

Post Oak Creek Watershed Assessment Plan



WATER MANAGEMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Post Oak Creek is a sub-watershed of Falling Water River located half in Putnam County and half in White County within the Hull-York Lakeland RC&D Area. It consists of approximately 8.7 miles of stream channel and drains 16,192 acres of predominately agricultural land. Most of the agriculture in this watershed consists of beef operations with the primary concerns being overgrazed pastures, unrestricted livestock access to the stream and removal of riparian vegetation. Resulting water quality testing by TDEC (Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation) in 1998 and 2002 resulted in Post Oak Creek being placed on the 303(d) impaired list due to agriculture. Several BMPs (Best Management Practices) have been implemented by agricultural producers within the watershed utilizing cost-sharing funds from USDA-NRCS's EQIP and Tennessee's Department of Agriculture's ARCF (Agriculture Resources Conservation Fund).

This Project included a detailed watershed bioassessment survey which identified specific locations where there was degradation of water quality. Upon completion of the bioassessment, a watershed plan is to be formulated which will identify steps necessary for this stream to meet its designated uses and be de-listed from the 303(d) impaired list. A proposal will be submitted for BMP implementation through EPA 319(h). Other financial resources will be requested from TDA's ARCF, USDA-NRCS's EQIP, and other financial or voluntary efforts on behalf of producers in the watershed. This project is a model in Tennessee for removing watersheds from TDEC's 303(d) impaired list for agriculture, utilizing voluntary efforts and existing federal and state cost-share programs.

IMPACT AND OUTCOME: All landowners of parcels in the watershed were contacted by mail and advised of the project. A survey was sent to each asking for their input into activities in the watershed and they were invited to the first public meeting. The meeting was held with 32 in attendance to explain the project, the process, and to answer landowner questions and request their participation. Technical specialists from USDA-NRCS and Tennessee Technological University (TTU) began collecting data along the creek such as GPS coordinates, existing riparian vegetation, erosion present and source if known. The Biological Assessment was completed on 10 different stream sites. The results were surprising. Six sites were found to be 'fully supporting' with only four 'slightly impaired'. The 'slightly impaired' sites were mainly where tributaries were entering the main stream stem. Only one of those was related to agriculture. ***Results show Post Oak Creek was not as impaired as assumed by original water quality testing and that the impairment was not due to agriculture.*** Information being shared with residents throughout the watershed has resulted in their having a heightened and sustained interest in continuing to manage their watershed. A watershed plan will be formed and presented at a second public meeting.

RC&D COUNCIL'S ROLE:

RC&D Coordinator - Technical advisor for the project.

RC&D Sec/Treasurer - Provide financial oversight and bookkeeping, with the assistance of the White and Putnam County SCD secretaries, and contract accountant services, as needed.

Directors and volunteers from the council - Assisting with administration and coordination as needed. Organize and direct volunteer assistance from multiple sources.

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$ 33,334.00
RC&D Council's Contribution In-kind \$ 13,334.00
EPA 319(h) Non-point Source Program \$ 20,000.00
Grant

TOTAL PROJECT VALUE: \$ 33,334.00

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTNERS: 7
Putnam County Soil Conservation District
White County Soil Conservation District
Tennessee Farm Bureau of Putnam County
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
TN Dept of Environment & Conservation
TN Dept of Agriculture
TN Technological University

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