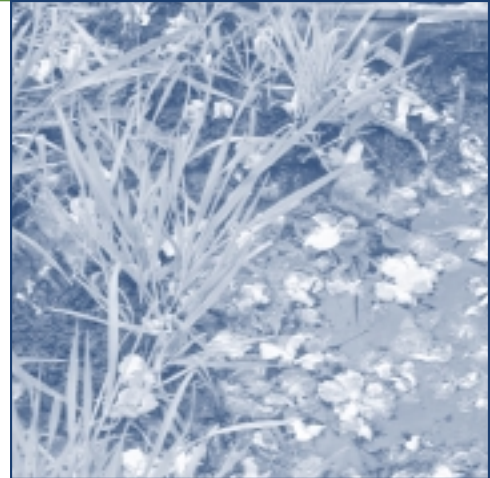


WHERE DOES YOUR WATER COME FROM?

PART 4 – 45 minutes

OVERVIEW

After teams have collected data at least twice, students read a one-page information sheet about the origin of their water, and the two systems for water disposal. Students take what they learn and relate it to the data they are collecting. Students continue to observe and record data.



Standards: 3c, 3e, 6f

Materials

- Information Sheet B – Where Does Your Water Come From? – 1 per group

Vocabulary Words

- Reservoir
- Sanitary sewer system
- Stormdrain
- Stormwater
- Wastewater treatment plant

Other Resources

See Teacher Resources, page 116 for additional activities that relate to the California water system.

Helpful Hints

- Contact your local water utility for information about the main source of water specific to your community.
- Help students investigate where the water goes after it leaves the campus.
- Provide students with information about a local body of water – lake, river, stream, or ocean. To locate your closest body of water, consult a local map. Go to www.epa.gov/surf to find the name of your watershed.
- If possible, take a field trip to the local waterway to observe how humans may be impacting it.

PART 4: WHERE DOES YOUR WATER COME FROM?

PROCEDURE

1. Have each student read Information Sheet B – Where Does Your Water Come From?
2. Have student groups discuss what they read and the ways in which it relates to their investigations. Each group can report their main points to the class as part of a group discussion.
3. Looking at the map on Information Sheet B, have students identify where some of the main sources of water for their region of California may come from. Provide resource material from the local water utility to have students investigate further to confirm their ideas.
4. To find out where water that flows across their campus goes, have students use a local map to identify the pathway that water may take from their campus to the nearest body of water.

