



You know the city that you live in, you probably even know the county, but do you know your watershed? What is a watershed? A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common waterway, such as a river, stream, and eventually to the ocean. Even though you may not live close to the beach, many of the things you do can affect the health of plants and animals in your neighborhood and all the way to the ocean. Check out the stencils painted on the stormdrains, indicating that everything that goes into them eventually leads to the ocean.

Look at this map to see where you live and discover your watershed. Where does water from your neighborhood drain? Once you understand your watershed, you will have a better understanding of what you can do to take care of it.

**SEWERS AND STORM DRAINS**

In Los Angeles County, we have two sets of pipes, sewers and storm drains. Both collect the polluted water created in our watersheds.

Sewers are large, underground pipes that carry wastewater or sewage. Wastewater is the water that comes from sinks, toilets, showers, washing machines, and anything else from inside your home, school, or other buildings. Once wastewater goes down the drain, it travels to the sewer.

There are thousands of miles of sewers in Los Angeles County. The sewers transport the wastewater to wastewater treatment plants, where the water is cleaned. Look at the map to find your local wastewater treatment plant. Some of the clean water from the treatment plant is recycled. For example, it is used to irrigate parks and golf courses. The remaining clean water is released to a river or into the ocean.

Storm drains are pipes that are designed to carry rain and other "runoff" water away from our streets and sidewalks so they don't flood. When it rains, water runs down the streets collecting anything that is along its way. It picks up litter, pet waste, cigarette butts, fertilizers, and more. The water flows into catch basins (openings in curbs) and these connect to the storm drains. When it is not raining, these catch basins collect runoff from over-watered lawns or driveway car washes.

Storm drains mostly do not lead to a treatment plant. Instead, they go straight to a river or to the ocean. The dirty water does not get cleaned and it ends up polluting the beach and the ocean. However, we can help! If we don't litter, pick up after our pets, and keep our neighborhood clean, we will protect the rivers and the ocean. Check out the poster on the other side and identify other things you can do so that your watershed is like the one in Rightville.

**For More Information on Watersheds**

Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

[www.lacsd.org](http://www.lacsd.org)

Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council

[www.lasgrwc.org](http://www.lasgrwc.org)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

[www.888cleanla.org](http://www.888cleanla.org)

San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

[www.rmc.ca.gov](http://www.rmc.ca.gov)

Heal the Bay

[www.healthebay.org](http://www.healthebay.org)

TreePeople

[www.treepeople.org](http://www.treepeople.org)

Think Earth

[www.thinkearth.org](http://www.thinkearth.org)

Federal and State

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

[www.epa.gov/watershed](http://www.epa.gov/watershed)

U.S. Forest Service-Angeles National Forest

[www.fs.fed.us/r5/angeles](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/angeles)

California Coastal Conservancy

[www.coastalconservancy.ca.gov](http://www.coastalconservancy.ca.gov)

California Coordinated Resource Management and Planning

[www.ccrmp.org](http://www.ccrmp.org)

# KNOW YOUR WATERSHEDS

