

2.5 Other Planning Efforts

The Upper Iroquois Watershed is an area of concern for many agencies and organizations. Many planning efforts have occurred or are occurring within the watershed. The following is a summary of known efforts and their relevance to this watershed planning effort.

In general, Jasper and Newton County receive less than 4 Rule 5 plans a year, so no formal enforcement/program exists at this time. If development increases and the number of Rule 5 plans go up then a program of enforcement should be considered. Currently, IDEM's Rule 5 Section can handle the workload. No known sprawl issue exist within the watershed

2.5.1 County Comprehensive Plans

Comprehensive plans function to communicate a unified vision and purpose across each county in regards to plans for land use and development. From a watershed planning perspective, the plans value is that they create a common language and vision as well as a basic roadmap and policy making structure to what development will look like in the county in the future, or depending on the extent of the plan they can clearly communicate what is not being planned and valued. The following is a summary of known plans and their relevance to this watershed planning effort.

Jasper County (2008)

The Jasper County Comprehensive Plan states as one of its goals, "Preserve and enhance the County's natural resources and environmental features, and protect these features from the impact of development." Within that goal; objectives 1-4 are applicable to concerns that may impact water quality.

Objective 1: "Protect the water volume and quality in lakes, streams, and their watersheds, including aquifers."

Objective 2: "Minimize conflicts between the built environment and the natural environment."

Objective 3: "Conserve existing natural areas including woodlots, wildlife habitats, riparian corridors, littoral corridors, open space, wetlands, and floodplains. "

Objective 4: "Encourage the proper use of land application methods and practices."

Under each of the above 4 objectives are 5-7 fairly specific strategies to try and meet the objectives. Plenty of good recommendations are given, many of which would start addressing the concerns of stakeholders, but few specifics are given that determine exactly how and by whom and a timeline of how the goals and objective would be achieved or how to determine if an area is in need of protection. Ultimately, the Upper Iroquois watershed plan will provide the how and by whom and the timeline that is not found within the comprehensive plan.

Newton County (2006)

The Newton County Comprehensive Plan states as one of its goals: "provide a healthful and attractive environment to live and raise a family." Specifically mentioned is the "significant acreage" of designated state and private nature preserves within the county and the need to take advantage of such resources by promoting the use by sportsmen and nature lovers, which will encourage businesses servicing such tourism.

This certainly relates to the stakeholder concern of "increasing recreational activity and protecting fish habitat." Again, the missing information is the how and by who part of this objective; beyond just saying the "zoning and drainage ordinances will implement these policies" or "work with DNR and The Nature Conservancy". Ultimately, the Upper Iroquois watershed plan will provide the how and by whom and timeline that is not part of this comprehensive plan.

Benton County currently has no comprehensive county plan.

White County

- The White County Comprehensive Plan has overall goals and selected objectives and projects to meet those goals. The following goals and projects might be utilized to address stakeholder concerns.

Overall goal = "To Encourage the protection of sensitive areas and protection of natural resources." Within the section on "Park and Open Space Development." The following statements are made that may address stakeholder concerns:

"Encourage the development of recreational corridors along rivers and abandoned railroad rights of way." This would fit right into lack of recreational access.

"Encourage the preservation and/or restoration of areas of special natural features such as lakefronts, beaches, wetlands, lakes, rivers, nature preserves, and/or natural drainage areas." This would help address flashiness and flooding by keeping water on site.

“Encourage environmentally sensitive lands to be used as open space or passive recreational areas.” Strategically placed these lands may be able to address multiple stakeholder concerns.

“Improve and control stormwater drainage and upgrade sewer and water lines.” A great thing, but no specific plan of action.

