Vocabulary: Water Cycle

**Vocabulary**

- **Aquifer** – an underground layer of porous rock and/or sand that contains water.
- **Condensation** – change from a gas to a liquid.
  - Condensation of water occurs when water vapor is cooled.
  - Condensation forms clouds, mist, and fog.
- **Evaporation** – change from a liquid to a gas at temperatures below boiling.
- **Freezing** – changing from a liquid to a solid.
- **Glacier** – a large, slowly moving body of snow and ice.
- **Melting** – changing from a solid to a liquid.
- **Phase change** – a change from one state of matter to another.
  - The three states of matter found naturally on Earth are solid, liquid, and gas.
  - Types of phase changes include freezing, melting, evaporation, boiling, and condensation.
- **Precipitation** – water that falls to Earth’s surface.
  - Types of precipitation include rain, sleet, snow, hail, and mist. Sleet is frozen rain, and hail consists of frozen balls of ice that can be as large as grapefruit.
- **Reservoir** – a body of water, often an artificial lake, which is used to store water for human use.
- **Runoff** – water that moves across the surface of land into streams or rivers.
  - Sources of runoff include heavy rain, snowmelt, or excess irrigation water.
  - Runoff can carry pollutants from the soil into rivers and streams.
- **Transpiration** – the release of water vapor from the leaves of plants.
- **Water cycle** – the continuous movement of water from Earth’s surface to the atmosphere and back again.