

No Water No Life – “WATERSHED” DEFINED

Watersheds are also called “River Basins” or “Drainages”

Hydrologically, a watershed is like the sides of a sink. It is the land area that drains water down to one common point, i.e., a river, lake, estuary, wetland, aquifer or ocean.

A watershed can include forests, wetlands, plains, and tributaries to bigger streams; and it can have many smaller sub-watersheds within it.

EXAMPLE: The Mississippi River Watershed drains water from 31 states, an area that equals 41% of the continental U.S. It contains many “sub-watersheds”, including the Missouri, Arkansas and Red River Basins coming in from the west and the Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee River Basins coming in from the east.



Hal Borland, *Beyond Your Doorstep*: "Any river is really the summation of its whole valley. It shapes not only the land but the culture of that valley. To think of any river as nothing but water is to ignore the greater part of it."

John Wesley Powell - scientist and geographer: "[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 a community."