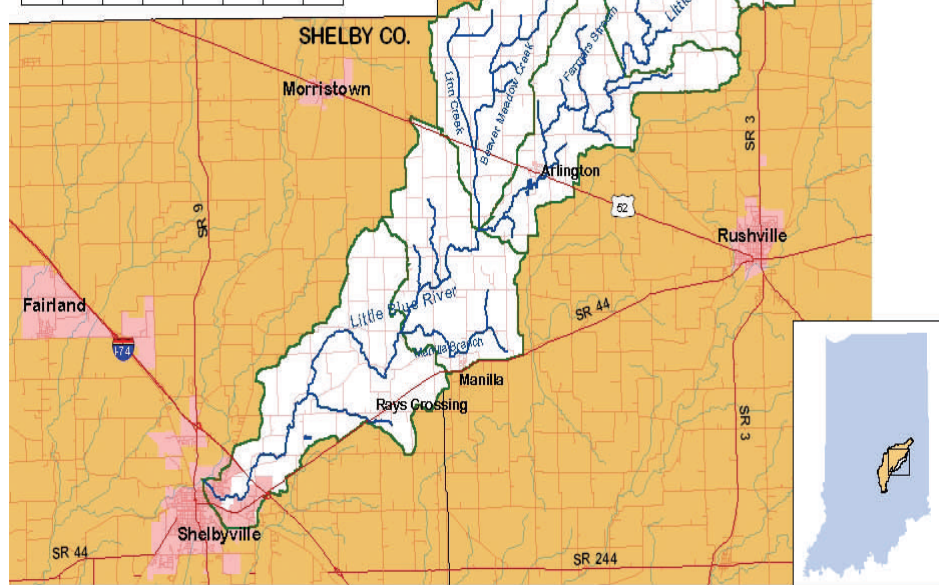
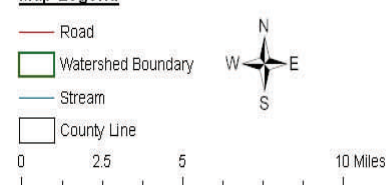


LITTLE BLUE RIVER WATERSHED

Map Legend



A watershed is the land area that drains into a body of water. How we use the land has a direct impact on water quality. The map above shows the boundaries of the Little Blue River watershed, which contains approximately 67,483 acres. The inset box on the state of Indiana indicates the location of the Little Blue River watershed.

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What you can do to help

1. Join our new watershed citizen's group by providing contact information so we can keep you informed about upcoming events.
2. Participate in community activities such as river clean-ups, educational workshops, and canoe/kayak trips. Check out www.hoosiercanoecub.org
3. Take the Hoosier Riverwatch training and join other water quality monitors as they document river health. Go www.in.gov/dnr/nrec/ for more information.
4. Visit the Shelby County SWCD website – www.shelbyswcd.org – to find out about current, local activities and how to become an Earth Team volunteer.
5. Educate yourself on ways to protect water quality and promote these ideas to others. Start by using the EPA's Watershed Region information website to find out your watershed address and learn about its environmental health www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/region/

Contact information

Little Blue River Watershed Project



What we've done

From 2004 through 2010, local citizens have taken a close look at the Little Blue River Watershed. Using individual, local, state, and national resources we've funded a diagnostic study, developed a Watershed Management Plan, taken water quality samples, gone canoeing and fishing, cleaned trash from the river, educated children, held field days and workshops, and encouraged farmers to adopt agriculture practices that protect and improve water quality.

What this means to you

The Little Blue River was formed long ago as a channel to take melt water from an ancient glacier. Today it serves as an important drainage basin so the land is available for farming, houses, businesses – for US! It provides a home for wildlife, a place to have fun and relax, and lovely scenery to behold. But over the years sediment from erosion has begun to fill in the river channel. Nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizer cause algae to bloom, which depletes oxygen for fish and other aquatic life. Some people have used the river as their personal dump when getting rid of old furniture, tires, and trash. **Let's not lose our beautiful river!**



