



The Boone Watershed News

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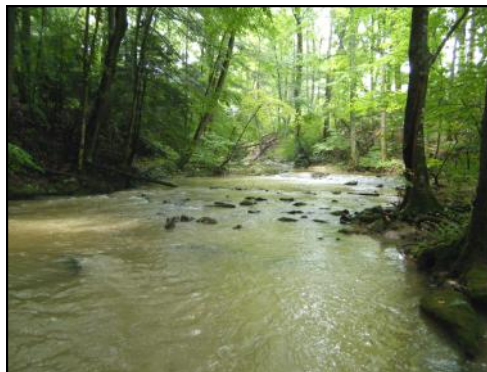
Sinking Creek Restoration Project Update

The Sinking Creek Restoration project, which started in October 2008, is underway. Funds from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, amounting to \$300,000 and matching funds from cooperating partners*, representing multiple agencies, brings the total project budget to \$517,700 to combat the presence of Escherichia coli (e coli) in the creek. To date, the Sinking Creek Technical Advisory Committee has recognized that the majority of these funds will likely be focused on assistance to individual homeowners and landowners with livestock, rather than to large municipal projects, though some projects of this nature may be required.

What does this mean for the Sinking Creek Community? Participation. In a series of public meetings, Sinking Creek residents will be asked to help identify problems and behaviors that they believe are contributing to the bacterial pollution. If residents are aware of their own failing septic systems or wish to connect to sanitary sewer (where feasible), they may have an opportunity for financial assistance. Additionally, the same concept will be afforded to livestock operations where engineering and

equipment may be needed to limit impacts to the creek. The restoration project is strictly voluntary, which is why it is being administered through the non-profit Boone Watershed Partnership, Inc., rather than a regulatory agency.

Since the inception of the grant, cooperating partners have been working on a plan to properly identify specific pollution sources in order to present information to the public. Information on the City's capability to provide sewer, soil surveys and data collec-



tion on Catbird Creek, a tributary to Sinking Creek, has been gathered in an attempt to focus efforts appropriately. Partner cooperation, combined with the many years of scientific study of the conditions in Sinking Creek, allows the project to move into the next phase, collecting information and input from those impacted most by pollution in Sinking Creek; its residents. On September 14, the project's first public meeting was held at Mountain View Elementary School.

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This newsletter was published as a part of an ongoing effort of the **Boone Watershed Partnership** to promote awareness of the importance of clean water to the regional economy and quality of life.



BOONE WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP 2009 WATERSHED AQUATIC STEWARDSHIP AWARDS

The 2009 Boone Watershed Partnership Recognition Event was held Saturday July 11th at Winged Deer Park in Johnson City. Approximately 45 participants were present. Before the awards ceremony, the Carter County Pollution Solutions Team provided a anti-litter skit based on the Wizard of Oz. The Team enlisted Congressman Phil Roe to play one of the Oz characters.

In addition to award presentations, Project Manager, Sarah Ketron provided a short presentation on the Sinking Creek Project. After the program, those attending enjoyed a picnic catered by City Market of Elizabethton.



Michael Countess accepts the Farmland Aquatic Stewardship Award for Countiss Dairy



Carter County Pollution Solutions Team accepts the K – 12 Aquatic Stewardship Award



Ken & Ellen Bronner received Lifetime Aquatic Stewardship Award



Representative Phil Roe joins the Carter County Pollution Solutions Team for a Anti-litter Skit



Assistant Editor Bryan Steven accepts the Industry/ Business Aquatic Stewardship Award for the Elizabethton Star



BWP Funds Research Project on Beaver Creek

-Ingrid Luffman, ETSU

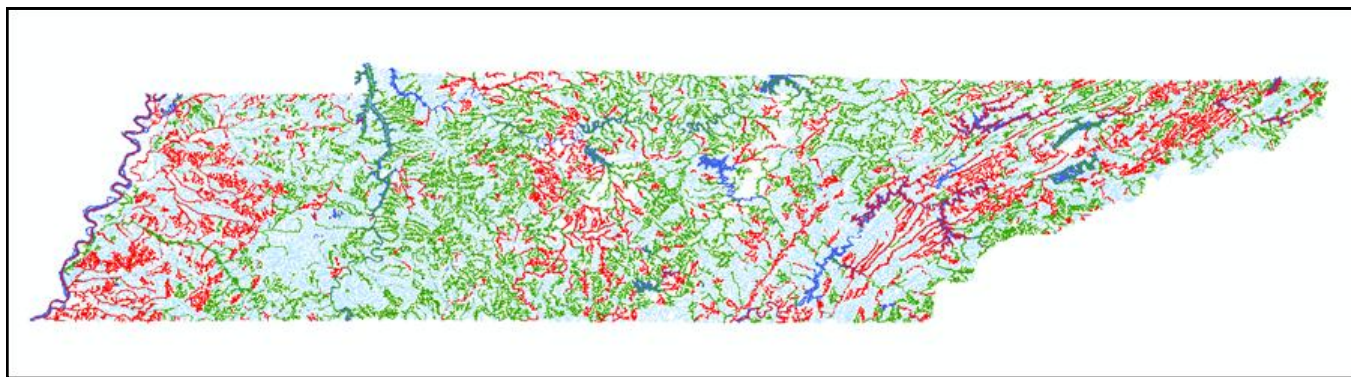
Every two years, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) prepares a report outlining the health of the state's streams and waterbodies. This report categorizes the streams according to whether they are healthy enough to support their intended use(s). Intended uses may include any of the following: livestock watering, recreation, fishing, etc. Streams that are so contaminated that they cannot support their intended use are categorized as non-supporting and are subsequently listed on the state's list of contaminated waters. Figure 1(a) shows the distribution of streams that do not support their intended use(s) (in red), as well as those that are supporting (in green) and those streams that have not yet been assessed by the state (in blue).

