

Watershed Facts

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land which drains into a particular body of water. Just as when you pour water in a bathtub, it all ends up in the drain, when it rains on the surface, that water flows to a particular body of water. That water can flow both above the ground through lakes, streams, and wetlands, or below the ground through groundwater springs.

Where is the Maple River Watershed?

The watershed boundaries include 604,226 acres in central Michigan. The watershed is located in Clinton, Gratiot, Ionia, Montcalm and Shiawassee counties.

The land use within the Maple River watershed is as follows:

- 80.9% Agricultural
- 12.8% Forested Uplands
- 4.5% Wetlands
- .9% Developed
- .8% Water

In the agricultural areas of the watershed there are about 1,789 farms covering about 405,706 acres. The average size farm is 250 acres. Primary crops include soybeans, corn, dry edible beans, forage and sugar beets.

The main bed of the river is approximately 61 miles long.

What is the Maple River State Game Area?

The Maple River State Game Area contains the largest contiguous wetland complex in mid-Michigan. It primarily consists of floodplain, lowlands, and marshes associated with the Maple River corridor. The eastern end of the area has been divided into wildlife management units. These units are easily accessed by US-27 and offer prime wildlife viewing.

Wetland-related wildlife may be viewed here year-round. Spring waterfowl viewing is excellent, as thousands of ducks, geese, and swans stop over in these wetlands on their annual migration to northern breeding grounds. Viewing is best from March through May.