2.5.2 Watershed Management Plans

The Iroquois River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (2001) was written by Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to assist restoration and protection efforts of stakeholders in the watershed of the Upper Iroquois River. The strategy broadly covers the entire watershed; therefore, it is intended to be an overall strategy and does not dictate management and activities at the stream site or segment level, hence the need for this UIWI-WMP. The following information drawn from this report will be important to consider:

- According to the 1998 Clean Water Indiana Act Section 303d list only the Iroquois River is impaired, and only for FCA and PCBs. Current WQ data and 303d lists show many more impairments on the Iroquois River as well as its tributaries
- Land use has shifted from 92% Agricultural to 84%, and Urban from 1% to 6% Urban.
- Confirmation that the Iroquois River from State Road 16 to State Line is on the state “Outstanding Rivers” lists, and that the river is designated in the “Roster of Indiana Waterways Declared Navigable.” This means regulatory standards and permitting is required for construction in the floodplain and that all stream segments in the watershed must meet surface water use designations.
- Remington use to be a CSO community. Our data confirms it no longer has any CSO outlets. Rensselaer still has CSO outlets, but has reduced the total number of CSOs.
- Within this report, the 1998 and 2001 Unified Watershed Assessment (UWA) for the Iroquois River Watershed is referenced and confirms many of the current concerns listed in this plan, such as stream bank erosion, failing septic systems, and nonpoint pollution sources. The UIWI-WMP data supports these concerns, adds additional concerns and further explores their severity and opportunities to address the concerns.
- All the stakeholders identified are part of current efforts, as well add many more stakeholders.

2.5.3 Other Planning Efforts

Regional Water and Sewer District Engineering Report

The Jasper County Regional Water and Sewer District plan, prepared by RQAW Corporation for submission to IDEM was issued June 8, 2009. By providing water supply and sewage disposal systems it was hoped that Jasper County would experience potential economic benefits and provide economic opportunities for its

citizens. It was also believed that such facilities would be conducive to the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare by ensuring that the potable water complied with the Safe Drinking Water Act and sewage disposal in accordance with the Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program. Historically the proposed area relied on individual septic systems, many of which have failed. As discussed in Section 2.3.3 Septic System Suitability approximately 98.7% of the soils in Jasper county are rated as "very limited" for septic tank adsorption fields. According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 2,985 wells exist within Jasper County, many of which have not been replaced and have unsatisfactory water quantity and quality. Currently three projects are being focused on, with two falling within the Upper Iroquois Watershed. Project 1, from State Road 114 to Rensselaer includes the installation of new sanitary sewers and a new water system from the City of Rensselaer to I-65 along Rt.114. This project is currently underway and specifics are discussed in Part Two of the Watershed Inventory under the appropriate subwatershed section. Project 2, from State Road 231 to Remington proposes the extension of both sanitary sewer and domestic water from the City of Remington's existing water and sewer service territory, north along SR 231, to Exit 205 on I-65, which is on the 303(d) list for E.coli impairment. See Figure 22 Regional Sewer District Project Sites.

Figure 22 Regional Sewer District Project Sites



0 1.75 3.5 7 Miles

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Environmental Impact Review for the Iroquois River Conservancy District

The Iroquois River Conservancy District along with JF New and Banning Engineering completed an environmental impact review in January 2010. The study area for this project was the Iroquois river corridor extending from Parr in Jasper County, through Newton County, to the Illinois border. The project was carried out to document natural resources in the study area, and to outline potential permitting challenges associated with those resources. Many of the proposed projects and associated benefits directly relate to the stakeholders concerns list; such as obstruction removal (logjams), eroded stream bank repair, two-stage ditch construction, enhancement of floodway conveyance, and upstream flood storage management. All of the recommended projects directly affect flashiness and flooding of the river and/or the amount of sediment in the water. Obstruction removal and treatment of stream bank stabilization projects are noted as maintenance projects which are ongoing and are budgeted for annually.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fish Survey Iroquois River

