

WATERSHEDS

On board the *Piscataqua* we'll be exploring the Piscataqua River watershed through time and thinking about how people have influenced it. Through the use of 2 and 3 dimensional maps we will look at where water flows and the different landscapes and industries that might affect the water quality along the way. The following provides some background on watersheds and a few activities that you may want to do with your students prior to your sail with us.

A watershed is an area in which water (surface and ground water) flows into a common basin defined by geographical features. A simpler visual is a puddle in a parking lot or a driveway; the puddle is the common basin into which the water collects. Everyone lives in a watershed because everyone's water flows somewhere. All watersheds eventually lead to the ocean, so everyone, no matter how close or far we live from the coast, has an effect on the ocean. This is important because when it rains the water travels downhill and carries anything that is on the ground with it. This can include trash, oil from cars, excess fertilizers from lawn and parks, pet waste left on the ground and anything else that people put on the ground. Pollution affects the water in different ways. Look at the "Water Quality Overview" for more on how human pollution affects the water.



[Click here](#)
for an activity looking
at how and where
water moves in a
watershed.

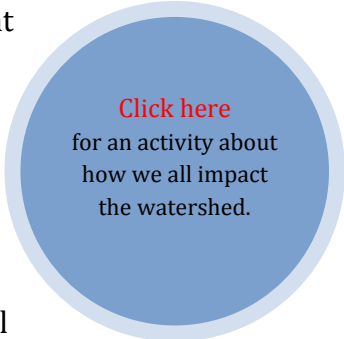
There are two main types of pollution, point-source pollution and non-point source pollution. Point-source pollution is the pollution for which you can point to a source. These are usually the easiest to blame, but not always the easiest to fix. Waste water treatment plants, or factories are common point-sources of pollution. Non-point source is harder to identify. Everyone who puts too much fertilizer on their lawn or doesn't clean up after their dog is responsible for non-point source pollution.

As individuals, this is the type that we have most personal control over. Our behaviors all contribute to this type of pollution.

Portsmouth is part of the Piscataqua River Watershed. This watershed extends as far north as Wakefield, NH and Acton, ME as far west as Strafford, NH and as far east as Wells, ME.



[Click here](#)
for a map of the
New Hampshire
Coastal
Watershed.



[Click here](#)
for an activity about
how we all impact
the watershed.