

Hydrology - An Explanation of Whitewater

A journey through the New River Gorge is a journey through time that began over 300 million years ago. That's when the youngest rocks of the gorge were formed and water and erosion began to carve this thousand-foot canyon. Considered one of the oldest rivers in the world, it makes an ideal "classroom" for exploring first-hand how the waters on our planet cycle through the environment and sustain life as we know it.

As part of this full-day hydrology study, students will raft the New River Gorge, a section appropriate to their age range. In this floating classroom, students will learn about how water, the landscape and human activity are interconnected. They will explore why water is a precious resource and how they can become part of the solution to its preservation by participating in a stream survey.

Objectives/Understandings:

- Review the water cycle and understand why water is a precious resource
- Understand what a watershed is and how human activity affects water resources
- Learn how the New River Gorge was formed
- Learn the names of water features and how they are created
- Practice debating skills by discussing river damming from the perspective of different users and their needs
- Explore prehistoric life by hunting for and observing fossils

Essential Questions/Guiding Questions:

- How do humans affect water resources?
- How does water affect all other parts of an ecosystem?
- Why should we use water wisely?
- How can we tell if a water source is healthy?

Activity Descriptions

Drop in the Bucket - A Project Wet activity demonstrating that of all the water on the planet, only .01% of it is potable (drinkable).

Water Cycle Dramatization - Students will review the water cycle by playing roles in a narrated drama.

River Anatomy - An active game where students learn the parts of the river including rapids, hydraulics, strainers and other river features.

White water Rafting - Students will raft the New River (section determined by age of participants) while learning about how water helps form the landscape and watersheds.

Watersheds & the New River - As students descend through the New River Gorge, they will learn what makes a watershed and what part this river plays in its local drainage system.

To Dam or Not to Dam - A Project Wild Aquatic activity where students practice their debating skills using the topic of dams and water use.



Activity Descriptions (continued)

- Macro Mayhem A high energy game where students become the macroinvertebrates they are studying in order to grasp the concept of how living organisms can indicate the health of an ecosystem.
- **Water Quality Survey** Students will have the opportunity to positively affect water resources and practice using the scientific method water survey that will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Background

A Time to Fish

Spring and fall are the best times of the year to fish the New River. During these seasons, water temperatures are in transition between cold winter temperatures and warm summer temperatures. Most fish species are more active in cooler water and are more aggressively feeding during the spring and fall.

The best times of the day to fish are early morning and late evening. Most fish prey is much more active at these times; therefore, more fish are out feeding. Some species of fish feed at night, providing anglers an opportunity for night fishing.

Source: West Virginia DNR

What is Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land which drains (sheds) water into a stream or river. It is also known as a drainage basin. The system of streams that transports water, sediment and other materials from a watershed is called a drainage system. A watershed catches water that falls to the earth as precipitation; a drainage system channels the water and substances it carries to a common outlet.

The watershed is the drainage basin of a river; the area through which all waters flow from their highest source before draining naturally to the sea. In the broader ecological sense, the term watershed includes not only the land and water but the mountains and forest, floodplains and valleys, as well as the communities of plants, animals and people who live there.

A watershed is "that area of land . . . within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of the community," John Wesley Powell.

Watersheds come in all sizes and shapes depending the topography or lay of the land. Each stream or river comprises a watershed (drainage basin) and is separated from other drainage basins by divides. Divides are the highest topographical points surrounding a stream or river causing water to drain into one stream or another. In every watershed, small streams flow into larger streams, which flow into river, lakes, and bays. Smaller streams are tributaries of a larger mainstream river and each is a sub-watershed of a larger watershed. For example, Piney and Glade creeks and the Greenbrier and Bluestone rivers are tributaries of the New River. They are also sub-watersheds of the New River watershed.

Hydrologic Cycle

Water is always on the move through the environment. The hydrologic cycle (water cycle) transports water between earth's watersheds, atmosphere and oceans. Rain falls upon the land and either runs off or soaks into the earth.



