

WHAT IS A WATERSHED

A watershed is the area of land that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, stream or bay. It is separated from other watersheds by high points in the area such as hills or slopes. It includes not only the waterway itself but also the entire land area that drains into it. For example, the watershed of a lake would include not only the streams entering into that lake but also the land area that drains into those streams and eventually the lake. In addition, the lake's watershed includes all of the land adjacent to the lakeshore from which runoff would flow into the lake.

A watershed can be as small as a backyard that drains into a pond or as large as the section of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware that drain into the Delaware River. However, very small watersheds such as those measuring a few acres are often referred to as "drainage areas" while very large watershed such as the parts of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware that drain into the Delaware River are called "drainage basins".

