

Watershed Update



Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District

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- > Oak Park Conservancy District
- > IDNR Division of Nature Preserves
- > Chicks on the Farm
- > Indiana State Department of Agriculture
- > Natural Resources Conservation Service

Our Watershed Improvement Project

In October, 2013, the Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was awarded a Section 319 Non-point Source Management grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). The grant will enable the SWCD to conduct a diagnostic study and establish baseline data for water quality within the Fourteen Mile Creek—Goose Creek-OH River (Indiana portion) watersheds.

Where are these watersheds? The watersheds addressed in this project cover the eastern portions of Clark County, the southeastern corner of Scott County, and southwestern corner of Jefferson County; a

total of 108,193 acres.

Why study these watersheds? Impaired Category 5A water bodies, per the EPA's 303(d) List, are found in four locations in the watersheds: Dry Branch-Fourteen Mile Creek, East Fork Unnamed Tributary, Yankee Creek, and Rogers Run-Fourteen Mile Creek. All these water bodies are impaired for E.coli; East Fork, in addition, is impaired for biotic communities, and dissolved oxygen. All citizens of the watersheds need to be made aware of this problem and educated on ways to help correct the situation.

What will be the result of the project?

A diverse local steering com-

mittee will develop a comprehensive watershed management plan over the next two years. During this process, they will review water sampling data as it is collected and compare it to existing data. This data, along with information to be gathered by windshield surveys of the watersheds, will help them determine priority areas. The plan will document the current status of water quality, outline a vision for the future, and will recommend a clear strategy for implementing watershed and water quality improvements. During the project, we will strive to stimulate community awareness, and lay a foundation for watershed ownership and investment, and lay the groundwork for full implementation of the recommendations and action items of the plan.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is like a large funnel—the slope of the land moves rainwater and melting snow downward toward a common endpoint. The rainwater or melting snow washes off the surface of the land down into the streams and into a central point, either a lake, river, or reservoir.

The faster the water moves off the land and into the streams, the more pollutants and sediments it picks up. Water that moves slowly, or better yet soaks into the surrounding waters, carries less pollution and sediment.



Different types of land cover affect the movement of the water and what the water contains. Forests and wetlands are very good at absorbing water. Parking lots don't absorb any water at all. Cornfields are somewhere in between the two. Some housing developments with many plants and grasses and minimal paving may be as good as cornfields at absorbing water. Land use within a watershed is critical to the quality of the water and the environment.

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Do I Live in Fourteen Mile/Goose Creek Watersheds?

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed. Even if you don't live along Fourteen Mile or Goose Creek, you may still live in those watersheds. All watersheds are given a hydrologic unit code (HUC). Hydrologic units represent the geographic boundaries of water as it flows across the landscape. Each HUC has an associated number or code which is representative of the size of the basin.

Larger basins are represented by smaller numbers. Indiana is divided into 39 watersheds at the 8-digit level. Each of these watersheds is divided into smaller sub-watersheds of 10-digit numbers, which are divided again into 12-digit watersheds.

Fourteen Mile Creek has a 10-digit code (0514010104), and eleven 12-digit subwatersheds within it. Goose Creek has a 10-digit code

(0514010106) and ten 12-digit watersheds within it. *Goose Creek watershed extends into Jefferson County, KY, however, for our project when are covering only the Indiana portion.* The map below will help you determine if you live in either watershed. You may also find your watershed by visiting "Surf Your Watershed" at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>.

Why is it important to know your watershed address? Most importantly, so that you have an understanding of what may be affecting your water's quality. Remember—everyone lives down stream of someone else. All activities that take place in a watershed have the potential to directly impact the water body that drains it. If activities such as urban development, logging, agriculture, roads and bridges, and dumping sewage and other waste are taking place up stream from you, your water may not be of the highest quality. When it rains, everything drains downstream.



