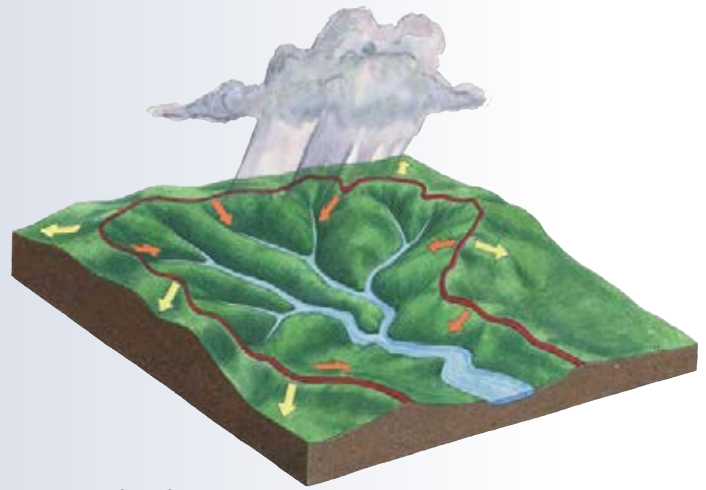


## What You Do to the Land, You Do to the Water

Everything that happens on the land affects the water into which it drains. A stream, pond, or wetland can be only as healthy as its watershed. As water runs downhill, it picks up whatever is on the ground. In a healthy watershed, water is naturally cleaned, filtered, and stored. When water flows through cities or across fields and pastures, it picks up sediment, pollutants, and heat. These contaminants — which flow into streams, wetlands, and lakes, or into underground passageways — affect the water you use for drinking, swimming, or fishing. When you flush your toilet, wash your laundry, fertilize your lawn, or dump used oil on the ground, you affect water quality in your watershed.

It's not easy to see a watershed unless you're standing on top of a ridge or looking down from an airplane. Then you can see all the hills and valleys that drain water into streams, wetlands, and lakes. A watershed might be as small as your yard or millions of square miles. If you stand atop the ridge that divides two watersheds, you can pour a glass of water from one hand into one watershed and a glass of water from the other hand into a different watershed. Sooner or later, the water from the two glasses will end up in two different streams.

Missouri is part of the Mississippi River watershed — the largest in the United States. However, many small (sub) watersheds and tributaries comprise its 1.2 million-square-mile area. For example, the Missouri River watershed is a sub-watershed of the Mississippi River watershed, just as the Missouri River is a tributary of the Mississippi River. Your watershed address is the watershed, sub-watershed, or sub-sub-watershed in which you live. It tells which lake, stream, or wetland collects the water that eventually you will use.



### Watershed

All the land that drains into a particular body of water is a watershed. In this illustration, all the rainwater that falls within the brown ridgeline boundary flows into the stream. Rainwater that falls outside this boundary flows into adjoining watersheds.



Raindrops fall at a speed of about 30 feet per second or 20 miles an hour. Without plenty of deep-rooted native plants and trees, watersheds can't keep rainwater from washing sediment, pollutants, and trash into waterways.

**For more information**, contact your nearest Missouri Department of Conservation regional office or contact the Missouri Stream Team Program:



Missouri Stream Team  
PO Box 180  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180  
800-781-1989  
streamteam@mdc.mo.gov  
mostreamteam.org



The Stream Team Program is a partnership between the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Conservation Federation of Missouri, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Stream Teams are a network of citizens that care about Missouri streams and perform activities to achieve the goals of education, stewardship, and advocacy for stream health.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, 573-751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to Chief, Public Civil Rights, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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