

# Definition of the Climate System

**Earth's climate system** consists of five major components: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. The interactions among the components dictate the distribution of heat and water across our planet over timescales from annual and decadal to millions of years. The climate system is fueled primarily by the amount and distribution of solar energy that reaches Earth's surface. It evolves under the influence of external forcings such as volcanic eruptions and solar variations, as well as internal **feedbacks** among its components. *Illustration by Geo Prose*

