Watersheds and Hydrologic Unit Codes

What's a Watershed?

A watershed is the total area of land that drains into a particular body of water. A wetland has a watershed. So does a stream. Rivers, lakes and seas all have their own watersheds. Smaller watersheds may cover only a few acres, but they are nested within the larger watershed that may measure thousands of square miles!

Watersheds are not bound by county, state or other political boundaries. The St. Joseph River watershed crosses 8 county lines in 3 states. The Lake Erie Basin watershed crosses the US border with Canada.

Land use and storm water runoff from a small watershed determine the quality of surface water in small streams and waterways. These small streams can in turn influence the water quality of larger streams. So the way you use the land in your neighborhood can affect the quality of water many, many miles downstream from your home or work place!

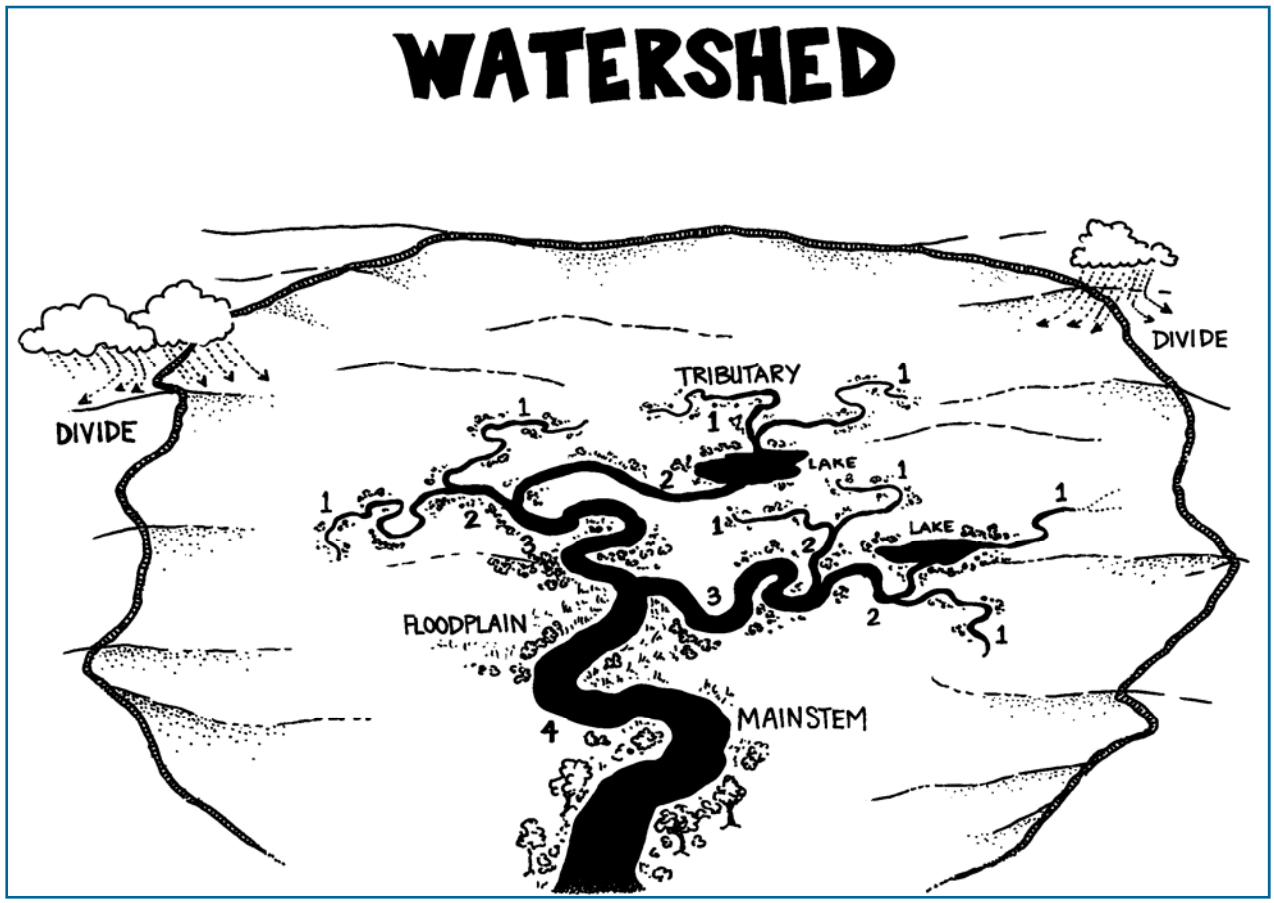
Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)

