



Know Your Watershed



Clean Water. Healthy Life.

MARC Regional Water Quality Education Program

A view of downtown Kansas City, Missouri, from Kaw Point — the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers — in Kansas City, Kansas

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common body of water, such as a nearby creek, stream, river or lake. Smaller watersheds drain into larger watersheds. For example, when it rains the stormwater runoff from a midtown neighborhood drains to small local creeks that flow into a larger stream, Brush Creek, which drains into the Blue River and on to the Missouri River.

We all live in a watershed.

Water crosses city, county and state lines. Communities within a watershed must work together to address issues like flooding and water quality. Local decisions impact our upstream and downstream neighbors.

What is runoff?

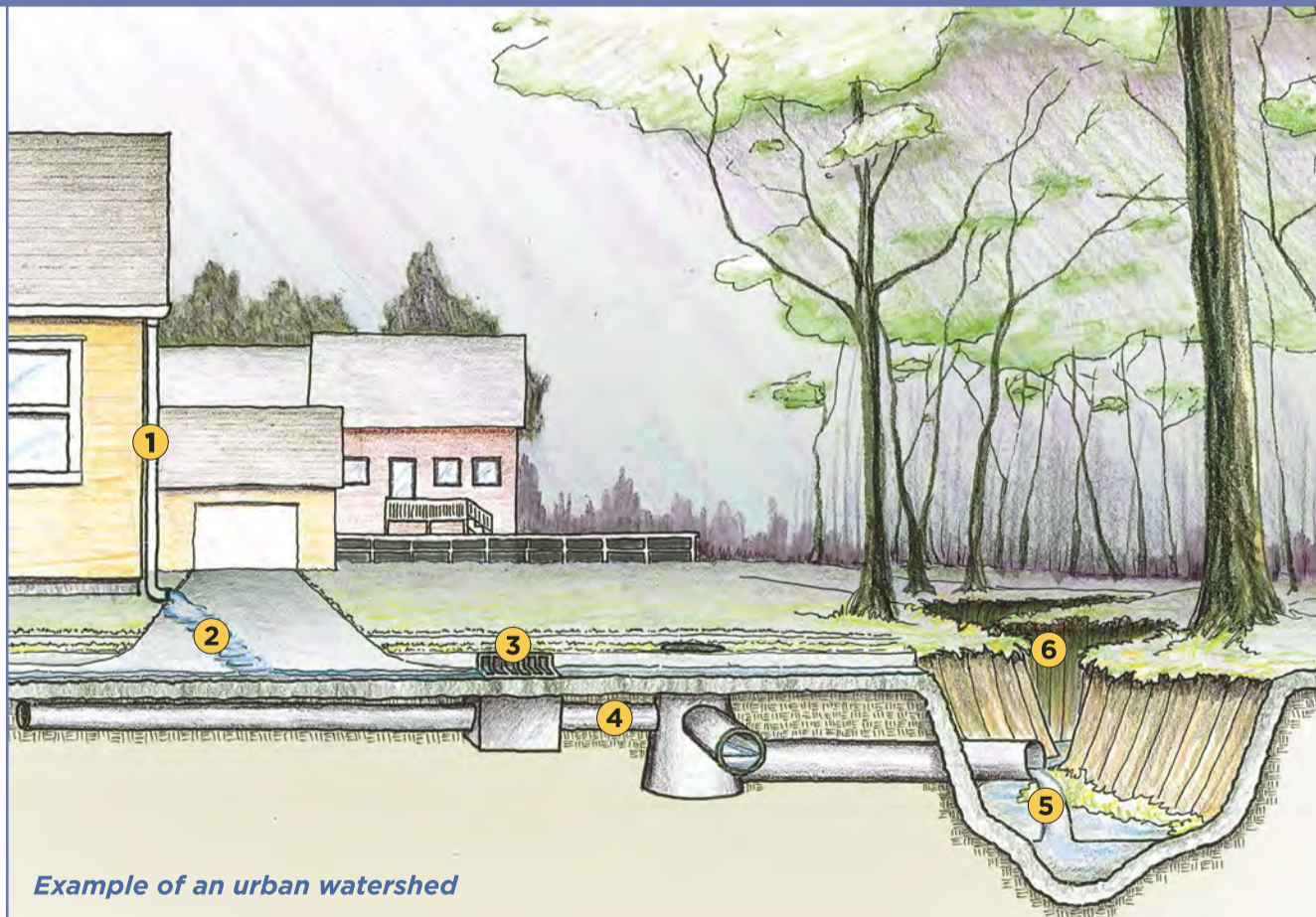
During the construction of homes, roads and office buildings, vegetation is often removed and replaced by large paved areas. These **impervious surfaces** keep rain from soaking into the soil. Paved surfaces also increase the speed and amount of water that rushes down gutters and into stormdrains when it rains. This **stormwater runoff** picks up pollutants like motor oil, lawn chemicals, pet waste, litter, and sediment along the way before flowing into storm drains that empty directly into rivers, lakes and streams — untreated.



Help protect our watersheds

These simple steps can help reduce stormwater runoff and keep the water that drains into our streams and rivers cleaner.

