

Vocabulary for BMP Demonstration Projects

This vocabulary is intended for use by third to sixth grade students working on school-site best management practice (BMP) projects. It is not intended to be comprehensive, and in particular does not include vocabulary on weather and plants that most students acquire in Kindergarten through second grade. For additional reference, consult the glossary of the science text used in your classroom, or the Delta Science Dictionary (Grades 3–4, or Grades 5–6).

adaptation = A body part or behavior that helps a living thing survive in an environment. *A porcupine's quills are an adaptation that keeps it safe from its enemies.* (noun)

algae = Plantlike organisms, often one-celled, that grow in water. *Algae have no stems, leaves, roots or flowers.* (plural noun)

bacteria = One-celled organisms that all exist all around you and inside you. *Bacteria break down dead materials.* (plural noun)

BMP = best management practice. Ways of constructing or using the environment that have the least impact on nature and natural processes. *The school built a BMP project that captured runoff before it went to the lake.* (noun)

clay = the smallest particles of soil. *Clay feels slick or sticky when wet.* (noun)

climate = what the weather is like over a long period of time in a particular place. *Lake Tahoe has a temperate climate.* (noun)

community = everything that interacts in a place, whether people in a human environment or everything in a natural environment. Humans depend on and are part of natural environments. *Plants and animals in a community depend on one another for survival.* (noun)

conifer = An evergreen tree that produces seeds inside cones. *Jeffrey pine, white fir and incense cedar are all conifers.* (noun)

conservation = the wise use of natural resources to prevent damage. *Students work on conservation projects to help the natural environment.* (noun)

deciduous = plants that lose and re-grow their leaves every year. *Cottonwood and aspens trees are deciduous.* (adjective)

decomposition = biological and chemical breakdown of nutrients from dead plants and animals, including bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms. *Fungi are important in the decomposition of dead trees.* (noun)

dirt = soil out of place. *Soil tracked into the classroom is dirt.* (noun)

diversity = Difference or variety. *The stream-side environment has a great diversity of plants.* (noun)

ecosystem = all the living things found in a place. *The organisms in an ecosystem depend on one another to survive.* (noun)

environment = all the living and non-living things found in a place, including plants, animals, soil, rocks and climate. *Climate, land, air, water and food sources are all part of our environment.* (noun)

erosion = loosening and movement of the solid material on the land's surface by water runoff, wind, moving ice and landslides. Erosion can also occur from humans disturbing the soil. *Water and wind are the main sources of erosion.* (noun)

evaporation = the change of a liquid to a gas. *Evaporation made the puddle disappear in a day.* (noun)

FBI = fungus, bacteria and invertebrates; the tiny animals and organisms that break down dead plants and animals. *The FBI will pick your bones clean.*

fertilizer = substance added to soil to help plants grow. Fertilizers can pollute streams and lakes. (noun)

fungus = plantlike organisms with no leaves, flowers, roots or green color. *Fungi, such as mushrooms and toadstools, make up one of the five kingdoms of living things.* (singular noun; fungi is plural noun)

groundwater = water trapped underground in rocks, clay or pore spaces. *Water that soaks into the ground becomes groundwater.* (noun)

habitat = a place where plants and animals live, grow and reproduce. *The habitat for raccoons is near streams and lakes.* (noun)

infiltration = water soaking into the ground. *Infiltration is slow in already wet soils.* (noun)

invasive = a non-native taking over rapidly where something else once lived or grew. *Thistles are invasive plants in disturbed areas.* (noun)

invertebrate = An animal without a backbone. *Insects, worms and snails are invertebrates.* (noun)

loam = rich soil that is made up of clay, sand, silt and humus. *Most plants grow well in loam.* (noun)

native = plants and animals that adapted over a long period of time to a particular place. *Students planted native plants to restore the meadow.* (noun)

natural resource = material found in nature and used by humans, such as trees, water and oil. *We are using natural resources at a very rapid rate.* (noun)

non-native = plants and animals that adapted to a different place but were brought here by humans or sometimes natural processes. *The non-native plants were using a lot of water.* (noun)

non-point source pollution = pollution that comes from a wide area such as a field or parking lots. *Water running off from the parking lot carries oil and rubber, a non-point source pollution to the lake.* (noun)

nutrient = raw material that provides food for organisms' growth, including humans. *Some nutrients were missing from the soil and the plants grew very slowly.* (noun)

organic material = decomposed plant and animal material, found in and on soil, that provides nutrients for living organism. *We added organic material to enrich the soil.* (noun)

organism = A living thing. *Organisms are an important part of nature.* (noun)

permeable = A substance which passes water easily. *The forest soil was permeable, but the asphalt was not.* (adjective)

point source pollution = pollution that comes from one place such as a factory or sewer pipe. *The factory leaked chemicals into the river, an example of point source pollution.* (noun)

pollution = A harmful substance that gets into the air, water, or soil. *Fertilizer running off the grass is pollution.* (noun)

precipitation = moisture that falls from the air as rain or snow. *Rain, snow, sleet and hail are forms of precipitation.* (noun)

restoration = bringing back natural processes, and native plants and animals to an area. *Students worked on a restoration project by planting native plants.* (verb)

runoff = water from precipitation that is not adsorbed but flows over the land, carrying sediment and other materials to streams, lakes and other bodies of water. *Runoff after a heavy rain carries polluted water to the lake.* (noun)

sand = particles of soil that are large enough to feel; waves deposit sand on beaches. *She rubbed the soil between her fingers and felt the rough sand.* (noun)

sediment = earth material carried by water from eroding areas of the land. Sediment can clog rivers and streams, destroy wildlife habitat, and pollute water supplies. *A layer of new sediment was deposited by the flood.* (noun)

service-learning = learning while doing real work to meet a community need. *The class created a service-learning project to grow food for the community.* (noun, verb or adjective)

silt = tiny particles of rock that are smaller than sand and larger than clay. *Silt often settles as sediment in river deltas.* (noun)

soil = the collective term for the natural bodies of earthy materials that cover much of the earth's surface; a complex combination of mineral and organic materials. *He learned that dirt was just soil out of place.* (noun)

transpiration = the giving off of water by plants. *Transpiration takes place through tiny openings in the leaves.* (noun)

wetlands = a transitional area between water and land that is saturated long enough to support very moist soils and plants that grow in water. *We found wetlands along the creek.* (noun)

water cycle (hydrologic cycle) = all the places water goes on its journey from water bodies to precipitation and back, including evaporation, condensation, precipitation, runoff, infiltration, and transpiration. *A simple water cycle includes evaporation, condensation and precipitation.* (noun)

water table = the upper area of ground water. *The water table was close enough to the surface to make a spring.* (noun)

watershed = the land area from which surface runoff drains to one single point, such as a stream, lake or ocean. *We all live in a watershed.* (noun)