

# Glossary

- **aquifer** – An underground zone of earth that contains water.
- **catch basin** – The opening in a curb or gutter that catches water and directs it to stormdrains.
- **concrete channel** – Refers to the paved bottom and sides of a river bed.
- **creek** – A small stream or tributary to a river.
- **culvert** – A channel that directs water to a drain.
- **dam** – A barrier built across a river or stream to hold water.
- **ditch** – A long, narrow drainage trench.
- **evapotranspiration meter** – A meter used to measure evaporation from ground surface and vegetation cover.
- **fertilizer** – Nutrients used by plants for growth.
- **flood** – When water overflows the boundaries of a stream, river or other body of water.
- **freshwater** – Water with less than 0.5 parts per thousand of dissolved salts and usable for human consumption.
- **groundwater** – The freshwater that fills the cracks and pores beneath the earth's surface, which supply wells and springs and can be pumped out, cleaned, and used for our water needs.
- **gutter** – A channel for draining off water.
- **impervious** – Not having pores or openings that allow water to pass through.
- **land pollution** – The trash dropped on the land, such as gum, food wrappers, cans, paper, and plastic bags. It also includes pet waste and oil dripped from cars.
- **mulch** – A protective covering of fallen leaves, branches and bark that cover the soil and is in a constant state of decay. It serves to feed the soil, prevent evaporation and erosion and insulates the roots of plants and trees.
- **native species** – An indigenous, as opposed to introduced, species.
- **percolation** – The movement or flow of water through soil or rocks.

- **pervious** – Having pores or openings that allow water to pass through.
- **pesticides** – Chemicals used to kill pests. Pests may include ants, termites and rats.
- **polluted runoff** – Sometimes referred to as non-point source pollution is caused by rainfall moving over and through the ground picking up pollutants along its journey.
- **river** – A large body of running water moving along defined channels from higher elevations to lower ones.
- **runoff** – Water that flows over the ground because it cannot seep into the soil, evaporate, or transpire through plants. It finds its way into streams and rivers as surface flow, and may pick-up contaminants, such as trash and fertilizer, along the way.
- **sanitary sewer system** – An underground system of pipes that carries waste water from homes and businesses to treatment plants where it is cleaned, solids and pollutants are removed, and the water is discharged into the ocean.
- **soil** – The top layer of Earth's surface that contains rock, minerals and organic material.
- **stormdrain** – Above ground or below ground pipes and channels that transport stormwater to the ocean for flood control purposes.
- **stream** – A small body of running water moving along natural channels from higher elevations to lower ones.
- **valley** – A broad area of low-lying land situated between hills or mountains and usually having a river or stream flowing along its bottom.
- **watershed** – The area of land that directs water to a common drainage or river system.