Section 2
Introduction

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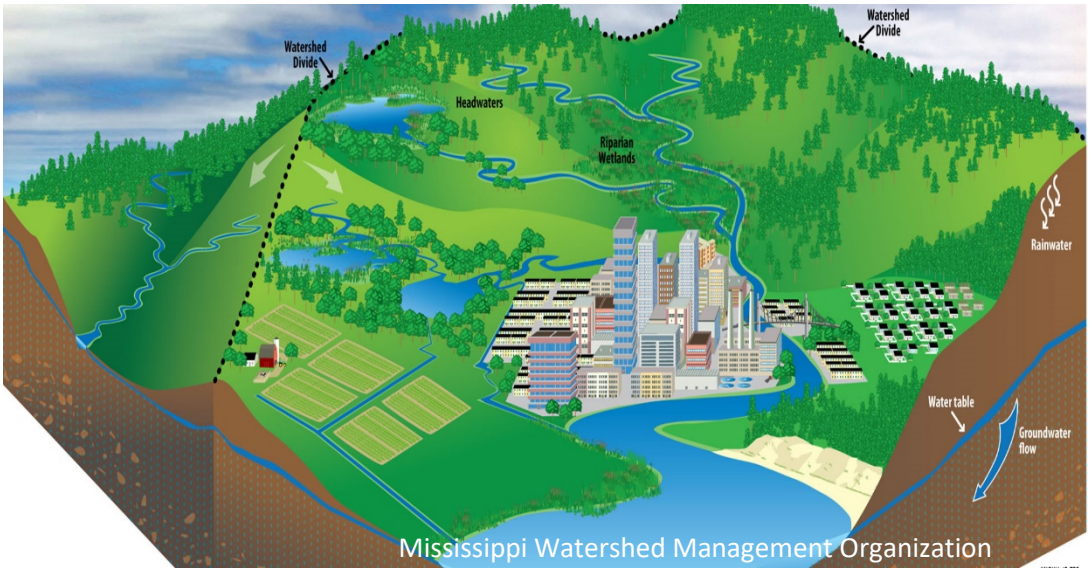
Section 1 of this document details the Watershed Resource Inventory. This section, Section 2, details the Watershed Plan. Creating a watershed-based plan is an important first step in improving water quality in East Fork Creek and Lake Carroll. Clean water has positive impacts on the local economy, property values, and recreational opportunities. Moreover, it preserves the local heritage for future generations. Watershed-based plans are valuable because they identify the most probable causes and sources of water quality impairments and develop a course of action to address the impairments.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is a geologic area within the boundary of a drainage divide. In *Figure i.1,* everything within the black dotted line is the watershed. Every form of precipitation, whether rain, sleet, or snow, and all other water sources, i.e. snowmelt, surface runoff, tributaries, and groundwater, that drops on or flows over the land within the watershed boundary eventually drains to the same stream, lake, or river. Any precipitation that falls outside of this watershed boundary drains to a different area. The water quality within a watershed is a reflection of the land use and land management within the watershed.

Figure i.1 Watershed Divide



What is a Watershed-based Plan?

The creation of the East Fork Creek watershed-based plan contains the nine minimum elements that will be consistent with the USEPA watershed-based plan guidance for future implementation of the watershed-based plan recommendations and is required for USEPA Clean Water Act Grants future funding considerations.

EPA's 9 Minimum Elements of a Watershed-Based Plan:

1. Identify causes and sources of pollution.
2. Estimate expected load reductions.
3. Detail management measures and targeted critical areas.
4. Estimate needed technical and financial assistance.
5. Create an information and education component.
6. Develop a project schedule.
7. Describe interim, measurable milestones.
8. Identify indicators to measure progress.
9. Develop a monitoring component (USEPA Introduction to Watershed Planning).