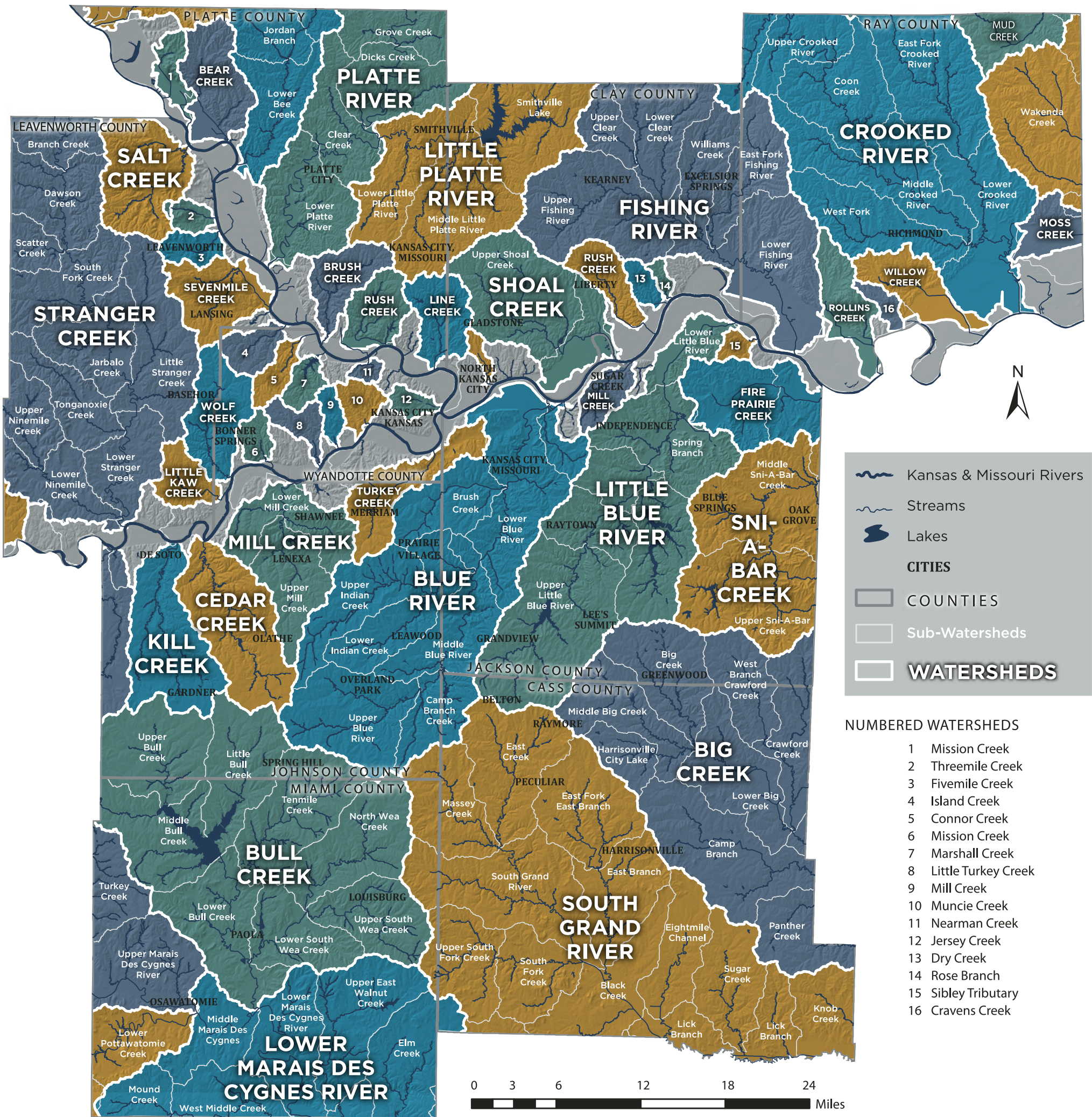
1. Landscape with native plants to increase water absorption and decrease lawn maintenance.
2. Never discard trash or yard waste down stormdrains or into the street.
3. Pick up pet waste and discard in a waste receptacle.
4. Use lawn chemicals safely. Always follow label instructions and never apply before rain or watering the lawn, unless directed.
5. Use compost to improve soil structure and add nutrients.
6. Redirect the downspouts on your home to drain onto lawns and gardens.
7. Wash your car at a professional car wash that filters the wastewater, or wash your car in a grassy area. Do not wash cars on driveways or in the street.
8. Use rain barrels or rain gardens to conserve rain water on your property.



Example of an urban watershed

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Downspout | 3 Stormdrain | 5 Untreated stormwater discharge |
| 2 Untreated runoff | 4 Sewer system | 6 Urban stream |

Find your watershed: *Watersheds in the Kansas City region*



Our local watersheds

In the Kansas City region, all runoff eventually drains into the Missouri River, the world's 15th longest river. The Missouri River watershed drains one-sixth of the water in the United States, from the mountains of western Montana to its confluence with the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri. In downtown Kansas City, Kansas, the Kansas River flows into the Missouri River at Kaw Point. The Kansas River watershed is part of the larger Missouri River watershed and drains about one-third of the state of Kansas.

Knowing our watersheds helps remind us that our actions can impact — for better or for worse — all of the streams and rivers in our region.

For more information please visit marc.org/water, or call 816-474-4240.

