Partridge Creek Watershed

The Elected Officials' Guide to the Plan

Citizens of the Partridge Creek Watershed face extensive challenges with erosion and water quality. Soil eroding from construction sites, agriculture fields, and stream channels collect in the streambeds and contribute an estimated 26,700 tons of sediment to Upper Peoria Lake annually. This document summarizes the Partridge Creek Watershed Restoration Plan and outlines specific policy recommendations that would benefit citizens by reducing the risk of soil erosion and protecting valuable natural resources on public and private property.

About Partridge Creek

Partridge Creek Watershed is a 17,842 acre drainage area of Woodford County. This rural area is located in Worth, Partridge, Cazenovia, and Metamora Townships.

Watershed Statistics:

- Partridge Creek drops 360 feet in elevation over its 12-mile course.
- Including tributaries, the Partridge Creek Watershed drains 73.5 miles of streams.
- The watershed contains approximately 64 ponds and 2 lakes, the Izaak Walton and Wild Wind Lake.
- 49% of the watershed is agriculture, 27% is forested, 20% is rural grassland and 4% is urban.
- Although only 2/3 the size of the neighboring Richland Creek Watershed, Partridge delivers 1.5 times as much sediment to Peoria Lake.

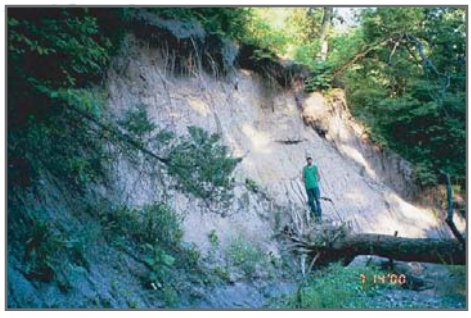
Creating the Watershed Plan

In 2004 the Partridge Creek Watershed Planning Committee completed the *Partridge Creek Watershed Restoration Plan* with the intent to "develop and encourage the funding and implementation of a long-range watershed management plan... to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, preserve natural habitats, protect farmland and encourage stewardship of the watershed.". **Planning committee members include elected officials, residents, farmers, environmental interest group members, and natural resource professionals**.

This photo demonstrates the magnitude of soil loss from streambank erosion.

Watershed Challenges

- Community members need **education** on watershed issues to prevent illegal dumping and to control stormwater runoff.
- **Prime farm land** is being lost to urban development.
- Urbanizing areas are contributing to **increased stormwater runoff** resulting in erosion of stream channels.
- There is a lack of appropriate vegetation adjacent to streams.
- There is significant erosion from cropland and unmanaged forested bluffs.
- Given the rural setting of the watershed, there are many private drinking wells that should be regularly tested for contaminants.



Stream bank erosion results from land use changes.

Watershed Management Options

For Local Units of Government

Below is a summary of action items recommended in the *Partridge 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 Partrdige 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 and farmers 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 in the urban areas and using no-till practices and installing grass swales, terraces and other soil conservation technologies on farm fields.

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)