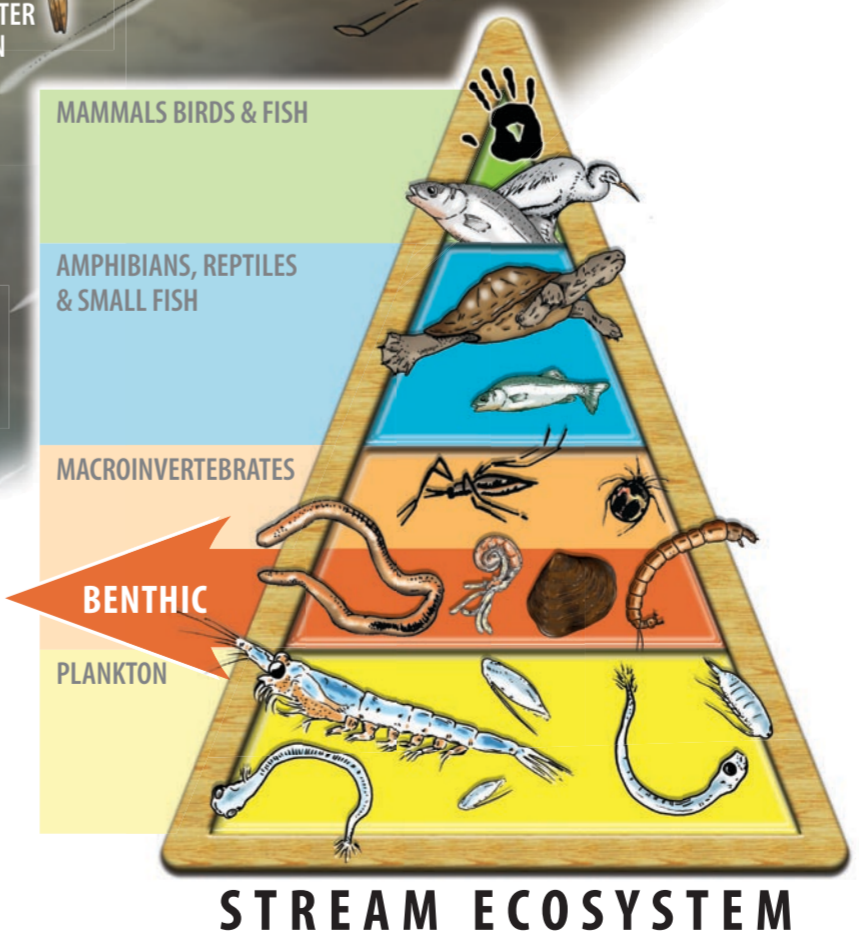
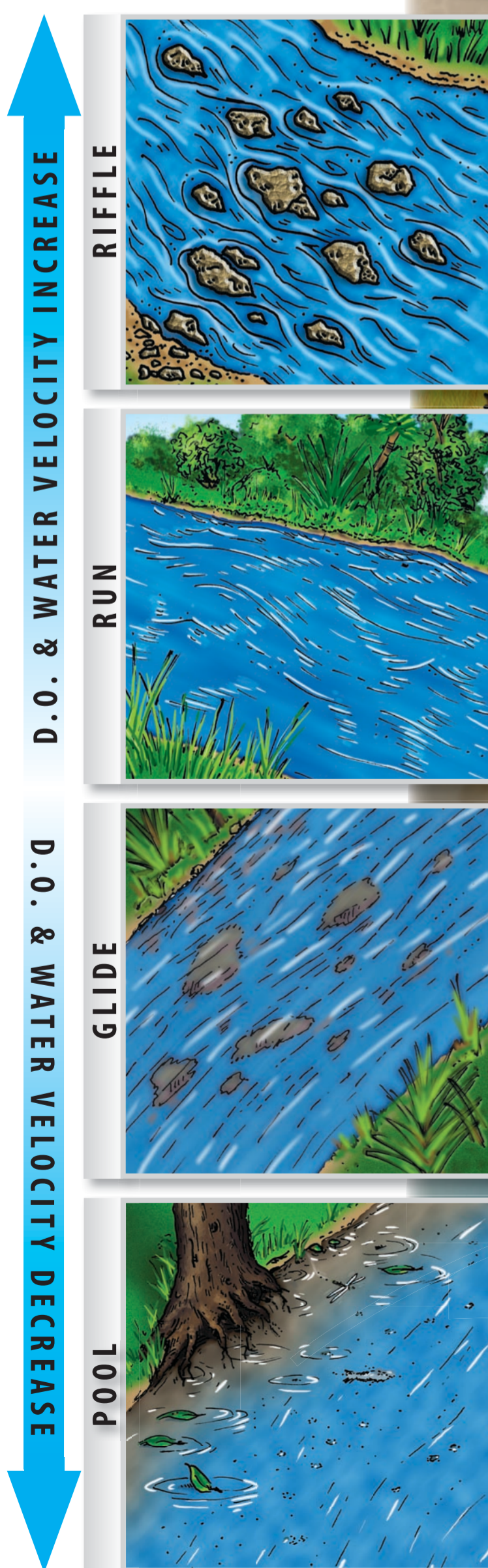
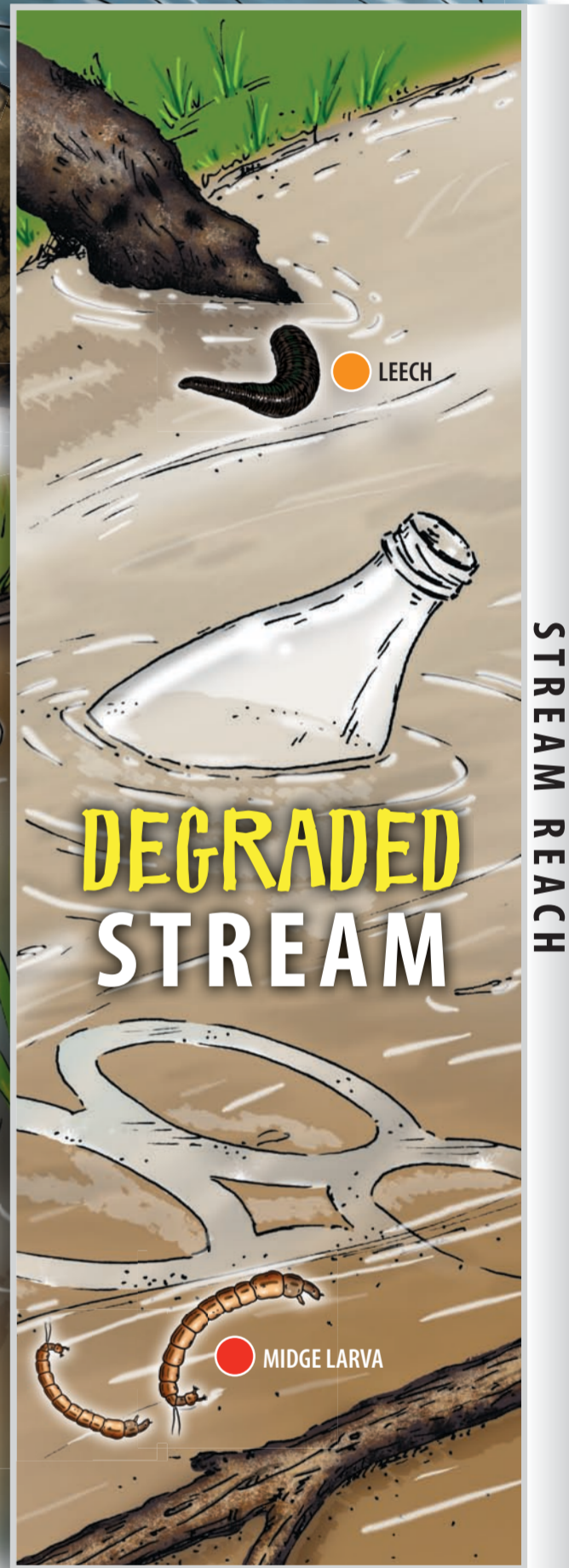
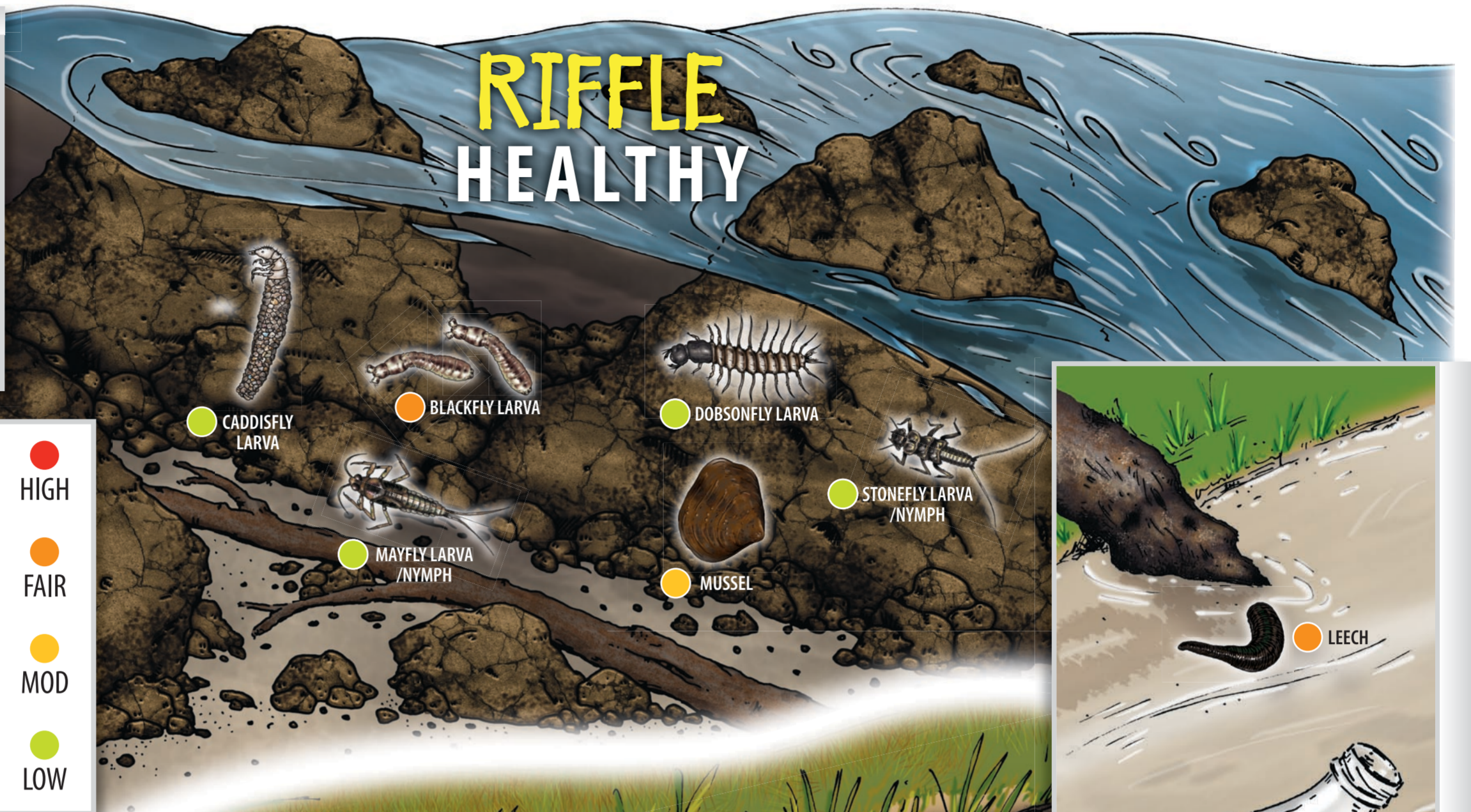
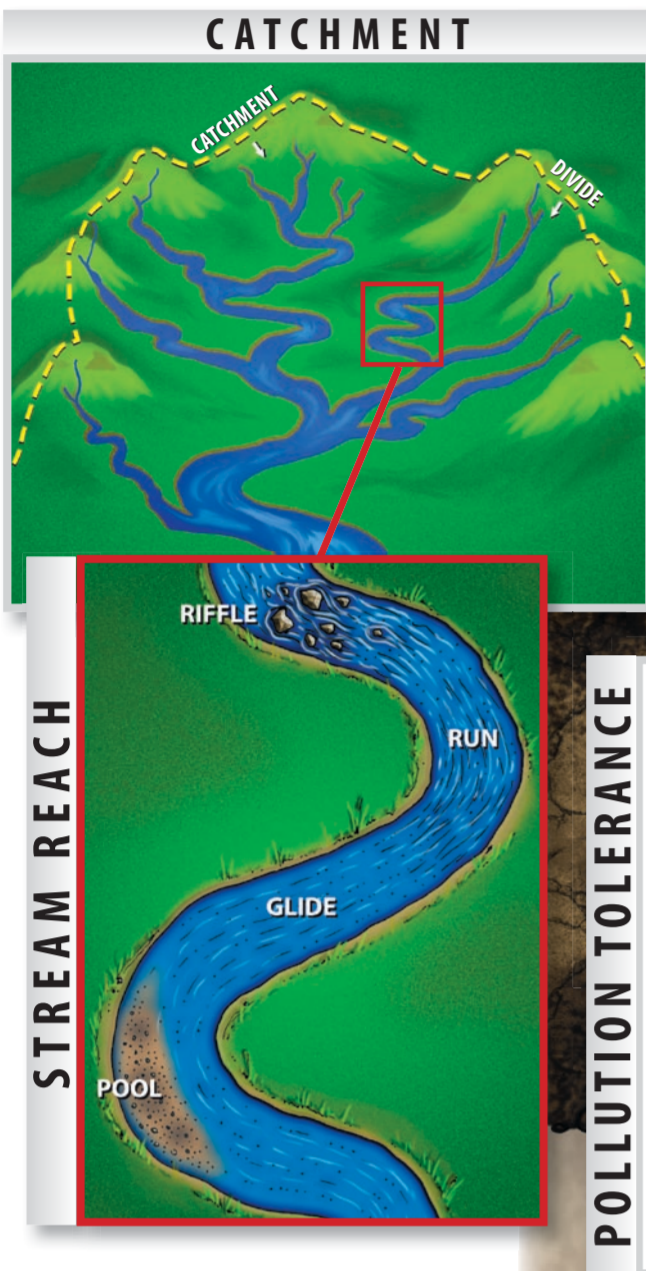


BENTHIC MACROINVERTEBRATES

— BOTTOM-DWELLING — — VISIBLE ANIMALS WITHOUT BACKBONES —



MACROINVERTEBRATES are animals that lack backbones and are visible to the unaided eye. We call them **"benthic"** when they live on the stream bed or attached to plants or floating wood. Common benthic macroinvertebrates include the larval stages of many insects – such as dragonflies and horseflies – as well as permanent stream dwellers like mussels, yabbies, leeches, and snails.

The presence of benthic macroinvertebrates can tell us much about the health of stream. Each creature varies in its ability to tolerate pollution (●). Mayfly larvae need clear, oxygen-rich streams in order to breathe and feed while leeches can tolerate very degraded waterways. When studying your stream remember: clean water is not enough. A diverse stream community also requires many habitats – riffles, runs, glides and pools. Each habitat varies in water velocity, dissolved oxygen, food and shelter. So if you want to learn about the overall health of your stream, just ask the creatures who call it home!



UPPER MURRUMBIDGEE WATERWATCH

DESIGNED AND ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID PRICE ON BEHALF OF BEAN FARM STUDIOS