Purpose and Funding

The Lake Carroll Association initiated the planning process with their desire to improve water quality. Together with JadEco Natural Resource Consultants, they requested planning assistance from Olson Ecological Solutions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided partial funding through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The Lake Carroll Association provided the remainder of the funding and administered the grant. The objective of the EPA Section 319 program is to manage nonpoint source pollutants. Non-point source pollution develops as rainfall or snowmelt flows, picks up natural and man-made pollutants, and carries them to our waterbodies. Nationally, EPA has funded $167.9 million in voluntary projects and programs to reduce nonpoint source pollution from entering our streams and lakes in the year 2017 alone. This number is somewhat typical for the average national annual funding (EPA 2017). The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) estimates that approximately $3.5 million are available for Section 319 program funded projects in Illinois on an average year (IEPA, FAQ). Funds are intended for watershed planning and implementation of projects and programs focused on best management practices. The East Fork Creek Watershed Plan and future implementation of the plan will be strictly voluntary; this is not a regulatory program.

Scope

The East Fork Creek Watershed Plan proposes how to prevent pollution from entering our streams and lake. It was formed with information from an inventory of the watershed, stakeholder involvement through participation in planning, and guidance from technical advisers and consultants. In the following pages, the plan provides a success statement, goals and objectives, proposed projects and programs plus education and outreach efforts needed to reach goals, schedules and priorities for projects and education, cost estimates and guidance for financial and technical support, and a monitoring strategy to evaluate the success of the plan.

This plan does not address retroactive measures to remove pollutants from waterbodies, such as dredging of sediment and mechanical removal of algae. Although these activities are encouraged, they would not likely be candidates for financial and technical assistance by environmental organizations.

Planning

Consultants to the Lake Carroll Association facilitated the watershed planning process, assembled the inventory of the watershed's existing conditions, provided the planning participants with factual information on which to base decisions, and wrote the watershed plan according to decisions and direction of the planning participants and technical advisory panel. The planning effort was facilitated by Rebecca Olson of Olson Ecological Solutions and Joe Rush of JadEco Natural Resources Consulting.

Planning participants were made up of interested stakeholders who live, work, play, and control the land management in the watershed. The community came together 14 times between May 2018 and September 2019. Meeting minutes are posted on the Olson Ecological Solutions website at http://www.olsonecosolutions.com/index.html under the "More" tab entitled "East Fork Creek Watershed". The group of stakeholders determined the vision and direction of the watershed and provided input for all aspects of the watershed plan. Stakeholder participation was encouraged via newspaper announcements, newsletters, emails, and direct mailings.

A technical advisory panel consisted of local experts in natural resources, water management, and agriculture. They provided expert review and recommendations to the planning participants.

Table i.1 lists the past and future planning meetings along with the agenda of the meeting. Completed meetings are shaded in grey, whereas future meetings are shaded in blue.

Table i.1 Schedule of Planning Meetings

Date	**Agenda**
May 21, 2018	Recruit landowner participation in the planning process and provide an overview of the watershed-based plan and process
Aug 21, 2018	Provide feedback for Inventory
Sep 21, 2018	Create success statement and set goals
Oct 27, 2018	Prioritize urban projects and programs
Nov 8, 2018	Prioritize rural projects and programs
Feb 2, 2019	Map site-specific rural projects and detail watershed-wide rural projects
Feb 19, 2019	Map site-specific residential projects and detail watershed-wide residential projects
Feb 28, 2019	Choose rural education/outreach opportunities, set objectives for rural education/outreach, and schedule rural education/outreach efforts: short-term and long-term
Mar 9, 2019	Choose residential education/outreach opportunities, set objectives for residential education/outreach, schedule residential education/outreach efforts: short-term and long term
Mar 19, 2019	Determine rural monitoring/evaluation strategies
Apr 29, 2019	Determine residential monitoring/evaluation strategies
May 29, 2019	Set targets and objectives for selected projects, prioritize selected projects/ programs, and schedule projects/programs: short-term and long-term
July 23, 2019	Review draft executive summary & watershed plan
Sept 23, 2019	Transition the planning committee from planning to implementation and elect leadership for watershed partnership

Watershed planning efforts offered planning participants the opportunity to be proactive in improving water quality on a voluntary basis. The following plan was a result of this community effort to care for East Fork Creek and Lake Carroll.