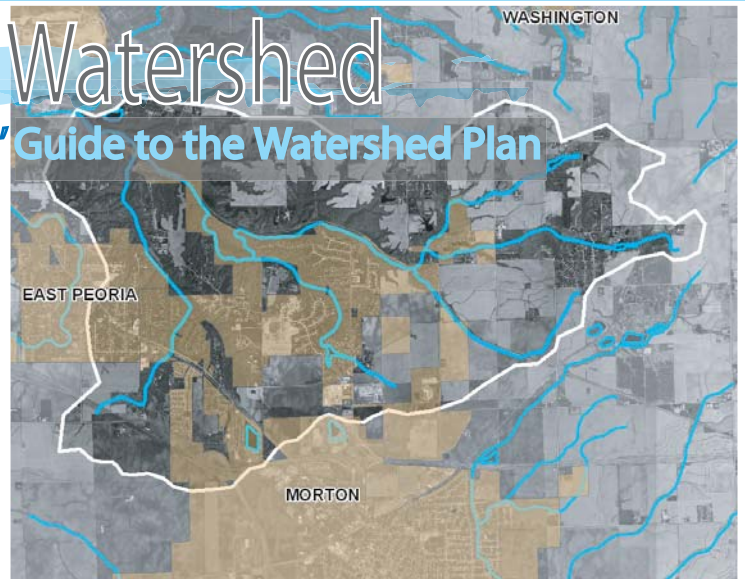


Ackerman Creek Watershed

Elected Officials' Guide to the Watershed Plan

Citizens of the Ackerman Creek Watershed face extensive challenges with erosion and water quality. Soil eroding from construction sites, agriculture fields, and stream channels fill isolated lakes and contribute an estimated 16,000 tons of sediment to Farm Creek each year. This document summarizes the Ackerman Creek Watershed Restoration Plan and outlines specific policy recommendations that would benefit citizens by reducing risk of soil erosion and protecting valuable natural resources on public and private property.



About Ackerman Creek

Ackerman Creek is a tributary to the larger Farm Creek Watershed. Relative to other subwatersheds in the Farm Creek system, **Ackerman contributes a great portion of sediment** that Farm Creek delivers to the Illinois River at Peoria Lakes. The Ackerman Creek Watershed lies within the municipal boundaries of the Village of Morton and the City of East Peoria, with the remainder in rural Tazewell County. Population of the watershed in 2000 was approximately 5,700.

Ackerman Creek Statistics:

- Ackerman Creek is 7 miles long.
- Including tributaries, the Ackerman Creek Watershed contains 26 miles of streams.
- The watershed contains approximately 40 lakes.
- 55% of the watershed is agriculture/grassland, 25% forested, and 20% urban.
- Ackerman Creek drops 310 feet in elevation in approximately 5 linear miles.
- 45% of the watershed contains sloping to very steep soils that pose an erosion hazard.

Creating the Watershed Plan

In 2004 the Ackerman Creek Watershed Planning Committee completed the *Ackerman Creek Watershed Restoration Plan* with the intent to “promote the implementation of a flexible plan that will protect natural resources, minimize erosion for improved water quality, enhance the quality of life for ourselves and future generations, and promote a balance between economic and environmental sustainability”. **Planning committee members include elected officials, residents, farmers, environmental interest group members, and natural resource professionals.**

Watershed Challenges

- Urban development has **increased stormwater runoff rates and volumes** resulting in streambank erosion and sedimentation.
- Local units of government must implement EPA's current **stormwater regulations**.
- **Development on the bluffs** causes gully and ravine erosion.
- Erosion is occurring on **farm fields and construction sites**.
- Community members need **education** on watershed issues to prevent illegal dumping and control stormwater runoff.



Streambank erosion along Ackerman Creek is a major source of sediment in the stream system (above).



Stream channel erosion can lead to expensive infrastructure projects, such as the riprap placed along Veterans Drive (above) and the placement of a concrete channel bed to protect a sanitary sewer line (below).



Watershed Management Options

For Local Units of Government

Below is a summary of action items recommended in the *Ackerman Creek Watershed Restoration Plan*. For more detailed information contact Tri-County Regional Planning Commission for a copy of the watershed plan or visit www.tricountyrpc.org

Update Development Ordinances

Local units of government will have the greatest impact on water quality by updating regulations on erosion, stormwater control, and the protection of sensitive, erodible areas. The following model ordinances are available and are recommended for consideration:

- **Tri-County Unified Stormwater Ordinance.** The Ackerman Creek Watershed Technical Committee drafted this ordinance specifically for the tri-county area. The ordinance fulfills requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency's Phase II stormwater regulations. This model also provides options to developers beyond the traditional detention basins.
- **Ravine Overlay District.** Development along ravines and steep slopes contributes to mass erosion that threatens water quality and the infrastructure of the development. The ordinance encourages development away from erodible areas by requesting geological surveys for construction activity on steep slopes.
- **Stream Buffer Ordinance.** The City of Peoria recently developed and adopted a stream buffer ordinance to encourage development away from streams. This protects homeowners from eroding channels and provides the City access to the drainage system for necessary maintenance.

Integrate Low-Impact Development

Principals of low-impact development aim to facilitate development while maintaining the most valuable natural features and functions of the site. The goal is to create high value areas with **no overall loss of buildable units**. Low-impact design encourages:

1. Flexibility in site design and lot size
2. Thoughtful protection and management of natural areas
3. Reduction of impervious surfaces
4. Sustainable stormwater management

See TCRPC for a copy of model low impact development policy.

Encourage Citizen Stewardship

Property owners can limit stormwater pollution by adopting stormwater best management practices. Such practices include, but are not limited to: establishing rain gardens, using rain barrels, redirecting downspouts from pavement to the grass, and clearing hard surfaces of dirt and/or household chemicals.

Local units of government can encourage these practices with a public award system, or stormwater credits in a stormwater user fee system.



Engineered swales such as those suggested in the *Unified Stormwater Ordinance* filter and infiltrate stormwater (above).



In a conventional subdivision layout, the entire site is converted to roads and building lots (above). Below is the same area with the same number of building lots using low-impact design. (Conservation Design Forum 2003)