Background (continued)

Hydrologic Cycle (continued)

Some of the rainwater is used by plants and animals in their life processes, some is used by humans, and some seeps underground to be stored or to reappear at another place to feed streams and rivers. Much of it goes back into the atmosphere through evaporation and transpiration. Clouds form and, when conditions are ripe, the water is released to earth again in the form of rain or snow.

The water cycle plays an important role in resupplying water to a watershed. It is the water cycle at work through evaporation, transpiration and precipitation that gives us the seemingly endless supply of water flowing within the New River and the New River watershed.

People and Watersheds

Every person on Earth lives within a watershed. A watershed is our home; it is where we are born and raised, where we learn and grow, and where we work and play. Our watershed contains mountains and plateaus, valleys and gorges, forests and wildlife, as well as our yard or farm and our neighbor's woodlot.

Within our watershed we are connected to everything and everybody. It is the watershed, itself, that connects us to one another. What we do and how we treat our watershed impacts the watershed and effect things downstream. Our daily activities can have a negative impact on the quality and quantity of water available to us and other living creatures for survival.

As water is shed off the land, the soil and plants collect large amounts of water. This process prevents flooding and makes more fresh water available by slowing its flow and allowing it to seep underground. When watershed lands are stripped of vegetation or replaced with concrete or houses, the watershed can no longer function to prevent floods and replenish the freshwater supply.

Water moving through the hydrologic cycle picks up pollutants left behind by our activities. In the atmosphere pollutants from factory smokestacks, car exhaust and wood smoke are picked up as water vapor condenses and falls back to earth as acid rain. Rainwater runoff picks up surface pollutants from farms, streets and roadways, lawns and gardens, etc. Chemical spills, leaky landfills, and illegal dumps pollute water as it moves through the ground and re-surfaces in springs and streams.

Many watersheds have been altered as a result of human needs for water, food, recreation, transportation, manufactured goods, etc. These growing demands have led to unwise land uses within watersheds that have degraded water quality in our streams and rivers. Diking, damming and straightening of streams is done for flood control; streams are put into underground pipes to make more land available for homes, malls and roads; streams are polluted by dumping storm water runoff and factory and sewage treatment plant discharges.

Everyone living in a watershed relies on the natural resources of the watershed to exist. All life forms (plants, animals, and humans) depend on water within the watershed they live in for survival.

A healthy watershed is vital for a healthy environment and economy. People must take a "watershed approach" to managing natural resources. This implies a way of looking at things as a whole, of seeing people and not just the trees but the forest, not just the river but all that creates and diminishes its flow. Therefore, maintaining the water quality of a watershed is essential to maintaining life on earth.



Background (continued)

New River Watershed

The New River watershed covers a portion of three states – North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. With it's headwaters beginning on the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina, the New River flows approximately 320 miles to the north. Along the way, many creeks, streams, and smaller rivers empty into the New River. These tributaries and the New River make up the drainage basin of the New River watershed.

The watershed encompasses an area of 6,964.6 square miles or approximately 4,457,369.5 acres. This is an area five and a half times larger than the state of Rhode Island, 3.4 times larger than Delaware, and 1.4 times larger than the state of Connecticut. There is approximately 9,000 miles of streams and rivers in the New River watershed. A total of 114 ponds and lakes, covering approximately 11,3289 acres of land, are within the watershed.

There are more than 165 cities, towns, and communities within the watershed. Towns with a population of 5,000-10,000 include Galax, Pulaski, and Wytheville, Virginia, and Oak Hill and Princeton, West Virginia. Boone, North Carolina, Radford and Christiansburg, Virginia, and Bluefield and Beckley, West Virginia, have populations of between 10,000-20,000. The city of Blacksburg, Virginia, has a population of over 30,000. There are two forks of the New River in North Carolina, the south fork bubbles from the ground near the community of Blowing Rock. The north fork of the New River begins along the North Carolina/Tennessee state line near Trade, Tennessee. Both the north and south forks meander through a rural mountain farm setting. At the North Carolina/Virginia border, the two forks join and continue a northeasterly flow across the valley of Virginia. North of Pulaski, Virginia, the river has cut several gaps through the ridge and valley province of the Appalachian Mountain region.

