

What is Your Watershed Address?

INTRODUCTION:

If someone were to ask you where you live, you would probably give them your street address. A street address is the way most people describe where they live in relation to other streets, houses, and buildings. But you have a second address, as well--your "watershed address." This address describes where you live in relation to the entire system of streams, creeks, and rivers flowing from the land into the Chesapeake Bay. In the following exercise, you will be investigating your watershed address to determine how your community is physically connected to the Bay by its waterways.

MATERIALS:

- County or local map
- Maryland state highway map
- Article, "Lifting Sewer Lid Elevates Spirit But Yields No Baseball," 7/10/93, *Baltimore Sun*
- Schoolyard scavenger hunt map



Charles R. Hazard

PROCEDURE:

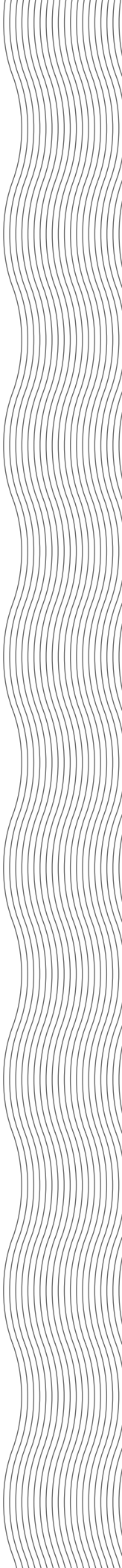
1. Think about what you have learned about your connection to the Bay from watching the video and doing the scavenger hunt on your school grounds. List four ways that you think you are connected to the Bay.

2. Earlier your teacher gave you instructions for marking locations on your maps. Working with your small group, use the county or local map to find where your school is located. Mark the location of your school on the map as instructed by your teacher.

3. Now use the map to locate the waterways (streams, rivers, the Bay) nearest to your school and your residence. Which waterway is closest to your school? To your residence?

4. Author Tom Horton suggests that “virtually no one in the watershed lives more than half a mile, about a 15 minute walk, from a stream,” (Turning the Tide, p.59). To find out if this is true for you, calculate how long it would take you to walk from your residence to the nearest waterway. Use the map scale to measure the distance from your residence to the waterway and assume that it takes the average person 20 minutes to walk one mile.

5. Before the days of streets and cars, people would often travel by way of streams and rivers. Imagine that you are traveling on foot and in canoes from the waterway nearest your school to the Chesapeake Bay. On your maps, use markers or grease pencils to trace the path that you would follow. Below, in the order in which you would encounter them, list the waterways, towns, cities, counties, and other political divisions you would travel through to reach the Chesapeake Bay.



6. Read the article, “Lifting Sewer Lid Elevates Spirits But Yields No Baseball,” from the 7/10/93 *Baltimore Sun*, which describes one boy’s experience with a baseball headed toward the Bay.
7. In the article, the boy’s street is drained by a stormdrain. Refer to the map that you created during the scavenger hunt to determine how rainwater drains off your school’s property. If you were to look down a stormdrain at your school or along your school’s drainage pathways, is it possible that you could find the boy’s ball from the article? If you answer yes, refer to your maps and describe the path that the ball might take. If you answer no, explain what factors might prevent the ball from reaching your school’s stormdrains or drainage areas.

8. Suppose, like the boy in the article, you were to lose a ball near your school and it found its way into a stream and eventually to the Chesapeake Bay. Would you “hit” your ball farther than the boy who lost his ball? Use the map scales to measure how far the ball would travel by water from your school to the Bay. (Note: The scales on your local and state maps may vary.)

9. If both you and the boy in the article were to do the same project at your residences to clean the rainwater flowing into nearby drains or ditches, would your project have a greater, lesser, or the same benefit to the Chesapeake Bay as the boy’s project? Use information from this activity to justify your answer.



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SATURDAY'S HERO ROB KASPER

Lifting sewer lid elevates spirits, but yields no baseball

The other night the 8-year-old and I walked out of the house carrying a crowbar, a hoe, a screwdriver, a hammer and a flashlight. We were going lid-lifting.

The lid we were lifting sat on top of a sewer. The sewer was right across the street from the playground where the kid had been batting. He had caught hold of one of my previously unhittable knuckeballs and sent it soaring. The baseball was last seen scooting under a parked car and moving toward the mouth of the storm sewer.

Like a lot of other parents I have spent a fair amount of time searching for various lost balls.

I have beaten bushes with baseball bats. I have mowed down tall grass with scythes. I have shaken tree limbs with rakes. But it has been a few years since I've lifted sewer lids. As my son and I carried out tools through the sticky summer air, memories of previous lid-lifting experiences came back to me.

When I was a kid, I played baseball in the street on similar humid evenings. Often as not the ball ended up in a sewer. Early in summer, when all the kids in the neighborhood had plenty of baseballs, we

didn't care much. But as the summer wore on and the supply of balls dwindled, games would have to be postponed until somebody's big brother could be found to pop the sewer lid.

In my street-ball career I progressed from being the little kid who was sent down the sewer to fetch the ball to the older kid who lifted the little kid out of the sewer to the big brother who was called upon to pop the sewer lid.

The other night as I tried my hand at prying off the lid, I noticed that over the years styles in sewer lids had changed. The sewer lids of my youth seemed much lighter than the thick, round, manhole-like lid I was struggling with.

Moreover, this new-style lid had two holes in it. The holes were there to accommodate a nifty, lid-lifting tool. I had seen teams of workmen around town operate this tool, it fit into the holes and grabbed the lid and the workmen lifted the lid off. I didn't have the lid-lifting tool. But I did have some experience in sewer work.

I knew that rather than hoisting the lid off the hole in one dramatic motion, the trick was to nudge it. My plan was to get an edge of the lid in the air, then wedge something underneath the upraised lid. Once the wedge was in place, I figured I could slide the lid sideways.

Getting the lid loose was an effort. It has been sitting there awhile, and was surround with grime, I tried working the tip of my crowbar into the grime that had fitted the space between the lid and the metal rim surrounding it. But the tip of the crowbar was too thick to get into the grime-filled crack.

I had better luck with an old screwdriver. Tapping it with the hammer, I worked it around the edge of the lid. Every so often the lid would lift slightly, then come

crashing back down. Each vibration shook loose more grime from the edge of the lid. Eventually, there was enough room to stick the shaft of the screwdriver under the lid. When I pried the lid up in the air, I told my kid to shove the hammer handle underneath it. The kid did as he was told, and the lid's seal was broken.

Slowly I slid the lid off the sewer and onto the sidewalk. I didn't want the lid to slip and somehow end up in the sewer.

The sound the lid made as it moved was stirring. It was the same scraping sound heard in movies when the Ark of the Covenant, or some other gleaming treasure, is about to be unearthed.

But when this lid came off, nothing gleamed. As our flashlight probed the darkness, my kid and I saw bricks, bugs, and cobwebs. There was no need for the hoe which I had brought to snag the baseball.

There was no baseball in this sewer. The ball might have passed through. Unlike the flat-bottomed storm sewers that I knew, this one had a steeply sloped bottom that fed into a large drain pipe.

Anything that landed in that sewer, whether it was rainwater or a baseball, was destined to travel down that pipe, into the Jones Falls, and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay.

I was disappointed, but the kid was upbeat. He had never seen the inside of a storm sewer before, and he obviously enjoyed this look at the underground.

He asked where the ball was. I told him it was on its way to the Chesapeake Bay.

"How far away is that" he asked. At least 25 miles, I said, rounding off the mileage.

"Cool." the kid said. "That means I hit a ball 25 miles."