

# Glossary

---

## WATER

### A

**aquifer** a body of rock or sediment that stores groundwater and allows the flow of groundwater

**artificial eutrophication** a process that increases the amount of nutrients in a body of water through human activities, such as waste disposal and land drainage

### B

**biomagnification** the accumulation of pollutants at successive levels of the food chain

### D

**dam** a structure that is built across a river to control a river's flow

**desalination** (DEE SAL uh NAY shun) a process of removing salt from ocean water

### G

**groundwater** the water that is beneath the Earth's surface

### I

**irrigation** a method of providing plants with water from sources other than direct precipitation

### N

**nonpoint-source pollution** pollution that comes from many sources rather than from a single specific site; an example is pollution that reaches a body of water from streets and storm sewers

### P

**pathogen** a virus, microorganism, or other substance that causes disease; an infectious agent

**permeability** the ability of a rock or sediment to let fluids pass through its open spaces or pores

**point-source pollution** pollution that comes from a specific site

**porosity** the percentage of the total volume of a rock or sediment that consists of open spaces

**potable** suitable for drinking

## R

**recharge zone** an area in which water travels downward to become part of an aquifer

**reservoir** an artificial body of water that usually forms behind a dam

**river system** a flowing network of rivers and streams draining a river basin

## S

**surface water** all the bodies of fresh water, salt water, ice, and snow that are found above the ground

## T

**thermal pollution** a temperature increase in a body of water that is caused by human activity and that has a harmful effect on water quality and on the ability of that body of water to support life

## W

**wastewater** water that contains wastes from homes or industry

**water pollution** the introduction into water of waste matter or chemicals that are harmful to organisms living in the water or to those that drink or are exposed to the water

**watershed** the area of land that is drained by a water system