At the West Virginia/Virginia state line, the New River leaves the mountains behind and enters the Alleghny Plateau. Over time, the New River and its tributaries in West Virginia carved the landscape of the Allegheny Plateau into the deep meandering gorges as we see today. The New River watershed is a sub-watershed to a much larger drainage system. At Gauley Bridge, West Virginia, the New River joins with the Gauley River to form the Kanawha River, which flows into the Ohio River. At this point, Pt. Pleasant, West Virginia, the New River watershed becomes part of the Ohio River watershed. Eventually the Ohio River empties into the Mississippi River and the New River watershed becomes a part of the Mississippi River watershed, which empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

1. Firehock, Karen. **Hands On Save Our Streams: The Save Our Stream Teacher's Manual.** Gaithersburg, MD: The Izaak Walton League of America, 1994.

2. Murdoch, Tom, Martha Cheo, and Kate O'Laughin. **Streamkeeper's Field Guide.** Everett, WV: The Adopt-A Stream Foundation, 1996.

3. Watershed. the TERRA (Toward Ecological Recovery & Regional Alliance) Bulletin, Thailand, July 1995.

4. Water Cycle and Water Supply. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, July 1967.

5. Environmental Action: Water Conservation. Menlo Park, CA: The Tides Center/E2: Environment and Education, 1998.

6. Adopt-A-Salmon Family: A Watershed Education Program for Middle School Students. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Background (continued)

The State of the Lower New Watershed

See the report below for information about the state of the Lower New River Watershed. (The Executive Summary on page 6 is a good place to start).

http://www.npca.org/assets/pdf/NewRiverState_ScreenView_Full.pdf

Stream Survey Information

All images in this section were pulled from "West Virginia Save Our Streams Program Level-One Standard Operating Procedures Manual" (see link below) unless otherwise cited.

http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/getinvolved/sos/Documents/SOPs/LevelOneSOPs.pdf





Stream Survey Information (continued)





Stream Survey Information (continued)





Hybrid Striped Bass Morone chrysops x M saxatilis.. O

0	White Perch Monne emericane
ses(3,1)	PERCICHTHYIDAE-Temperate Bas
O,N,J P N	Mottled Sculpin, Cottus bairdi
(6)	COTTIDAE-Sculpins
0	Brock Stickleback, Culaea inconstans
(1)	GASTEROSTEIDAE-Sticklebacks
O,N,P	Brook Silverside, Labidesthes sicculus
(1)	ATHERINIDAE-Silversides
O,N,P	Western Mosquitofish, Gambusia affinis
Э	POECILIIDAE-Livebearers
0,P	Northern Studfish, Fundulus catenatus Banded Killifish*, Fundulus diaphanus Mummichog, Fundulus heterocitus
(3)	FUNDULIDAE-Killifishes
0	Trout-Perch, Percopsis omiscomaycus
(1)	PERCOPSIDAE-Trout-perches
O,N,J,P O,N,J,P	Cuthroat Trout, Oncorhynchus clarki Rainbow Trout, Oncorhynchus mykiss Brown Trout, Salvelinus fontinalis Brook Trout, Salvelinus fontinalis
(4)	SALMONIDAE-Trouts
0	Central Mudminnow, Umbra limi
3	UMBRIDAE-Mudminnows
O,N,P O,P,N O,N,P	Northern Pika, Esox Jucius Muskellunge, Esox masquinongy Chain Pickerel, Esox niger Hybrid Tiger Musky, Esox Jucius x E. masquin
	Paddlefish

