Glossary of River Terms

* Aquifer - an underground bed of saturated soil or rock that yields significant quantities of water
* Boundary - the limit or border of an area
* Channel - the bed of a stream or river, the path of ground through which a river flows
* Confluence - the point where two rivers flow together
* Contour line - a line on a topographic map that shows elevation above sea level
* Downstream - in the direction of a stream's current; in relation to water rights, refers to water uses or locations that are affected by upstream uses or locations
* Drought - an extended period with little or no precipitation; often affects crop production and availability of water supplies
* Ecology – the study of the relationships of living things to one another and their environment
* Ecosystem - a community of living organisms and their interrelated physical and chemical environment
* Environment - all of the external factors, conditions, and influences that affect an organism or a biological community
* Environment - the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors (as in climate, soil, and living things) that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival.
* Erosion - the wearing down or washing away of the soil and land surface by the action of water, wind or ice
* Features - the recognizable attributes of an area including land forms, vegetation, structures, and bodies of water
* Flood - any relatively high stream flow overtopping the natural or artificial banks of a stream
* Floodplain - any normally dry land area that is susceptible to being inundated by water from any natural source; usually lowland, adjacent to a stream or lake
* Headwaters - the source of a stream
* Hydrology - the study of water: including properties of water, circulation, and distribution
* Macro Invertebrates - invertebrate animals (animals without backbones) large enough to be observed without the aid of a microscope or other magnification
* Meander - a curve in a river
* Native Plant - a plant occurring naturally in an area and not introduced by humans
* Natural -a natural boundary is marked by a land form such as a river
* Natural Features - the attributes of an area that are not created by human power including land forms, vegetation, and bodies of water
* Non-point source pollution - enters the water from a variety of sources including homes, farms, streets, and construction sites
* Point source pollution - enters the water from a single location as a concentrated source
* Political -a political boundary is artificially determined
* Riparian Area - a land area directly influenced by a body of water; usually visible vegetation or other physical characteristics showing this water influence
* River mouth - the point where a smaller body of water enters a larger body of water
* River source - the point of origin of a stream or river
* Storm drain - constructed opening in a road system through which runoff from the road surface flows into an underground sewer system
* Stream Flow - the discharge of water from a river
* Structure - something that is made by human power, something that is constructed
* Topographical Map - a map that shows elevation of a land area through the use of contour lines
* Tributary - a stream feeding a larger stream or lake
* Upstream - toward the source or upper part of a stream; against the current; in relation to water rights refers to water uses or locations that affect water quality or quantity of downstream uses or locations
* Water quality - the chemical, physical and biological characteristics of water with respect to its suitability for a particular use
* Water table - the level below the earth's surface at which the ground becomes saturated with water
* Watershed – a region draining ultimately to a particular watercourse or body of water; total area drained by a stream or river.