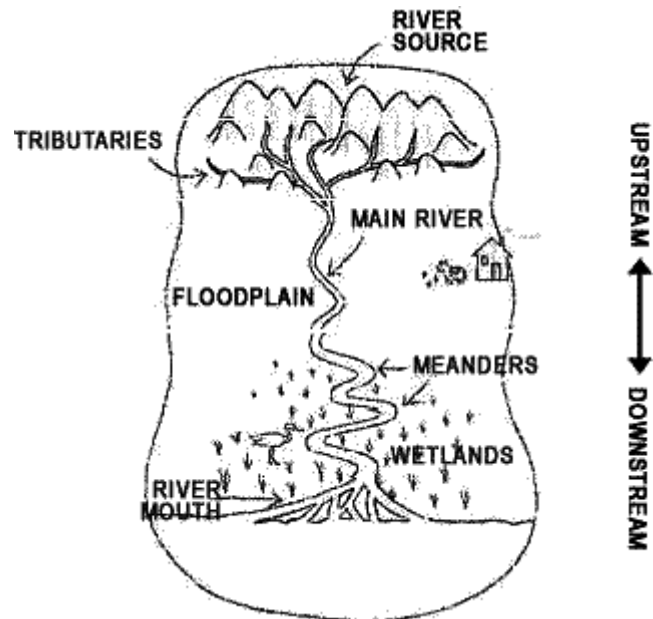


What's a river?

Rivers are large natural streams of water, more or less continuous, flowing in channels. Every river is part of a larger system—a watershed-, which is the land drained by a river and its tributaries.



The **river source**, also called the headwaters, is the beginning of a river. Often located in mountains, the source of water is the rain or the snowmelt.

A **tributary** is a smaller stream or river that joins a larger or main river.

The **main river** is the primary channel and course of a river.

A **floodplain** is a relatively flat land located in each side of a river. These areas can be flooded during heavy rain or snowmelt.

A **meander** is a loop in a river channel.

Upstream is in the direction of or nearer to the source of a river

Wetlands are low flat areas saturated with water for long periods.

The **river mouth** is the place where a river flows into a larger body of water, such as another river, a lake, or an ocean.

A **watershed boundary** marks the limit of a watershed. The watershed is the land drained by a river and its tributaries. Anything that affects a watershed may eventually impact its tributaries and river as well as the water body at the mouth of the river. People's actions within a watershed can affect the overall quality of its rivers.

Downstream is in the direction for or nearer to the mouth of a river.