Watershed education for youth



River cleanup



Watershed education for adults



Volunteer water quality monitoring



Cost-share for Best Management Practices



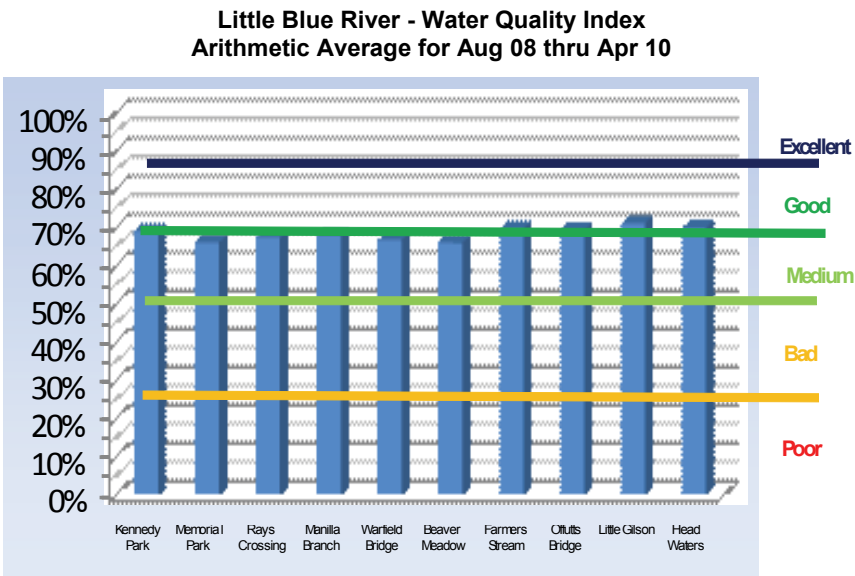
Workshops and field days



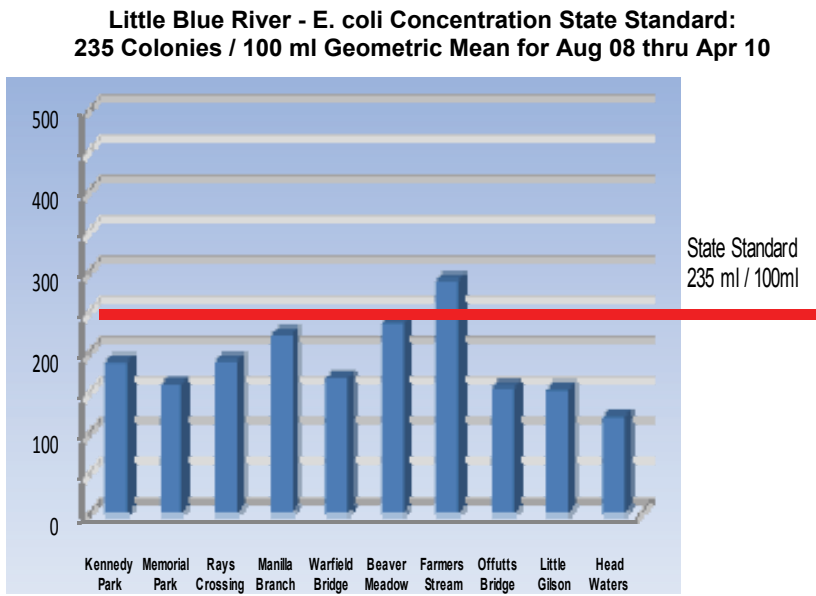
What we've learned

Volunteers checked water quality in the Little Blue River and its main tributaries at ten sites from August 2008 through April 2010. The charts on this page explain what our research found - that water quality is neither terrible nor great. If we start now we've got a chance to protect what we have and improve the river for future generations.