(1)	SCIAENIDAE-Drums
0.N.P	Walleye, Sander vitreum
0	Sauger, Sander canadense.
0	River Darter*, Percina shumanti
	Puelo Dater Percina roanoka
0	Slenderhead Darter, Percina phoxocephala
P	Shield Darter, Percina peltata
O N	Sharphose Darter, Percina oxyrhynchus
0,0	Stringhork Darter, Persing macurate
0	Longhead Darter*, Percina macrocephala
N	Appalachia Darter*, Percina gymnocephala
0	Gilt Darter*, Percina evides
0	Channel Darter, Percina copelandi
ON ON	Lonperch, Parcina canodes
	Vollow Darch Darca Reveasance
N'O	Vanegate Darter, Etheostoma vanatum
0	Tippecanoe Darter, Etheostoma tippecanoe
N	Snubnose Darter, Etheostoma simoterum
N	Candy Darter*, Etheostoma osburni
P	Tesselated Darter, Etheostoma olmstedi
L'N'O	Johnny Darter, Etheostoma nigrum
0	Spotted Darter*, Etheostoma maculatum
	Lonafin Darter*. Etheostoma Ionalmanum
DNIP	Eantal Darter, Etheostoma fishellare
0,14,17	Rijebreast Darter, Etheostoma camunum
	Greenside Datter, Ethoostoma biennioides
0	Diamond Darter*, Crystallaria cincotta
0	Western Sand Darter*, Ammocrypta clara
0	Eastern Sand Darter, Ammocrypta pelliucida
(32,1)	PERCIDAE-Perches
.0,N,P	Black Crappie, Pomoxis nigromaculatus
O,N,P	White Crapple, Pomoxis annularis
O,N,J,P	Largemouth Bass, Micropterus salmoides
O,N	Spotted Bass, Micropterus punctulatus
O,N,J,P	Smallmouth Bass, Micropterus dolomieu
0,0,1	Redear Sunfish, Lepomis microloutus
O,N,J,P	Bluegili, Lepomis macrochirus
0	Orangespotted Sunfish, Lepomis humilis
O,P	Warmouth, Lepomis gulosus
ON J.P	Pumpkinseed. Lepomis albosus
O,N,J,P	Redbreast Sunfish, Lepomis auntus
O,N,J,P	Rock Bass, Ambloplites rupestris
(14)	CENTRARCHUAE-SUMISHIES
IAAN	OPAITDADOUIDAE Cumfishas

It's Against the Law! Don't Move Fish, Protect your resources by never moving fishes or

Suggested literature for further information: Field Guide To North American Fishes, by Jay R. Stauffer, Jr., Jeffrey M. Boltz, The Fishes of West Virginia Peterson Field Guides: The Audubon Society: Whales and Dolphins **Freshwater Fishes** and Laura White and



www.wvdnr.gov (304)637-0245

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White Bass, Morone chrysops. Striped Bass, Morone saxatilits.

0 O N N

Freshwater Drum, Aplodinotus grunniens..

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Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section Wildlife Diversity Program Published by the

Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section Wildlife Diversity Program

A Field Checklist



Virginia





releasing bait or aquarium fishes.







Stream Survey Information (continued)



Fishes of West Virginia

hybrid sport fishes distributed among 24 different carfishes (12). perches (32), suckers (19), basses/sunfishes (14), and found in just five families: carps/minnows (63 species) sport fishes, 80% are nongame fishes and 75% are tamilies. Interestingly, approximately 20 percent are West Virginia is blessed with a variety of fish resources, including 184 species and 3

are for the greater Ohio River basin (O), which includes & all waters in the state above Kanawha Falls , the Monongahela, Little Kanawha, Kanawha, they are generally found. The drainage abbreviations Guyandotte, and Big Sandy rivers; New River (N), the presently known species in West Virginia and where The list of fishes that follows is a compilation of

PETROMYZONTIDAE-Lampreys

6

Chio Lamprey*, *Ichthyomyzon* bdelitum....... Northern Brook Lamprey*, *Ichthyomyzon* fossor...... Mountain Brook Lamprey*, *Ichthyomyzon* greeley/.... Least Brook Lamprey, Lampetra aepyptera..... American Brook Lamprey, Lampetra appendix. Silver Lamprey*, Ichthyomyzon unicuspis ACIPENSERIDAE-Sturgeons N,O 3 N ò ò ò ò ò

POLYODONTIDAE-Paddlefish

Paddlefish*, Polyodon spathula.