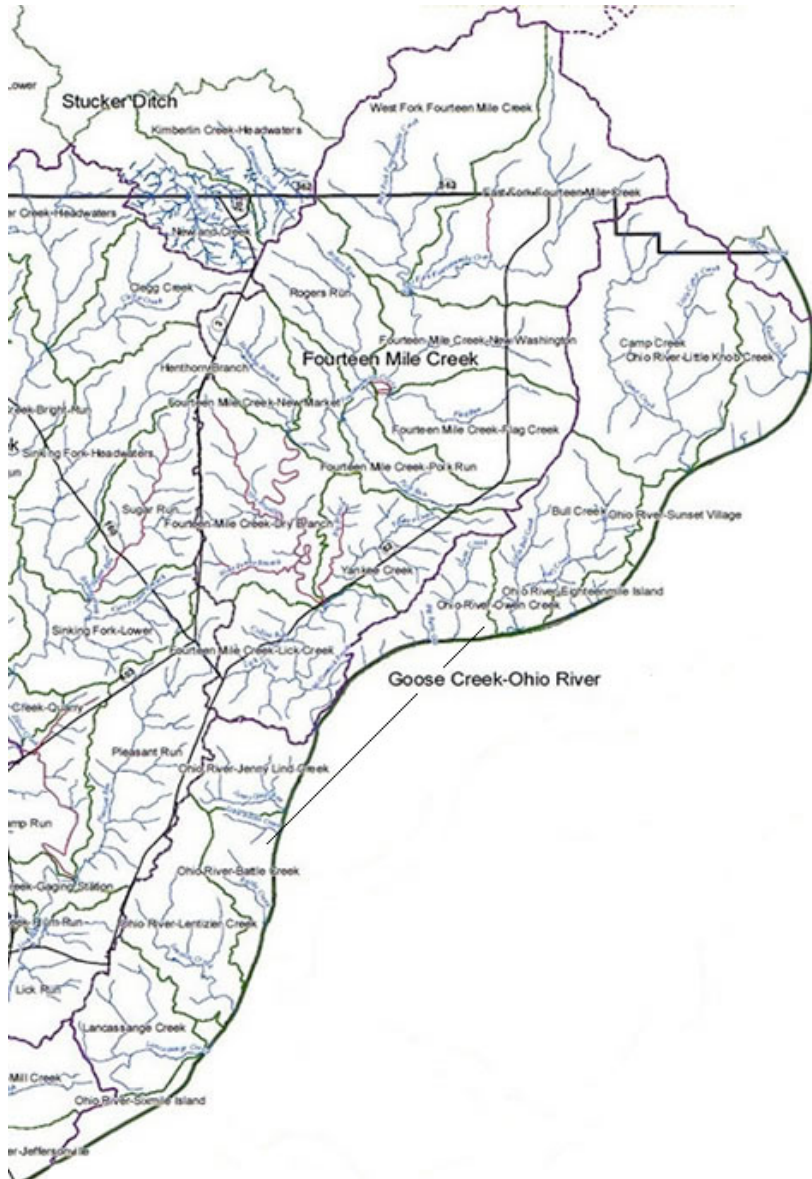
EPA's "Surf Your Watershed" web site

Fourteen Mile Creek
0514010104

Goose Creek
0514010106

Combined acreage:
108,193

Clark, Scott,
and Jefferson
Counties in
Indiana



What Makes a Healthy Watershed?

The character of a watershed depends on how it handles water and sediment. We call the watershed healthy or well-functioning when...

- Rainfall sinks into the soil in the uplands and is released slowly through sub-surface flow into springs, seeps, streams, or groundwater.
- Native plants take up the water and use it for growth and reproduction. Their roots help to hold the soil in place.
- The streams run clear and cool.
- The floodplains slow the velocity of the occasional floods.
- Riparian vegetation is thick and luxuriant.
- Fish and wildlife are healthy, productive, and diverse.

- The stream channel is stable, in a dynamic equilibrium with its surroundings.

Does this describe the Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek watersheds? Hopefully, once the management plan is completed, it will.

Indiana's number one water pollutant is sediment.

What is Nonpoint Source Pollution?

There are two types of pollution—point and nonpoint. Point source pollution causes about 25 percent of all water pollution in Indiana. It is easy to identify because it usually comes out of a pipe.

Nonpoint source pollution, which accounts for 75 percent of Indiana's water pollution, is not so easy to identify. It comes from many diffuse widespread sources. Pollutants that are transported to the water bodies by

storm runoff, snowmelt, and wind are considered to be nonpoint source pollution. You can't trace it back to any one point because it comes from several points.

Some nonpoint source pollutants are soil particles, fertilizers, animal manure, pesticides, oil road salt, fecal material from failing septic systems, pet waste and debris from paved areas. The number one pollutant in Indiana is sediment.

Although individual homes might contribute only minor amounts of nonpoint source pollution, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood can be serious. Measures directed at controlling nonpoint source pollution are usually voluntary and must involve many people to be successful.



Ways You Can Help Your Watershed

- Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn and garden. No-phosphorus fertilizers are an excellent way to protect water quality.
- Never pour anything down the storm drain or into the stream.
- Clean up after your pet.
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces.
- Plant trees, shrubs, and ground covers that filter pollutants and reduce runoff.
- Have your septic tank pumped every 3 to 5 years.
- Wash your car at the car wash where water is recycled and detergents are captured or wash it in a grassy area instead of on the driveway.



Washing your car in the grass instead of on the driveway helps to slow down runoff.

Clark County Soil and
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Our Steering Committee Needs Your Help

The watershed planning process doesn't happen in a vacuum. To have a chance at actually restoring and protecting water quality through planning, all of the major interests in the watershed need to be engaged in the process.

Steering Committee members meet once a month for the two-year grant period. They will consider the public's, as well as their own, water quality concerns for the watersheds, determine which are real and which are perceived, and then map out a plan to address them.

During this process, the Committee will review water sampling data as it is col-

lected during the project, and compare it to existing data. This data, along with information that will be gathered by conducting a windshield survey of the watersheds, will help them determine priority areas.

Time volunteered as a member will not be wasted. It will be used constructively and efficiently to reach the project mission. Citizens of the watershed have the expertise and information to create the solutions that will make the watershed healthy and improve water quality. A shared community vision will build long-term support and help the implementation of the watershed management plan become a reality.



If you can contribute an hour or two a month of your time to our project, please contact Chelsea Tooley, Watershed Coordinator, at 14mile.watershed.outreach@gmail.com, or the Clark County SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3. We look forward to hearing from you!

For additional information or details on the Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek Watersheds Improvement Project, contact Chelsea Tooley, Watershed Coordinator, at

14mile.watershed.outreach@gmail.com