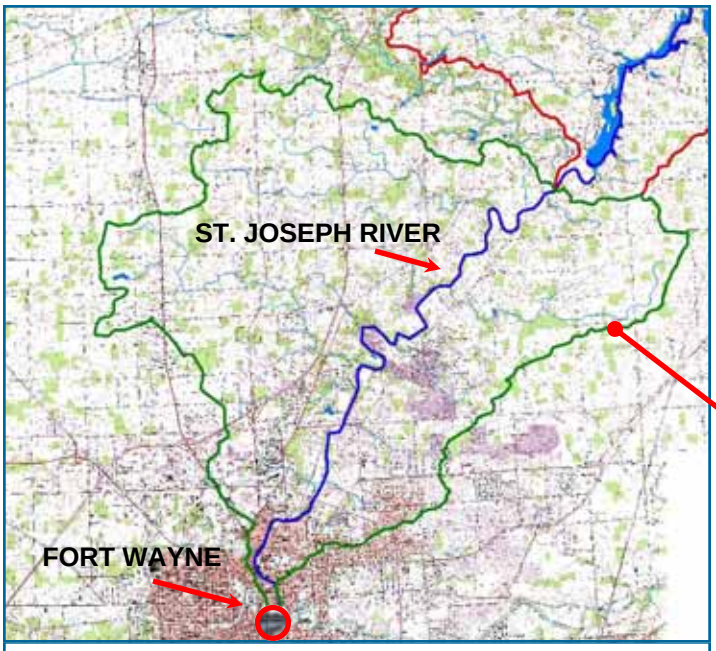
A HUC is a way of identifying all of the drainage basins or watersheds in the United States in a nested arrangement from largest to smallest. (See page 3 for a visual example). Described by the U.S. Geological Survey, hydrologic units represent the geographic boundaries of water as it flows across the landscape.

The St. Joseph River Watershed is identified as an 8-digit HUC number 04100003. The 04 identifies it as being part of the Great Lakes watershed.

The St. Joseph River Watershed is divided into nine sub watersheds which have 11-digit HUC numbers. For example the Lower St. Joseph's HUC number is 04100003100.

Within the Lower St. Joseph watershed in Allen County, there are four subwatersheds with 14-digit HUC numbers. The Schoppman Drain is one of those, located just north of downtown Fort Wayne. The Schoppman Drain's HUC number is 04100003100040.

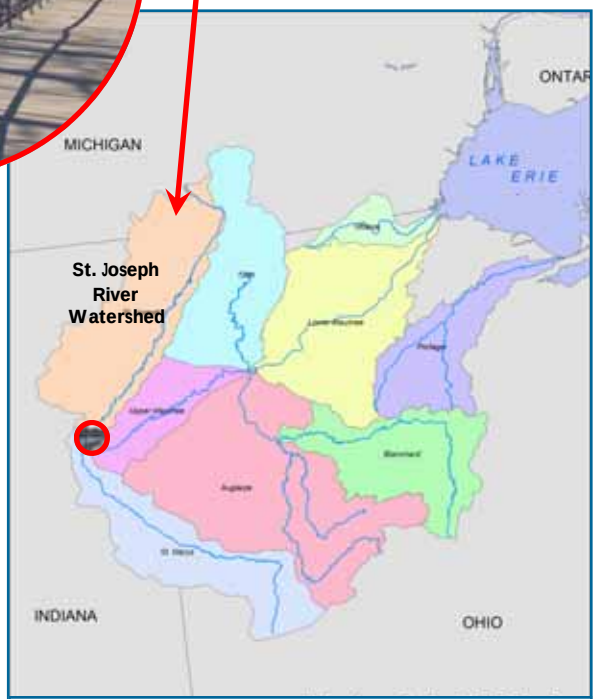




2 The Lower St. Joseph sub-watershed (outlined in green) is one of nine 11-DIGIT HUCs in the St. Joseph River Watershed

The nine 11-digit HUCs in the St. Joseph River Watershed **3**

1 The Schoppman Drain in north-central Fort Wayne is a 14-digit HUC in the Lower St. Joseph sub-watershed



Western Lake Erie Basin Major Watersheds

The St. Joseph River Watershed is one of ten 8-DIGIT HUCs in the Western Lake Erie Basin **4**

5 Great Lakes Watershed in the United States and Canada