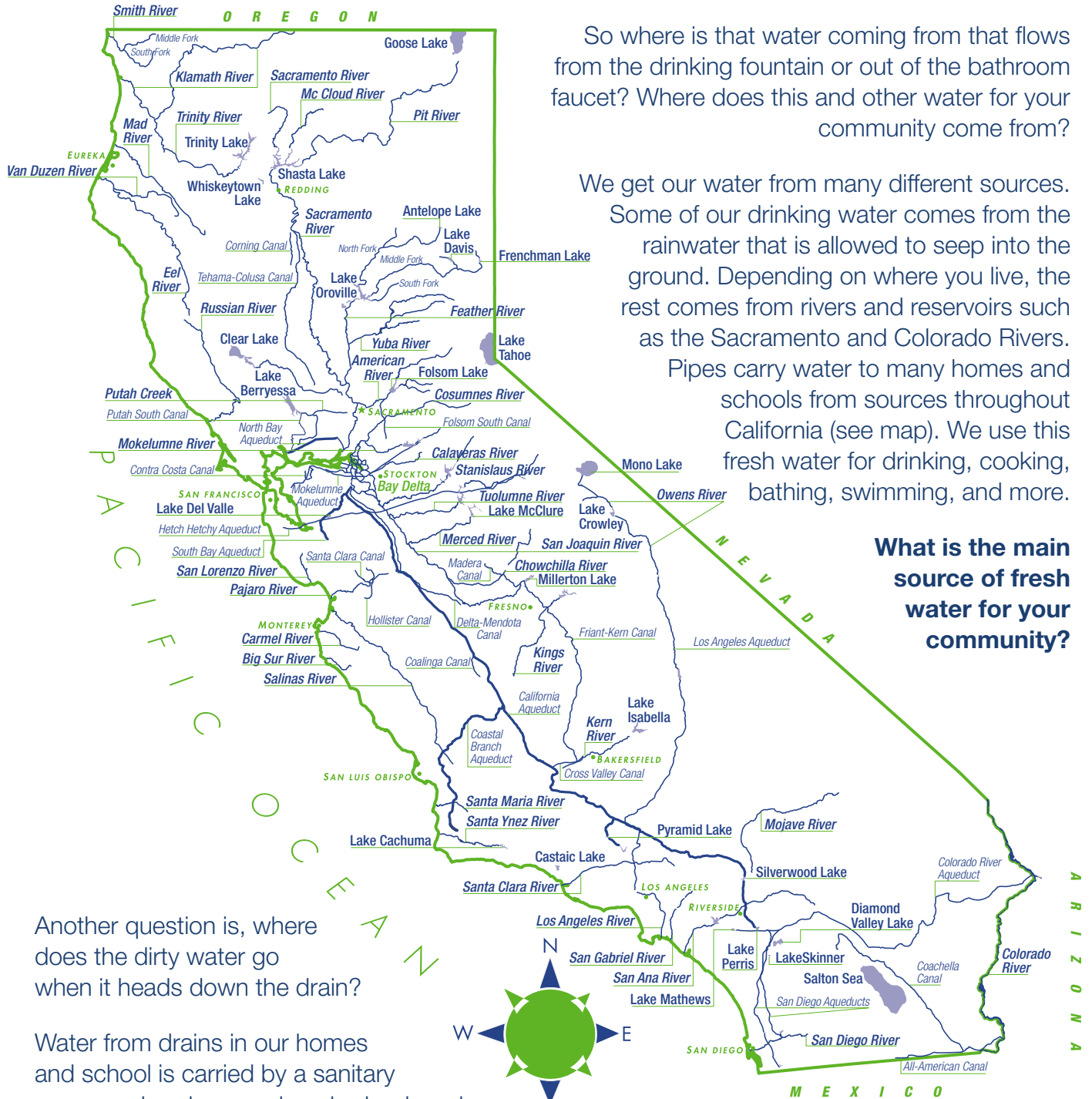


GUIDED QUESTIONS



- What is the origin of the fresh water for your community?
- Is it piped in from a reservoir or does it come from a groundwater source?
- What is the closest body of water to our school?
- Where, if at all, does that body of water flow to?
- What impact is what you are observing having on your local water system? How do you know?

WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM?



So where is that water coming from that flows from the drinking fountain or out of the bathroom faucet? Where does this and other water for your community come from?

We get our water from many different sources. Some of our drinking water comes from the rainwater that is allowed to seep into the ground. Depending on where you live, the rest comes from rivers and reservoirs such as the Sacramento and Colorado Rivers. Pipes carry water to many homes and schools from sources throughout California (see map). We use this fresh water for drinking, cooking, bathing, swimming, and more.

What is the main source of fresh water for your community?

Another question is, where does the dirty water go when it heads down the drain?

Water from drains in our homes and school is carried by a sanitary sewer system to a wastewater treatment plant. Here, dirty water is treated (or cleaned) before it is directed into rivers or the ocean.

WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM? (continued)

However, did you know that there is another system of drains for rainwater? Most people don't know that when it rains, this stormwater is sent quickly off of city streets to prevent flooding. It is carried off by an underground system of stormdrains that lead directly to the nearest body of water, such as a river, lake, or stream. The problem is, this water is never cleaned before it arrives there.

Into what body of water – river, stream, lake, or ocean – is the water from your schooyard going?

Many cities and school grounds contain up to 90 percent hard surfaces such as rooftops, concrete playgrounds, streets, and parking lots where water collects quickly and runs off into the stormdrain system. This not only prevents water from seeping into the ground to replenish underground supplies of fresh water, but problems occur when stormwater picks up land pollution and delivers it to our rivers and the ocean untreated.

Think about the following questions:

- What are you observing during your data collection? Do hard surfaces have an impact?
- What about the “land pollution?” What impact on your local water system do you think it may have?

