

Watershed 101

Watershed- the area of land where water drains to a single waterway, think of a watershed as a sink, all the water in that sink (land) will do down the drain (river)

Riparian Zone- the riparian zone is the land that lies directly next to stream or river, a riparian zone provides habitat for many species of wildlife and also keeps our waterways clean and healthy

Tributary- a tributary is a smaller stream or river that flows into a larger stream or river, the Cumberland River is a tributary to the Ohio River, and the Ohio River is a tributary to the Mississippi

Watershed Restoration- the practice of returning a waterway to the state where it was less impacted by human actions, this usually involves stabilizing the bank, planting native trees and plants, and doing clean ups

Water Pollution- when waterways are contaminated with either trash (tires, plastic, etc) or synthetic chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, etc) they are considered polluted, water pollution decreases the water quality

303 D List- when streams reach a certain level of pollution they are described as a 303 D Listed Impaired Stream, these streams have a high need clean up and restoration projects

Erosion- erosion is when soil is removed from the surface by water or air, we are most concerned about erosion along the banks of the creek, when there are not trees or plants to hold the soil in place the soil erodes into the creek destroying the bank and decreasing water quality

Water Quality- humans and wildlife alike need clean water to survive, we calculate water quality by taking measurements of turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, and levels of phosphates or other chemicals.

Rain Garden- you can help protect your waterways right in your own backyard by establishing a rain garden, rain gardens are areas which allow for water to be soaked up by the soil and plants instead of running directly into the waterway, rain gardens help improve water quality in a number of ways