In 1971, the Iroquois River was surveyed by DNR as part of the Kankakee River to assess the status of the current fish populations. A total of 383 fish representing 19 species were collected. In contrast, downstream on the Illinois portion of the watershed, 69 species in 2000, and 63 species in 2005 were counted. (Lutterbie, 2000) (LutterBie, 2005). Game fish collected included smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, rock bass, channel catfish, northern pike, bluegill and black crappie. Game fish only made up a small percentage of the fish collected. Relative abundance of the major species by number collected was quillback 38%, carp 29%, shorthead redhorse 8%, bluntnose minnow 6%, bigmounting buffalo 6%, and golden redhorse 4%. The presence of game and native fish species, along with healthy fish habitat are among the list of stakeholder concerns. In 1989, it was recommended that the reduction of soil run-off through improved land management practices would help improve water quality and game fish populations. Improvement structures, such as gabions, might also enhance game fish reproduction and survival.

Jasper County Trails Initiative

The National Park Service, Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission, and the Jasper County Economic Development Organization are working together to develop a trails system throughout Jasper County. This project is currently ongoing and hopes to provide hiking, biking, walking, and water trails to area residents. The purpose of these trails is to enhance tourism, promote healthy lifestyles, and help boost economic development along the corridors and in surrounding communities. This project addresses the stakeholder concerns regarding recreation.

2008 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report for the Kankakee/Iroquois Watershed (Tetra Tech, 2009)

The TMDL Report finalized on October 23, 2009 was prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5, Illinois EPA, and IDEM by Tetra Tech, Inc. A TMDL is the total amount of a pollutant that can be assimilated by the receiving water while still achieving water quality standards. They are composed of the sum of individual waste-load allocations for regulated sources and load allocations for unregulated sources and natural background levels. TMDL studies are performed on waterways that have been previously listed on the state's 303(d) list. These studies look to identify more specifically what types of pollutants are leading to impairments and what needs to be done to address those threats so that state water quality goals would be achieved. Data compiled for the Upper Iroquois in the summer of 2008 indicate that there are *E. coli* exceedances throughout the Indiana portion; therefore, this study looked specifically to address high levels of *E. coli*. Numeric criteria for *E. coli* were used as a basis of the TMDLs. The Indiana Administrative Code designates all surface waters of the state for full body contact recreation uses. Water Quality Standards (WQS) for all waters in the non-Great Lakes system states that *E. coli* bacteria shall not exceed 125 counts per 100ml as a geometric mean based on not less than 5 samples equally spaced over a 30 day period. Some of the recommended solutions to address the impairments include storm water controls, point source controls, manure management and habitat improvements. A more detailed review of the water quality data is included in the subwatershed descriptions.

Rensselaer Riverfront Project (Iroquois River Conservancy District, 1988)

In 1988, the Jasper County Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) and the Jasper County SWCD worked with the Rensselaer Chamber of Commerce, Rensselaer Rotary and other local agencies to develop an Iroquois River improvement plan within the boundaries of Rensselaer, IN. The project consisted of three phases: Phase 1 was the construction of the canoe/boat access point at Lairds Landing; Phase 2 consisted of the installation of gabion, rock-filled baskets, to be placed into the river to improve canoe and boat access during times of low flow; and Phase 3 consisted of the construction of walkways through the downtown area to promote winter and summer recreation activities. Phase 1 was completed; however, phases 2 and 3 were never started. During the late summer months when rainfall is low and consequently run-off into the river is low, the depth of water flow over the rock ledges is not enough to allow passage of boats and canoes. The deep water pools become stagnant and depleted of oxygen and therefore do not provide livable fish habitat. Gabions would maintain a flow depth over the rock ledges so that small boats and canoes may pass at least 90% of the time. In addition to providing for the passage of small boats and canoes, these structures would also help aerate the water for better fish habitat. While this is a dated project, it still proves relevant to stakeholder concerns for fish habitat and recreational access. Much support for this project existed and preliminary engineering plans and cost estimates were completed, however due to landowner concerns of basement flooding the project was abandoned. Not sure if the concern was ever validated as a true concern, or just a rumor.