

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Watershed Wisdom: Day 5

This week, Weekday Wonders encourages young scientists to explore the movement of water through a watershed. They will learn about the different parts of a watershed, the water cycle, and how to protect and care for our most important natural resource and the plants and animals that depend on it.

These curated activities are listed in a suggested sequence but may be done in the order that works best for you and your young scientists. Learn more about this series in the [Introduction to Weekday Wonders](#).



Question of the Day

How can you protect your watershed?



Daily Nature Journal

Ask your young scientist to go outside to complete a daily nature journal entry. If you need additional information, these entries are described in the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#).



Wise Warriors

Now that your young scientist has loads of watershed wisdom, he or she can become a Watershed Warrior! Your scientist can choose to join the ranks of those worldwide who take on the responsibility of educating, protecting, and advocating on behalf of water and all life it sustains.

Tell your young scientist that Maya Angelou was an American poet and civil rights activist. She once said, “When you know better, you do better.” Remind your young scientist that s/he has learned about how humans are interconnected with water, wildlife, and each other. Now your scientist can decide how to use the new information.

One way your scientist might use new water knowledge is to keep track of water usage in your home for a day. If he or she would like to, allow your scientist to monitor anyone in the home who will be using water. This will help him or her become aware of when and how water is being used. The constant “policing” of your family’s water will, in turn, make all members of the family more aware of their own behaviors and habits—potentially saving you money at the same time!

For older scientists, they can imagine that they are in charge of the Tennessee River watershed. Have your scientist design and create a mural, sign, or poster to engage and educate the public to take actions that can protect the Tennessee River. Your scientist may work from what he or she already knows or may do additional research to learn more.



Nature Journal

For this Nature Journal entry, ask your young scientist to write or draw about why s/he thinks it is important to pay attention to the water used at home. Ask him or her to include ways to conserve water, clean water, or protect water at home or in the neighborhood.



Water Walk #5

Our Watershed Warriors are ready for action! Let your scientist walk around their yard, neighborhood, or park to locate areas where dirt or sediment is eroding and entering the watershed. *Fun fact:* Dirt is considered water pollution. Sediment pollutes most waterways in the U.S. and is a major problem for the quality of water and for the quality of life for aquatic plants and animals, particularly those animals that live or nest on the bottom. Many aquatic animals rely on the habitat created by rock crevices, but when sediment settles, those rocks get smothered and no longer provide food, shelter, and safe hiding places.

Once your young scientist has safely located some areas of erosion, ask him or her to brainstorm ways to help protect the watershed by stopping sediment and other pollutants from entering the water. Your scientist should consider soil that washes away when watering a garden or mud getting swept into waterways during a rain storm.

Encourage creativity. Also share that there are two easy ways that young scientists can help.

- (1) If you live where there are storm drains on the street, supervise and assist your scientist while they remove debris from the area around the drains. This simple task will keep pollutants from flowing directly into the river the next time it rains.
- (2) Create a natural filter for the water that will leave the yard. If possible and permitted, your scientist could help plant native shrubs and herbs along the area where s/he found sediment eroding. Plant roots are great at holding dirt in place.

Go for another walk around the yard, neighborhood, or park (if it is open and safe to do so) in search of anything that could be harmful to animals, plants, or the water itself. See if your young scientist can find places to put these actions to use. They can be a Wise Warrior!

For more information on how to improve the watershed on your property, check out the USDA's website on [Backyard Conservation](#).