

ELF NOTES

Environmental Learning for the Future - Vermont Institute of Natural Science

www.vinsweb.org/education/elf/volunteers.html

STREAM MAPPING

Trace the route of a stream to see where it comes from and where it goes. Look at a topographic map (one that shows elevations) of the area near your home. See if you can find the start of a stream that flows close to home. Walk in or along the stream in different places along its course, recording and mapping what you find. What kinds of plants and signs of animals can you find living in the water and along the bank? What is the stream bottom like? Is it different from one place to another? Follow the stream to where it flows into a bigger stream or river. Does it flow slower or faster? Streams can be full of surprises. They meander in and out of rocky areas, can be lazy or swift and might go tumbling from high to low places. Use a large area map to follow the path of the stream beyond where you can go. Try to trace its path to the ocean.

HABITATS STREAMS



A stream is formed when water, absorbed by the soil, is pulled by gravity across the surface of the earth. As the water moves, it carves a course for itself, following the path of least resistance.

A stream's current sets it apart from still-water bodies and creates varying conditions and a variety of habitats along its course. The speed of the current determines the texture of the streambed and the distribution of organisms.

Animal life in a healthy stream is diverse and abundant due to high oxygen in the tumbling water and the variety of habitats available. Animals and plants that live in a stream's moving water must be adapted to withstand the constant movement of the water. However, there are little pools along the bank that provide calmer habitat and can serve as nurseries for animals that go on to live in the rougher waters as adults.

ELF NEWS FROM SCHOOL