



Activity: Modeling runoff

Materials

- cardboard box lid
- newspaper, scrap paper, or cardboard
- scissors
- Crayola washable markers
- small, white trash bag
- medium binder clips
- spray bottle with water

Directions

1. Place your newspaper, scrap paper, and cardboard inside the boxes lid. These materials will help shape the “land” of your model.
2. Place the trash bag over the model so that it covers the contours of the model’s landscape. Use the Binder clips to secure the edges of the bag to the lid.
3. Once secure, sue the markers to color various areas of the trash bag. Add a few milliliters of tap water to the lowest area of the bag to represent a body of water.
4. Use the spray bottle to simulate rainfall across your watershed. Observe how the water flows, where it is pooled, and how the water content changes.

Analysis Questions

1. Where did the water pool on your model? Why did it stay in these areas?

2. What happens in a watershed when it rains?

3. What color is the water in the pool(s) at the end of the experiment? What does this color represent to you?
