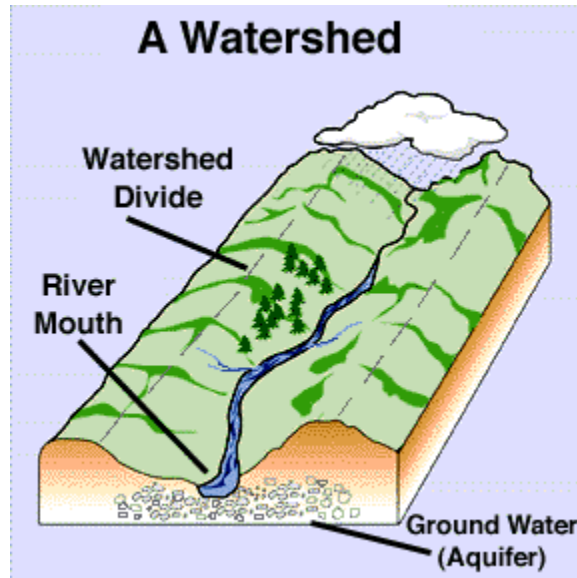


# What is a Watershed?



A watershed is a geographic area in which all water running off the land drains to a specific location such as a river, stream or creek. Each region draining into a river system, creek or body of water has a watershed defined by topographic and hydrologic features that separate it from the adjoining watershed.

## What's the difference between a watershed and a basin?

Here are some definitions, as used in Kentucky's program:

**Basin** - A basin is a large-scale watershed, such as Kentucky, Salt, Licking and Green. These are also referred to by a U.S. Geological Survey coding scheme called Hydrologic Unit Codes, or HUCs. Each of these basins has a six-digit code, and, as such, are often called HUC6 watersheds. These cover an average of 2,525 square miles. Watersheds with more digits are smaller.

**Sub-basin** - Sub-basins are smaller scale basins, such as the North Fork Kentucky River, South Fork Licking River, Tygarts Creek, Lower Cumberland or Lower Tennessee. These watersheds have eight-digit codes, and may be called HUC8 watersheds. They are an average of 748 square miles.

**Watershed** - Technically speaking, this refers to all sizes of watersheds as defined above. However, it is common to use this term to refer to watersheds of size smaller than a basin or sub-basin. These watersheds have 10- or 11-digit codes and may be called HUC10 or HUC11 watersheds. HUC11 watersheds average 64 square miles.

**Sub-watershed** - Sub-watersheds are smaller watersheds, on the scale of a community. These watersheds have 12- or 14-digit codes and may be called HUC12 or HUC14 watersheds. HUC14 watersheds average 4.4 square miles.