

The Challenges – Teacher Resources

Name _____

Protect Our Watershed

When Paul, Todd, and Maggie arrived at the park, they quickly got off their bikes. Then they locked them to the bike rack next to the path that led to the wetlands and Parkside Pond.

Maggie looked at the big sign posted at the path entrance and read it aloud. "Protect your watershed. Come to the pond cleanup on Saturday!"

"What's a watershed?" asked Paul. "I can see the damp, soggy wetlands and the pond, but I don't see a shed anywhere."

"It's an area where water collects and then sometimes moves to a bigger body of water," said Maggie. "My teacher says that we all live in a watershed. She said to think of a watershed sort of like a neighborhood. That's because everyone who lives in a watershed should help take care of it."

Paul thought about it for a moment and then asked, "Is Parkside Pond part of the watershed?"

"Yes, absolutely," said Maggie. "The wetlands near the pond are part of the watershed too. And so is the creek that runs by the pond that feeds into the stream, which flows into the river that's a few miles away."

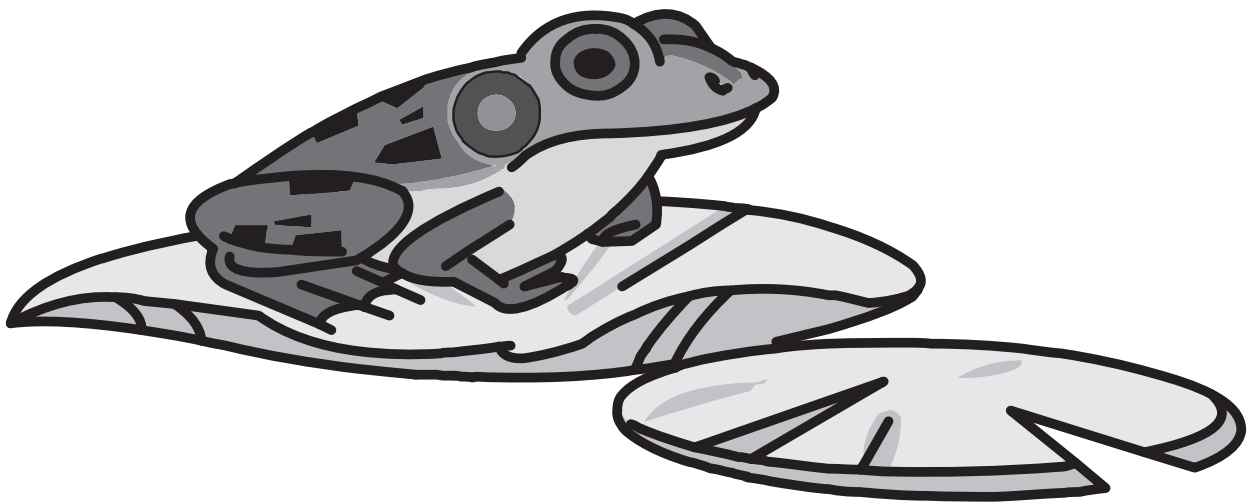
"Whew! That's a lot of different water bodies," said Paul.

Todd pointed at the puddle next to his bike and asked, "Is the puddle part of the watershed?"

"Yes, even the puddle," said Maggie. "It's a mini-watershed. The water collects there and either flows to a bigger water area, soaks into the ground, or evaporates."

As Paul, Todd, and Maggie began walking on the path that led them by the wetlands and toward the pond, they quickly understood why a cleanup was scheduled to take place.

When they arrived at the edge of the pond, Paul exclaimed, "This place is a mess!" Several soda cans and bottles littered the shallow water. A few empty motor oil cans could



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be seen in the bushes nearby. An abandoned kite, several plastic cups, and a variety of candy wrappers floated near a group of water lilies. An old fishing pole with its hook and line still attached was wedged between two rocks in the water.

“Look over there!” exclaimed Todd. “Someone even left an old bicycle tire. What do people think this is, the city dump? People who do this aren’t being very good watershed neighbors.”

It was clear to all three of them that people who visited the area had created this horrible condition. They looked at each other and sighed. Then they continued walking around the pond and silently thought about how people’s actions can harm the environment.

“What do you think all this nasty stuff does to the water?” asked Paul.

“It makes it unhealthy, that’s for sure,” responded Maggie. “I bet the fish don’t appreciate trying to survive among all these pollutants. Just think about what happens to the creatures that live in the wetlands. Not to mention what happens when water overflows into the creek, the stream, and finally the river. All those areas become polluted too.”

“I’m glad there is a cleanup on Saturday,” said Paul. “We need to let others know about it too.”

“It’s going to take the help of a lot of volunteers to clean this place up,” said Todd.

“Let’s tell all of our neighbors and encourage them to come to the cleanup,” said Maggie. “After all, a watershed is like a neighborhood. And it’s everyone’s responsibility to keep it clean and healthy.”

Pretend that your school has decided to have a school area cleanup. List several things that you would expect to find. Suggest ways to encourage people to keep the area clean so that everyone can enjoy it. Write your responses in the space provided.
