Picture of Practice

For the complete video with media resources, visit:
http://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/runoff-and-our-environment/

Students quickly learn that trash and debris have a negative impact on our environment. They see debris in their local waterways or hear stories about animals ingesting plastics or becoming entangled in debris. This type of pollution is certainly a problem, especially in urban areas. Trash and debris are the foundational knowledge that many of your students will bring to your classroom with respect to pollution and our environment. Yet, there are many forms of pollution that students may not easily recognize but will need to learn more about, including urban, industrial, and agricultural runoff. With respect to farms in particular, students may not readily recognize that agriculture has potential impacts on our environment, especially our freshwater systems. They may see farms as "natural" places, yet farms require a lot of human-engineered technologies, such as irrigation, pesticides, and fertilizers. In addition, ranches and livestock operations produce a great deal of manure that must be carefully controlled and disposed of without getting into our water systems. Discussing these sources of pollution and their impacts on our water systems will help students develop a more complete understanding of water quality and the health of aquatic life.

Watch this video of 6th grade students in San Diego, California—a coastal community. The purpose of this classroom video is to see how student ideas about runoff develop.

For additional classroom context, video analysis, and reflection opportunities,
read the Picture of Practice page for "Runoff and Our Environment" in the Earth's Freshwater Environmental Literacy Teacher Guide, page 95.

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