Family Activity - Watershed In Your Hand

Summary	**Time**
Learn about watersheds through creating a simple 3-dimensional paper model.	15 minutes

Materials
● One sheet of 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper for each person ● A selection of water soluble markers (at least 3 different colors) ● Spray bottles filled with water

Activity Directions

1. **Make the watershed out of paper.** Take the 8 1/2 x 11 inch piece of paper and crumple it into a tight ball. Then gently open up the paper, being careful to not flatten it out completely. *The highest points on the paper now represent mountaintops and the low places represent valleys.*

2. **Color mountain ridges.** Choose one color marker and draw lines to connect the highest points on the map. These are the mountain ridgelines.

3. **Color water.** Choose a second color and mark the low places where different bodies of water might be found: creeks, rivers, lakes, the Bay etc.

4. **Color human activity.** With a third color, mark four or five places to represent places of human activity: housing, factories, shopping centers, schools, etc.

5. **Predict the flow of water.** Predict the path water might take in the watershed if it rained on the watershed.

6. **Observe the flow of water.** Using spray bottles, lightly spray the paper watersheds and observe where the water flows. Compare to predictions.

7. **Discuss.**
   - *What observations can be made about how water travels in the watershed?*
   - *Where did you place the human activity on your map? Why?*
   - *What path did the water follow?*
   - *Were your initial predictions correct?*
   - *What types of materials might the water pick up as it moves through the watershed? (hint: pollution)*

8. **Clean-up.** After discussion, let the paper watersheds dry out.

Background *A watershed is an area of land that drains surface and groundwater into a common body of water like a stream, creek, reservoir, or bay. You can think of a watershed as all the land that "sheds" water onto the lower area of land. A watershed connects all the plants, animals, and people that live in it, as well as the non-living components like rocks.*