

Water Cycle Glossary of Terms

Aquifer

An aquifer is an underground layer that contains groundwater.

Atmosphere

A unit of atmosphere measure the air pressure at sea level, which is about 14.7 pounds per square inch.

Climate

The climate of a location includes all of the weather conditions for this location over an extended period of time.

Cloud

A cloud is a visible mass of small water droplets or tiny ice crystals that are suspended in the atmosphere.

Cloud Condensation Nuclei

Water vapor surrounds tiny particles, condensing in clouds to become raindrops.

Condensation

Condensation is the process by which water vapor changes into liquid.

Current

Currents are predictable and steady flows of fluid in a larger body of fluid.

Density

Density describes the amount of things in a specific space.

Dew Point

Dew point is the temperature at which water in the air condenses to become water droplets near the ground.

Ecosystem

An ecosystem is a community of living and nonliving things in an area.

Erosion

Erosion happens when soil is worn away, usually by wind, water, or ice.

Evaporation

Evaporation is the process of water changing into water vapor.

Evapotranspiration

When moisture from the soil evaporates into the atmosphere or when transpiration from plants occurs, this is called evapotranspiration.

Fog

Clouds near the ground are known as fog.

Freshwater

A lake, river, or spring is a source of freshwater, which animals can drink.

Glacier

A glacier is a mass of ice that moves slowly across a land mass.

Great Lake

The Great Lakes are the biggest freshwater bodies of water in the world, located in the United States.

Greenhouse Gas

Gases in the atmosphere that absorb solar heat reflected by Earth's surface, contributing to warming of the atmosphere, are greenhouses gases.

Groundwater

Groundwater is water found in aquifer.

Humidity

The amount of water vapor in the air is the humidity.

Ice

Ice is water in solid form.

Ice Cap

An ice cap is an area of less than 19,000 square miles covered by ice.

Ice Sheet

Ice sheets are glacial ice areas that cover a large expanse.

Lake

A lake is a body of water that is surrounded by land.

Microscopic

Microscopic describes something very small.

Pollutant

A pollutant is a substance that harms a natural resource.

Precipitation

Precipitation includes all types of water that fall to Earth.

River

A river is a big stream of fresh water that flows.

Runoff

When fluid overflows from a farm or factory, it's known as runoff.

Snowmelt

Melted water from snow is snowmelt.

Temperature

The level of heat or cold, measured by a thermometer, is temperature.

Transpiration

Water that evaporates from plants is transpiration.

Vapor

Vapor is liquid that is suspended in air.

Water Cycle

Water moves between the land, bodies of water, and atmosphere in a process known as the water cycle.

Weather

Weather describes the state of the atmosphere, and it includes atmosphere pressure, temperature, humidity, cloudiness, precipitation, and wind.