



Watershed in My Hands



Grade Level: All ages

Duration: 30 minutes

Objective: Students learn what a watershed is and its defining characteristics.

Materials:

- Georgia River Basins Map
- Atlantic and Gulf Slopes Map

Part 1 – Defining a Watershed

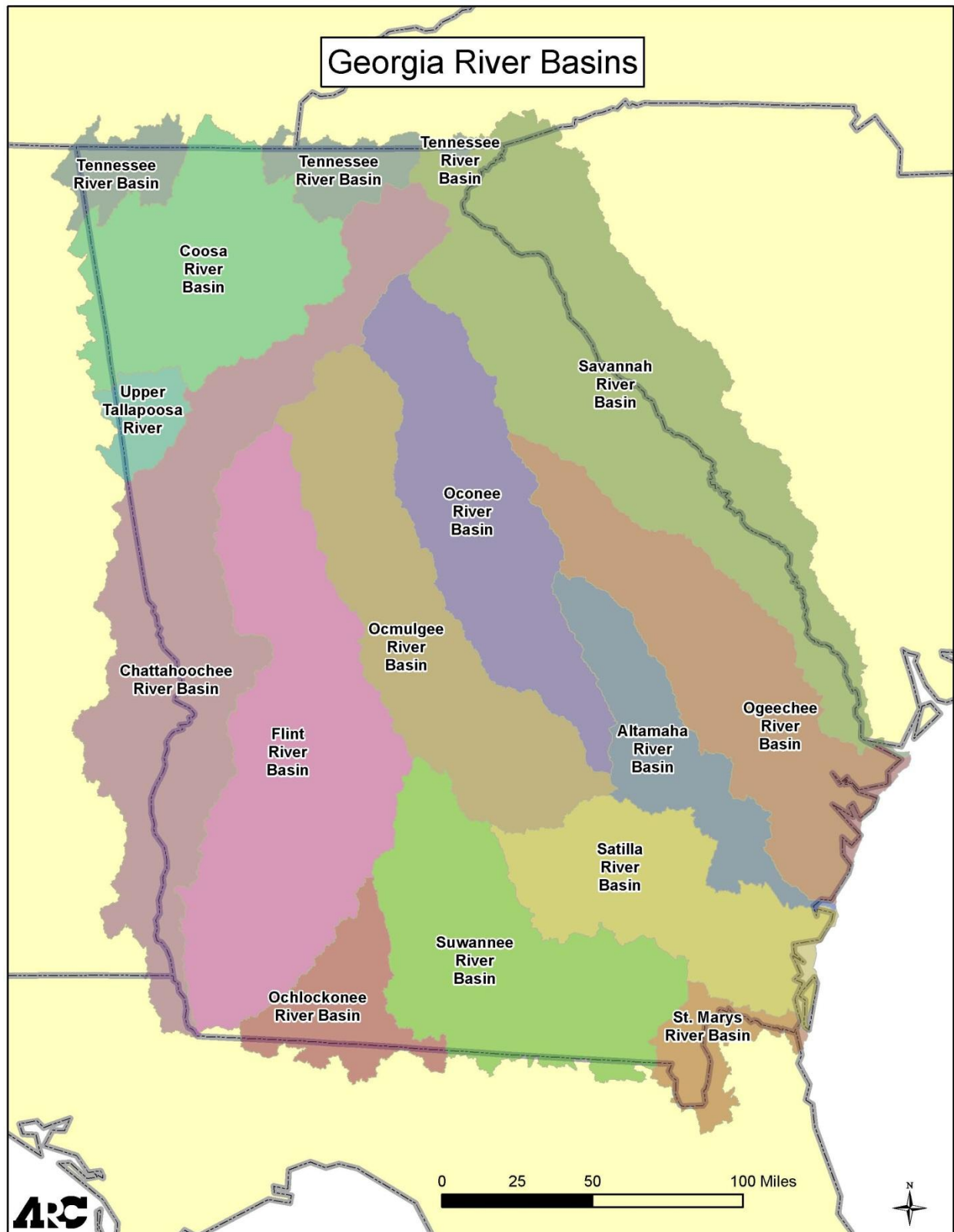
1. Ask the students “What is a watershed?”
 - Define a watershed – An area of land that “sheds” water to the same river, lake or stream; a basin
2. Tell the students that they can each create a model watershed; all they need is their hands. Have students hold up their hands and cup them with palms up to make a shape of a bowl. Explain that their watershed boundary is the top of their thumb and fingers. In a landscape these high areas are the ridgeline.
3. Ask the students where would rain or snow melt would travel in their watershed. [Option - you can spray water in their hands. Have the students stand in a circle if you do so. It will make it easier]
 - The water would flow to the lowest point following the lines in their hands in the same way water flows from creeks and streams to larger rivers and lakes.
4. Ask for a volunteer to join you in the front of the class or middle of the classroom.
 - Have the student cup their hands. Tell the students that your volunteer is showing a closed watershed.

- Orient your hands so your watershed flows into the volunteers. Explain that one watershed flowing into another is an open watershed. Most watersheds are open watersheds that flow into another drainage basin and eventually flow into an ocean.
5. Tell the students that some watersheds are big and some are small. One of the largest watersheds in the world is located in the United States. Ask them if they know which watershed it is.
- Mississippi Watershed – 40% of the United States and includes 31 states and 2 Canadian Provinces.

Part 2 – Your watershed

6. Ask the students if they live in a watershed
- If they say yes, ask which one.
 - If they say no, explain that everyone lives in a watershed.
7. Use the Georgia River Basins Map to identify which major watershed the students live in.
8. Use the Atlantic and Gulf Slopes Map to discuss the flow of water from their watershed to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean.

Georgia River Basins Map



Atlantic and Gulf Slopes Map

