

Activity: the storm drain hunt

time: 30 minutes outside, 10 minute in-class wrap-up

Goal: Students will explore their campus and determine where storm water runoff collects. Students will understand that litter and debris from their campus are washed into nearby streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes.

Instructor prep: Set boundaries for students walking around the school. Students will be asked to collect trash and debris samples from around the school and storm drains. This will require bags to collect trash, and gloves at your discretion.

Student prep: Students will need to bring paper and pencil with them.

Outline:

1. Students will explore their campus and draw a map of where storm drains, gutters, or other storm water collection features are located.
2. While students are looking for drains, they will also look for things that could be swept in to storm drains (trash, leaves, oil residue, etc.), and they will collect samples to bring back to class.
3. Back in the classroom students should catalog the types of debris that they found, and share the information with the class.

Conclusion:

1. What did students notice about the location of the storm drains? Students should understand that water flows downhill, and storm drains are usually located at low points.
2. Ask students about the types of debris they found. Are there many types trash and other debris, or primarily one type?
3. How do the students feel about the health of their school watershed? If the students are dissatisfied with what they found, can they come up with a way to improve the situation?

Clean up: separate any recyclables and dispose of trash