By zooming in on the northeast corner of the state, we can see a snapshot of stream health in our local Boone Watershed area (Figure 1(b)). Many of the streams that flow into Boone Lake are impaired in some way. The mission of the Boone Watershed Partnership (BWP) is "to partner with local users, regional, state and federal entities, educators and others to identify and address water resource issues in the Boone Watershed". In fulfillment of this mission, the BWP has worked with its partners to facilitate assessments of many of the non-attaining streams in the watershed.

For the past twelve months, faculty and students from the ETSU Departments of Environmental Health and Geosciences have monitored land use and water quality on Beaver Creek. The BWP has been instrumental in supporting the land use portion of the project, providing over \$4000 in funding. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has provided the funding for the water sampling and analysis.

Beaver Creek is unique because it straddles the border between two states, and although independent assessments of the stream have been performed by both Tennessee and Virginia, there must be cooperation and data sharing between the two states for water quality in Beaver Creek to improve. Beaver Creek has been identified by both states as contaminated with *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). *E. coli* is a bacteria found in both human and animal waste, which has been associated with outbreaks of *E. coli* infection in humans.

The purpose of the land use monitoring portion of the project is to evaluate the connection between land use and water quality, with the ultimate goal of identifying hot spots that would benefit from restoration work. The connection between land use and water quality is often as simple as the erosion of sediment or manure from a parcel of land, or waste from wildlife entering a stream, or failing septic systems contributing human waste to a stream.



By understanding the connection between the land use in the Beaver Creek watershed and the water quality in the stream, we will be able to make recommendations on where and how to reduce the amount of *E. coli* entering Beaver Creek. These recommendations will be included in the Beaver Creek Watershed Action Plan, a document outlining the steps required to clean up the stream, and ultimately remove it from both states' lists of contaminated waters.

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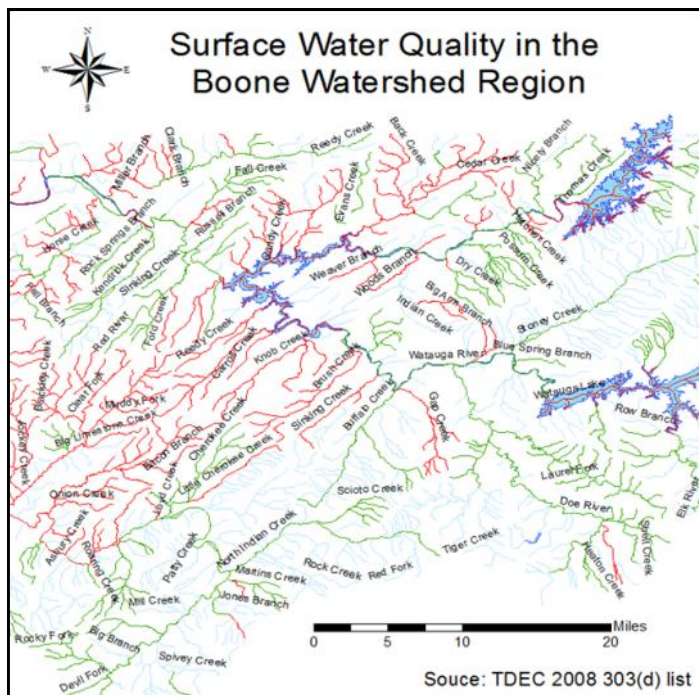
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one people attended the meeting. Several ideas were exchanged and will be presented to the Sinking Creek Technical Advisory Committee. The first meeting was a tremendous success, but there is more to come!

Contact Sarah Ketron, Project Manager, if you are interested in learning more or assisting with the project. Ms. Ketron can be reached at sarah.ketron@yahoo.com or by phone at 423.220.7480.

**Cooperating partners for both funding and in-kind activities include: The City of Johnson City, Tennessee Valley Authority, and Boone Watershed Partnership. Other participating entities may include: First Tennessee Development District, East Tennessee State University, National Resource Conservation Districts, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Tennessee Department*

BWP Funds Project on Beaver Creek (continued from page 3)



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To partner with local users, regional, state and federal entities, educators and others to identify and address water resource issues in the Boone Watershed.

We're on the WEB!

<http://boonewatershed.com>