

MEETING INVITATION

An Introduction to the Vernon Fork Muscatatuck River Watershed Study and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report

Location	Date	Time
Virtual via Webinar https://zoom.us/j/93349185962?pwd=TU1tTXB2YUNqLzRxcTZDSINSVIFdz09 (Additional information on joining this meeting found on the following page)	Oct. 27th, 2020	2:00 PM EDT

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) invites you to participate in a public meeting to learn about the water quality of the Vernon Fork Muscatatuck River watershed, and how IDEM is working with local stakeholders to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load report and watershed management plan for pollutants. This will allow the rivers and streams to meet water quality standards.

What is a Total Maximum Daily Load?

A Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. A TMDL is the sum of the allowable loads of a single pollutant from all contributing point and nonpoint sources. The calculation must include a margin of safety to ensure that the waterbody can be used for the purposes the State has designated. IDEM is developing TMDLs for impaired waters in Indiana to characterize the causes of the impairments and identify potential sources of pollution.

What are water quality standards?

Water quality standards are set by the state of Indiana. They identify the designated uses for each waterbody, such as for drinking water, contact recreation (swimming), and aquatic life support (fishing). The water quality standards also set the scientific criteria to support each designated use. Any waterbody that does not meet the standards for a given pollutant is considered impaired.

What are the water quality impairments in the Vernon Fork Muscatatuck River Watershed?

The Vernon Fork watershed has several streams that are impaired for *E. coli*, biological communities, mercury (in fish tissue), and/or dissolved oxygen. IDEM is planning a watershed characterization study to characterize the current condition of the watershed and gather more information to support the TMDL document and aid in the development of a watershed management plan.

What is *E. coli* and why should we care?

E. coli is the abbreviated name for bacteria found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals. The presence of *E. coli* is used as an indicator of the overall sanitary quality of soil and water environments. Water becomes contaminated through either exposure to point (permitted activities) or nonpoint source pollution. The sources of contaminants can include a mal-functioning septic system, domestic animal wastes (overflow from feedlots, animals defecating in streams and ditches, runoff and leaching from manure applied to fields, wild animal waste (mammals and birds), and combined sewer overflows.

What is a watershed characterization study?

The main objective of the Vernon Fork Muscatatuck River watershed characterization study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the streams in the watershed for their ability to support aquatic life use and recreational use. The stream monitoring will provide data for TMDL development and watershed planning and will aid in the evaluation of future changes within the basin. Chemical, physical, bacteriological and biological parameters will be collected for the project.

How can I help to improve our water quality?

You can help by attending this meeting and becoming involved in the watershed planning process. At this meeting, IDEM will provide an overview of what TMDLs are, why the Vernon Fork watershed was selected for this project, general information about the study area, and how the data will be used to determine the overall health of the watershed.

More information on IDEM's TMDL Program can be found at: www.in.gov/idem/nps/2652.htm

Additional information on the Vernon Fork Muscatatuck River Watershed TMDL study can be found at:
<https://www.in.gov/idem/nps/4064.htm>

We look forward to your participation!

To Join the Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/93349185962?pwd=TU1tTXB2YUNqLzRxcTZDSINSVlFldz09>

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