

# Water's Journey

## The Drinking Water Cycle

by John Fraga and Ken Tomlin



DNR photo by Scott Myers

**C**laps of thunder and flashes of lightning announce the coming rain. Carefully tended fields with terraces capture and absorb the falling rain. Across the valley, though, the hills appear scarred with irregular and muddy paths as the

rainfall creates its own channels and flows down towards the gullies and ditches below. Along the historic city streets of St. Joseph, stormwater cascades in sheets toward the storm drains and sewers, following its designed path and picking up whatever

dirt and debris that accumulated since the last downpour. The runoff follows its downward course to the Missouri River and beyond.

This scene, although it could depict a storm almost anywhere in Missouri, is what greets visitors as they first walk through a new, permanent exhibit at the Remington Nature Center of St. Joseph.

As rain falls over an artful rendition of St. Joseph and the surrounding watershed, visitors can follow the path water takes as it flows to the river and the saturated sands that line its banks. Turn a few levers and you'll learn some facts about the Missouri River from jumping fish.

Next, follow the path of water as it is drawn through alluvial wells into the treatment facility where it undergoes coagulation, sedimentation and filtration – all in front of your eyes. Watch as the treated water flows up and back down through a water tower before being channeled through the distribution system towards St. Joseph residents.

**The Remington Nature Center in St. Joseph aims to share nature's wonder with students and families, children and adults.**



DNR photo by Scott Myers

“This interactive display shows the journey of water as it travels from a source to the tap. It answers the question of how we get our drinking water and the answer is delivered in a fun and unique way ... and the entire walk-through display includes running water,” said Andrea George, manager of the nature center.

Modeled after the drinking water treatment system used by Missouri American Water to serve St. Joseph, “Water’s Journey” offers a tour of the drinking water cycle and an interactive experience that reinforces the concept of watershed and source water protection.

DNR photo by Scott Myers



**D**esigned as an educational component of St. Joseph’s source water protection plan, Water’s Journey highlights the value of protecting water resources and the power of collaboration. The Missouri River and its saturated alluvial aquifer is a primary source of drinking water for as many as 1.8 million Missourians.

“The city is excited about the Remington Nature Center and the Water’s Journey project,” said Andrew Clements, assistant director of Public Works and Transportation for St. Joseph. “It reinforces the importance of the Missouri River and its influence on our communities and helps to promote awareness of what a valuable resource it is for drinking water.”

Producing an interactive, technical and accurate exhibit requires partnership and collaboration. “This display is the first of its kind in Missouri and the first time American Water has embarked on a collaboration of this kind,” said Frank Kartmann, president of Missouri American Water. “With the contributions of the City of St. Joe and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, we believe Water’s Journey will set a new standard for water-themed educational displays.”

Water’s Journey was funded by Missouri American Water, the City of St. Joseph and a source water protection grant from the Department of Natural Resources.

Protecting the sources of drinking water in Missouri is the goal of the department’s Source Water Protection Program, a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to public water systems and communities in Missouri to protect their drinking water sources. Participation in the program is voluntary on the part of water systems, but collaborative efforts such as St. Joseph’s are essential in protecting a drinking water source as vast as the Missouri River. Communities interested in the Missouri Source Water Protection Program should contact the department’s Public Drinking Water Branch at 573-751-1300.

Overlooking the real Missouri River, the Water’s Journey display is just one of many outstanding educational exhibits at the Remington Nature Center, a facility owned by St. Joseph and operated by the city’s Parks and Recreation Department. For additional information about the center and the Water’s Journey exhibit, please visit the center at 1502 MacArthur Drive in St. Joseph, go to [stjoenaturecenter.info](http://stjoenaturecenter.info) or call 816-271-5499. 

*John Fraga and Ken Tomlin both work in the Department of Natural Resources’ public drinking water compliance and enforcement unit. Tomlin also is the source water assessment and protection coordinator.*



Portraits by Long photo

**(Opposite page top)** An interactive display at the Remington Nature Center shows the journey of water as it flows from its source to the tap. **(Top)** The Water’s Journey exhibit helps to promote awareness of the importance of the Missouri River as a valuable source of drinking water. **(Above)** Visitors experience a walk-through that features interpretive displays, demonstrating the drinking water cycle.