

# Peel's Watersheds

**Activity Overview:** This activity helps students visualize what a watershed is, and how the connections that exist have an impact on those who live downstream.

**Objectives:**

Students should learn to:

- Describe what a watershed is.
- Identify where all water from a watershed goes.
- Describe how pollution in a river can affect the lake.

**Materials:**

- Large watershed model
- Different coloured marbles (blue and clear)
- Eavestrough/bucket (represents Lake Ontario)

**Setup:** Have the different coloured marbles near the display.

**Takedown:** Collect materials and return to appropriate location

**Vocabulary:**

**Watershed:** a catchment basin or area, that includes all of the land is drained by a watercourse and its tributaries; an ecosystem with natural borders.

**Watercourse:** the channel that a flowing body of water follows. This includes rivers, streams and canals.

**What will I be doing? (Procedure)**

*Before you start your presentation check with the teacher or chaperone that the entire group is present and ready to start. Remember that **doing** an experiment and **discovering** the answer is more powerful than watching and listening to someone, so try to involve as many children as possible.*

**Say:** "Welcome to the Peel's Watersheds! This activity will teach you about what the Peel watershed is, and how it connects with and drains into Lake Ontario. Remember to keep our lakes and well water pollution-free because all these bodies of water are interconnected and contain important wildlife."

**Say:** "A watershed includes all the land (farm, hills, towns, cities) around the waterways near your house. Think of a watershed like a bathtub; the shape and characteristics of the watershed means that all the water will empty in a specific spot."

**Ask:** "Where do you think all the water that we use in Peel goes? Hint: it is a lake" (Answer: In Peel Region watershed, this point is Lake Ontario.)

Point out Lake Ontario on the map (at the bottom). On the display, also point out Heart Lake Conservation Park ("This is where we are!").

**Say:** “Each different colour marble represents one of the rivers that drain into Peel Region’s watershed. I need two volunteers to come up and each choose a different coloured marble and different creek/river. For now, just hold the marble at the entry (opening at the top of the tube).” **Ask the rest of the students:** “Which colour do you think will win the “water race”?”

**Say:** “I am going to count down from 5. When I say 1, I want you to release the marbles. 5...4...3...2...1!”

**Ask:** “Which colour drained the fastest?” “Which colour drained the slowest?”

**Ask:** “Where did all the marbles end up?” (Answer: into the bin representing Lake Ontario; just like all creeks and rivers in Peel drain into Lake Ontario).

**Ask:** “Using our knowledge on watersheds, why should we not pollute (or throw garbage) into the river?” (Answer: all waterways are connected, so polluting one area will pollute others in the watershed).

Provide them an opportunity to recall their learning experience before going to the next activity. **Ask:** “So who remembers what watersheds are?” (Answer: watersheds include all the waterways around your home that eventually connect to Lake Ontario)

**Ask:** “Why do you think some marbles moved faster and others moved slower?” (Answer: steeper slopes make a faster river; bends in the river slow it down.)

**IF TIME PERMITS:** Ask two more students to choose another two rivers/creeks and repeat the “water race.” Ask the rest of the students to predict which colour will win based on the knowledge they just obtained.

**Specifically remind students:**

- Watersheds are very important because they provide us with our drinking water (we get our drinking water from Lake Ontario)
- What we do on the surface affects the water in the creeks and rivers, which affects the water we drink and the water for all living creatures within the creeks and river. The land is interconnected with the watershed.
- Keep our lakes and well water pollution-free because all these bodies of water are interconnected and contain wildlife.

