



# Know Your Miami Valley Watershed

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a common body of water, such as a nearby creek, stream, river or lake. Watersheds vary considerably in size. For example, when it rains, all the water from a small watershed may travel to a local creek. That creek, like Wolf Creek, will flow into a larger stream, which in turn collects water from an even larger watershed. Wolf Creek flows into the Great Miami River, which then deposits into the Ohio River. **We all live in a watershed.**

## What is the problem?

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 seeping into the soil and recharging groundwater supplies. Paved surfaces also increase the speed and amount of water that rushes down gutters and into storm drains during a rain storm. This **stormwater runoff** picks up pollutants from motor oil, lawn chemicals, pet waste, salt, litter and soil along the way, before flowing to rivers, lakes and streams — **untreated**.

## What is the consequence?



Photo by Dusty Hall

The large amounts of untreated water entering the storm sewer system - and eventually our streams and lakes - has lasting health, safety, environmental and economic impacts on our watersheds and communities. Watersheds support a wide variety of plants and wildlife and provide outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the Miami Valley.

Protecting the health of our watersheds preserves and enhances the quality of life for Miami Valley residents and all those living downstream.

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