LEPISOSTEIDAE-Gars

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Longnose Gar, Lepisosteus osseus

Scientific names taken from: Common and Scientific Names of Pitches from the

United States and Canada, 2004, AFS special publication 29

Central Stoneroller, Campostoma anomalum.....O,N,P,J

Channel Shiner, Notropis wickliffi.

Telescope Shiner, Notropis telescopus. Mimic Shiner, Notropis voluceilus......

...O,N,J,P 0,N,P

CYPRINIDAE-Minnows, Carps

63

including the Gauley River; Potomac River (P); and where the fishes will be located. moving streams, or sand or rock bottoms, will dictate preferences, such as warm or cold water, fast or slow all minor or major tributaries. Different habitat species does not necessarily mean that it is found in James River (J). The drainage indicated for each

dance and diversity of West Virginia's fishes. The ing their existence for future generations. WVDNR is committed to preserving and maintain-This extensive checklist illustrates the abun-



*Rare (uncommon, undetermined status or limited WV range)
*Extirpated (native to WV, but no recent records)

	Threadfin Shad, Dorosoma betenense
O,N,P	Skipjack Herring, Alosa chrysochloris Alewite, Alosa pseudoharengus
(4)	CLUPEIDAE -Herrings
O,N,P	American Eel, Anguilla rostrata
(1)	ANGUILLIDAE-Freshwater Eels
00	Goldeye*, Hiodon alosoides Mooneye, Hiodon tergisus
(2)	HIODONTIDAE-Mooneyes
0	Bowfin*, Amia calva
(1)	AMIIDAE-Bowfins

Sand Shiner, Notropis stramineus	
Silverjaw Minnow, Notropis buccata	
Emerald Shiner, Notropis atherinoides	
River Chub, Nocomis micropogon	
Common Shiner, Luxikus cornutus	
The candy darter is truly special to the Mountain State, because, with the exception of a small portion of the New River in Virginia, it is found exclusively in West Virginia.	
Eastern Silvery Minnow*, Hybognathus regius	
Grass Carp. Ctenopharynogodon ideilaO,N,P Bighead Carp. Hypophthaimichthys noblilsO,N Streamline Chub. Ennystax dissimilisO,N Tonguetied Minnow, Exoglossum faxillinguaO,N Cutilps Minnow, Exoglossum maxillinguaN,J,P	
Rosyside Dace, Clinostomus funduloidesO,N, J, P Satinfin Shiner', Cyprinella galacturaO,N Spotfin Shiner, Cyprinella galacturaO,N Steeloolor Shiner, Cyprinella whippleiO,N,P Common Carp, Cyprinella whippleiO,N,P	
Goldfish, Carassius auratus	

Sartawna Minnow , rhenacoolus tereluws. Southerm Redbelly Dace, Phoxinus erythrogester
Contraction delegander Change and the stands have



Links:

National Park Service Watersheds Lesson Plan: Additional materials teachers may want to use in their classroom. http://www.nps.gov/neri/forteachers/upload/Ribbon%20of%20Life.pdf

New River Watershed:

Follow The New River from its origin in the mountains of North Carolina to the Gulf of Mexico. http://www1.hollins.edu/classes/hesit/Journey%20of%20New%20River.pdf

River Introduction Video: This video introduces the study of rivers. http://youtu.be/jSL9nQb-ohM

Water Survey:

This is the water survey we will be using during the trip. http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/getinvolved/sos/Documents/Surveys/Level1.pdf

Fishes of West Virginia Brochure:

http://www.wvdnr.gov/Wildlife/PDFFiles/fishbrochure.pdf

Department of Environmental Protection Educational Resources: http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/getinvolved/Pages/default.aspx