

Watershed Center Activity Menu

Water Sampling (Chemical)--Water chemistry sampling is an important tool in assessing the quality of water. Drinking water, wastewater, and water in the environment are frequently sampled for a variety of chemicals such as Oxygen, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, heavy metals, and sediment and other chemicals. At the Watershed Center, we can provide the chemical kits and instruction for basic water sampling and help explain what the test results mean.

Water Sampling (Biological)—For scientists and citizens, biological water sampling is an important tool to determine the basic “health” of our streams and rivers. At the Watershed Center, we have a Missouri Stream Team that routinely monitors the South Dry Sac creek, at our streamside learning station. We can provide the equipment and instruction to take a biological survey, and help identify the macroinvertebrates (creek critters) you will catch!

Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) The **mission** of Project WET is reaching children, parents, teachers and community members of the world with water education. Project WET achieves its mission of worldwide water education by publishing water resource materials in several languages, providing training workshops on diverse water topics (i.e., watersheds, water quality, water conservation) organizing community water events, such as Make a Splash with Project WET water festivals and the Global Water Education Village™, building a worldwide network of educators, water resource professionals and scientists. If you are interested in sampling WET activities with your class, or becoming a trained Facilitator, the Watershed Center can help.

Introduction to Stream Ecology Learning about how the living and non living parts of a stream interact is an important subject at all education levels. Ozark streams are the most biologically diverse freshwater streams in the country. We love them for recreation, and rely on them for our drinking water! So let us help you and your group learn about our little Ozark Stream, the South Dry Sac, at the Watershed Center.

Karst Topography We live in Springfield, that’s right, Spring...Field. Springs and other Karst features result from our limestone landscape, as does our plentiful groundwater which is critical for drinking water, irrigation, and industry in Southwest Missouri. At the Watershed Center, we have the four characteristic karst features on display: caves, springs, sinkholes and a losing stream. Indeed, we have a microcosm of the Ozarks at our fingertips, and we are not afraid to teach about it!

Groundwater 101 Groundwater is one of the most important, and least visible resources in Southwest Missouri. Thousands of private wells are currently in use in Greene County, and many neighboring communities like Republic, Nixa, Willard, and Rogersville rely almost entirely on groundwater for their municipal water source. Understanding our aquifers is important to ensuring our groundwater is clean and plentiful for years to come. The Watershed Center demonstrates aquifer recharge techniques like rain gardens, pervious pavement, and bioswales, and also includes monitoring wells and Karst features for hands-on learning opportunities.

Watershed 101 What is a watershed? That question is a basis for keeping our rivers, lakes, and ultimately our drinking water clean. At the Watershed Center, we have a variety of ways to communicate to visitors and students what a watershed is, including the enviroscape model, the stream trailer, and oh yes, a real live watershed to muck around in.

Enviroscape (watershed model) The Enviroscape is a suitcase size model of a watershed that can be an effective teaching tool to make the connection of how what people do in the watershed can impact their waterways. Usually the model is used by simulating different types of pollution in a watershed and then discussing “better practices” to prevent pollution from entering our waterways.

Stream Table In partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Watershed Center acquired a stream table. Essentially, this demonstration is like a sandbox on wheels with a re-circulating water stream that flows over the table. But don’t let this simple description fool you, it shows the physical functions of a river and watershed interactions very clearly. Erosion, the effects of gravel mining, riparian cover, siltation, habitat, and more are all in full view. This exhibit can also be transported to schools or events.

Pond Life Loren Eisley said, “If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.” A single drop of water from Valley water mill lake can be a very interesting study, likely containing a whole ecosystem that can barely even be seen. We can help provide equipment and instruction to examine the world beneath the surface. The fishing piers on the lake make a handy “research station.”

Watershed Center Scavenger Hunt The Watershed Center Scavenger hunt is an excellent activity that incorporates map reading, physical exercise, and learning. Participants usually break up into small groups/teams, and are given the map and clues. The information for the clues comes from the interpretive signs located throughout the site.

Green Building/Green Site Tour The Watershed Center is a demonstration of green practices like Low Impact Development, Green Building, and Stormwater Best Management Practices. Take the tour to learn about the practice we have used and get ideas for your own home or office.

Volunteer/Service projects There is always work to do at the Watershed Center. If you have a group interested in volunteering, contact the Watershed Center and we can probably find a project to fit your group. Some common volunteer activities are litter pick-ups, trail work, and tree planting.

Nature Unleashed Fun is in your students’ nature, and Nature Unleashed helps them get outside and explore it. Our new education unit for third- to fifth-graders has colorful, engaging student books and teacher guides. Field-tested activities are aligned to Missouri’s grade-level expectations, so you can use them with confidence. Using Nature Unleashed (NU) makes you a part of our Discover Nature Schools program, which provides training, funding opportunities and other benefits. (Description from Missouri Department of Conservation)

Most Nature Unleashed trips to the Watershed begin with a “welcome to the Watershed” address, and then students divide into groups to do different NU activities throughout the site. With advance

planning, Watershed Center volunteers can usually help with your day by running activity stations or guiding students around the Watershed Center. Most trips end with a brown bag school lunch, and an ending keynote about water conservation and recycling.

Jordan Creek Underground Tours (downtown) It's an adventure similar to a cave tour. Once you have walked through the graffiti covered passages of the once pristine Jordan Creek you and your group will never see a stormdrain the same way. The tour offers opportunities to learn about the water centric history of our city, to reflect on how we have treated waterways in the past, and think about how to treat them in the future.

Special water related programs--as needed Our Mission is to protect our drinking water, and helping people understand the resource critical to that end. Education/Outreach Coordinator Mike Kromrey can assist you in designing a trip to the Watershed Center to meet the goals of the group, and incorporate water education into the experience.