



## Experiment: Will it float or will it sink?

What do you see when you look at this picture? You probably see a lot of trash floating on the surface of the water. This picture shows trash floating on the Missouri River. But what can't we see? Does all pollution float on top of the water? Complete the activity below to learn how different pollutants act when they enter our waterways.



| Materials:   | Instructions:  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Container of water</li> <li>• Plastic (could be a cut-up bag, a straw, any plastic)</li> <li>• Dry, crushed leaves</li> <li>• Small amount of dirt</li> <li>• Powdered drink mix (will represent lawn chemicals)</li> <li>• A few drops of vegetable oil (will represent oil from vehicles)</li> <li>• Large spoon</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill the container with water.</li> <li>2. Before adding any pollutants (items) to your water, make a prediction telling if you think they will float or sink.</li> <li>3. Add the pollutants one at a time. Stir the water after each addition. The river is always flowing, stirring water will represent the moving water.</li> <li>4. Watch to see if the pollutant sinks or floats, write this down in the outcome column.</li> <li>5. Answer the reflection question.</li> </ol> |

| Type of pollutant          | Prediction | Outcome | Reflection Questions:   |
|----------------------------|------------|---------|---|
| Plastic                    |            |         | Dirt and leaves are natural, so they don't seem like pollutants. But too much dirt and too many leaves can cause the water to be too warm and reduce the oxygen that animals need. When you look at our streams and rivers, can you see the dirt and leave? |
| Leaves                     |            |         |   |
| Dirt                       |            |         | Some pollutants float, which makes them easier to clean out of the water. However, we don't want them there in the first place. What are some things we could do to reduce the amount of pollutants in our water?   |
| Lawn Chemicals (drink mix) |            |         |   |
| Oil (vegetable oil)        |            |         |   |

\*When finished, have adult supervision help dispose of materials to the trash bin or garbage can. Do not pour experiment down the drain.