

Section I. Executive Summary

The Busseron Creek Watershed (BCW) is 252 square miles in size and is located in Clay, Greene, Sullivan, and Vigo Counties in West-Central Indiana. The Busseron Creek flows in a southwesterly direction to a confluence with the Wabash River. Approximately 83% of the watershed is located in Sullivan County. The BCW retains a rural, agrarian heritage with land use that is overwhelmingly agricultural (58%) or forested (30%). Surface coal mining operations have significantly altered the watershed landscape. Only 7% of the area is developed.

Over 16,000 acres of lands managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources provide habitat for a growing number of threatened and endangered species as well as large tracts of state-significant and rare wet-mesic floodplain forests. The watershed's close proximity to Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area has served to increase the incidence of rare and unusual migrating bird species.

The BCW Advisory and Steering Committee collaboratively identified water quality source concerns as they related to various land uses. Goals, objectives and tasks were identified to address these resource concerns.

Water quality monitoring, habitat assessments, and geo-statistical modeling were performed to identify physical areas of concern and strategic areas in which to implement tasks to reduce pollutant loads. These tasks / areas were prioritized based upon critical concern and projected impact on water quality.

The Busseron Creek Watershed Management Plan is intended as a guide for the protection and enhancement of the environment and quality of the Busseron Creek Watershed while balancing the different uses and demands of the community on this natural resource. Goals address items such as:

- Education and outreach;
- Reducing the amount of pollutants and sediment entering surface waters;
- Increasing and targeting conservation efforts;
- Increasing cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among all stakeholders;
- Building and maintaining a solid organization to further the improvement of environmental and economic health of the Busseron Creek Watershed.

Section II. Introduction

2.01 Mission & Vision Statements

(a) Mission Statement

The Busseron Creek Watershed Partnership (BCWP) is a coalition of interested parties dedicated to promoting and implementing best management practices in the Busseron Creek Watershed while educating the general public about environmental stewardship. The BCWP is committed to improve the water quality in the watershed and the regions downstream from Busseron Creek.

(b) Vision Statement

The BCWP envisions a balanced ecosystem that supports a healthy watershed, where quality of life and economic vitality are fostered by

- improving current conditions of the water resources;
- having a dynamic mix of land uses and development types;
- a continued push for improved land management strategies;
- development of public/private partnerships for implementation of local and region-wide plans and projects.

2.02 Partnership Structure

(a) Sponsor

The Sullivan County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) serves as the fiscal and administrative arm of the Busseron Creek Watershed Partnership. Funds received from all sources, including EPA Section 319 grant, other grants and cash donations are controlled by the SWCD. Legal and financial administration of BCWP – Landowner contracts are part of the SWCD responsibilities

(b) Advisory and Steering Committee

The BCWP Advisory and Steering Committee is a group of engaged stakeholders representing local growers, the coal industry, town government, SWCD, Indiana DNR, wildlife & natural resources concerns, economic development, education, river heritage, and conservancy districts. This core group of individuals actively directs the work of the partnership, including development of this watershed management plan, and work performed and administrated by individual committees.

(c) Watershed Coordinator

The BCWP Watershed Coordinator reports directly to the Steering Committee and is contractually obligated to the SWCD. The coordinator is responsible for oversight of all BCWP activities, coordinating resources and manpower to complete work, and cooperating with other organizations to develop cohesive and focused work in order to use available resources in the most effective and efficient means possible.

(d) Committees

A dynamic group of committees will continue to evolve and subside as the needs of the Busseron Creek Watershed Partnership change. As of the most recent publication of this watershed management plan, the following committees are actively engaged:

(i) Advisory and Steering Committee

This core group of individuals actively directs the work of the partnership, including development of this watershed management plan, and work performed and administrated by individual committees.

(ii) Monitoring

The Monitoring Committee is responsible for oversight of water quality sampling & procedures, habitat assessment, macroinvertebrate sampling, and other on-site monitoring activities that may evolve.

(iii) Education and Outreach

The Education and Outreach Committee is responsible for framing a cohesive, yet dynamic education program for school-aged residents and instructors, educator workshops, and adult (non-education-related) workshops.

(iv) Data Analysis & Modeling

The Data Analysis Committee is responsible for organization of collected information into a useable, functional format. This includes:

- **Databases** – Input of existing and new data into a database structure easily joined to a geo-referenced dataset. This data includes water quality test results, macroinvertebrate sampling scores, and habitat assessment scores.
- **Habitat Assessment** – Because of their complex and subjective nature, Qualitative Habitat Assessments will be further reviewed in relation to land uses, critical habitat areas and needs, and economic impact.
- **GIS / Modeling**
Statistical analysis and modeling provide a visible representation of possible priority areas, aiding in ranking and classification of needs.

(v) Project Development and Planning

As with Data Analysis, a divide and conquer method has been adopted by the Project Development and Planning Committee. Its main areas of concern are the *Watershed Management Plan* and *Annual Work Plans*.

As an expansion of the Advisory and Planning Committee, individuals with area expertise provided leadership and review for the body of this work. Working meetings have been conducted to direct the content of this document and will be similarly conducted in development of Annual Work Plans. This committee will also be responsible for promoting and overseeing implementation of projects outline in the Annual Work Plans.

(vi) Financial

The financial committee provides fiduciary guidance to insure the long-term viability of the Busseron Creek Watershed Partnership. Their responsibility includes development and maintenance of a Financial Plan ("Business" Plan) and guidance in economic impact of watershed projects.

(e) Stakeholders

All work completed by the Busseron Creek Watershed Partnership is done on behalf of our stakeholders: anyone who lives in, works in, hunts in, fishes in, banks in, shops in, plays in, goes to school in, owns property in, rents property in, or is otherwise affected by the Busseron Creek Watershed.

Public meetings were held to gather stakeholder concerns. In addition, a combination of on-line surveys and newsletter-distributed surveys were conducted to further define those concerns. A list of concerns may be found in Section V of this document.



Figure II-1 Organization Tree