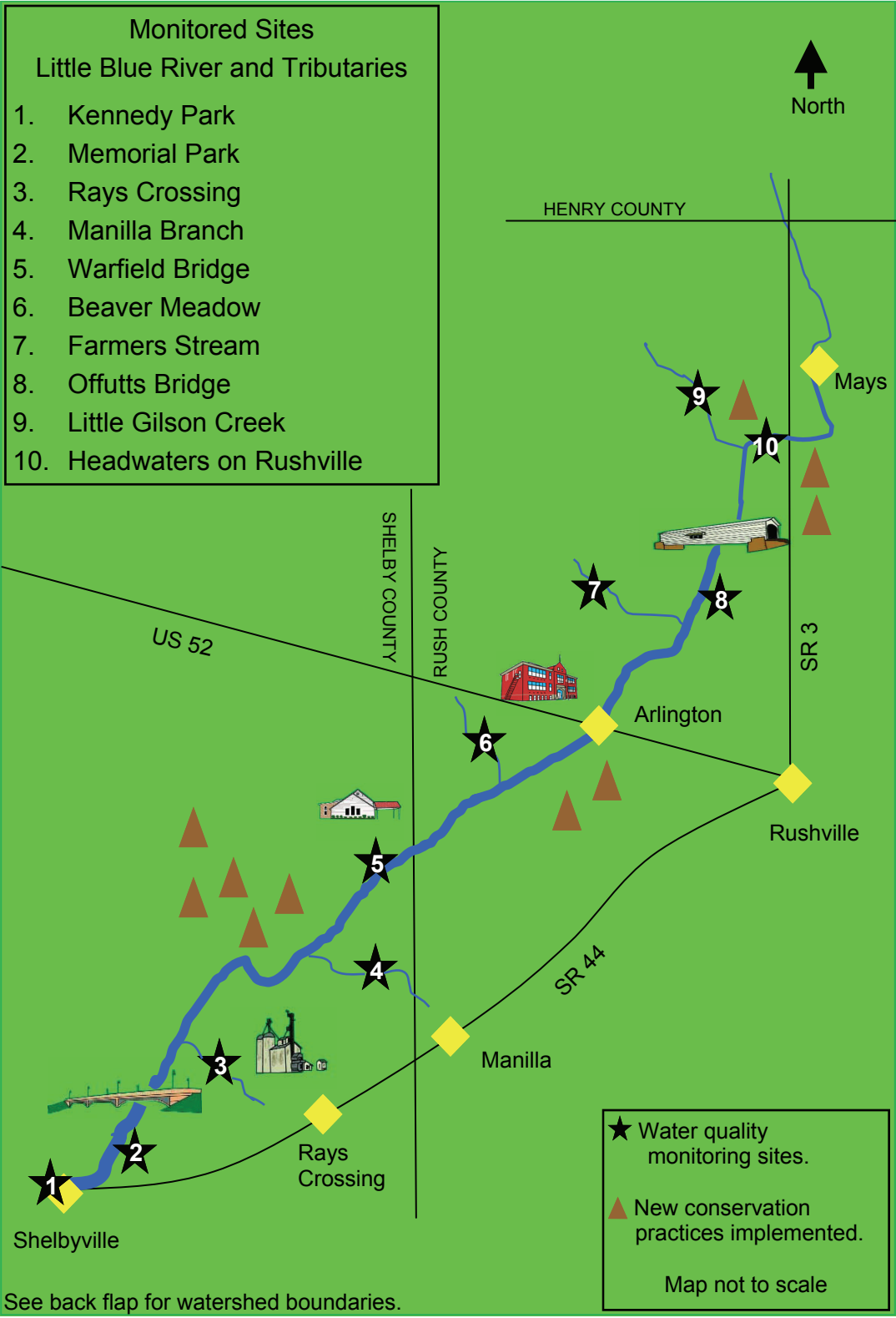
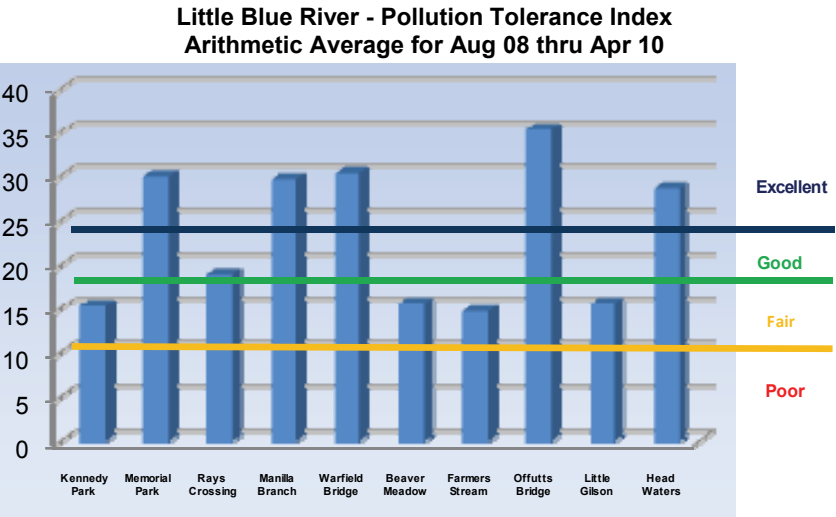
Our water quality is in the medium range. The Water Quality Index is determined by testing several factors including oxygen levels, nitrogen, orthophosphates, E. coli, temperature, pH, and turbidity.



Average E. coli levels are near or below the state standard, which is considered safe for human contact. E. coli occurs naturally and comes from the digestive systems of warm-blooded animals including livestock, wildlife and humans. E. coli spikes can occur in warm weather months. Never drink river water and always wash your face and hands after getting wet in the river.



Water quality conditions for aquatic life range from fair to excellent. The Pollution Tolerance Index is derived by studying insects and other small creatures that live on the river bottom. Some are very sensitive to pollution while others can live where water quality is relatively poor. Good oxygen levels are important to support healthy aquatic life.



What we've done

Since March 2008 the Rush and Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation Districts have worked with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to sponsor a cost-share grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. Farmers have used grant money to implement Best Management Practices such as organic and conventional hay plantings, no-till systems, nutrient and pest management, cover crops, stream bank stabilization, filter strips and field borders. These practices will improve water quality now and in the future. Over the next five years it is estimated these new practices will help water quality by keeping out of the river system:

Sediment - 950.2 tons/year
Phosphorus - 1,308 pounds/year
Nitrogen - 2,590 pounds/year