

Fountain Creek Watershed

Flood Control & Greenway District

FACT SHEET

Water Quality



A watershed is a region that drains into a river, river system or other common body of water. The Fountain Creek Watershed is located along the central front range of Colorado. It is a 927 square mile area of land and water that drains to the Arkansas River at Pueblo and ultimately to the Gulf of Mexico. The watershed's boundaries are defined by the shape of the land - Palmer Divide to the north, Pikes Peak to the west, and a minor divide 20 miles east of Colorado Springs. Why is watershed protection important? Improving our waterways helps with water quality, stormwater management, flood prevention, creating recreational opportunities, and natural habitat for wildlife.



WATERSHED PLAN PURPOSE

1. Provide an appropriate planning framework around addressing *E. coli* sources
2. Identify possible sources of *E. coli* as well as locations that need further investigation
3. Identify projects and activities which may be implemented to improve in-stream *E. coli* levels
4. Prioritize projects and expansion or implementation of programs and best management practices targeted at the reduction of *E. coli* within the watershed

NON-POINT SOURCE (NPS) POLLUTION

Non-point source (NPS) pollution refers to both water and air pollution from diffuse sources, rather than from a "point source" like the end of a discharge pipe. It may be hard to recognize and is often hard to control. Polluted stormwater runoff is one of the greatest threats to clean water.

Examples of non-point sources of pollution include

- Sediments from construction;
- forestry operations;
- agricultural lands;
- bacteria and microorganisms from failing septic systems;
- and, pet wastes.

POLLUTION SOURCES (UNREGULATED NONPOINT SOURCES):

- Human Waste: Homeless camps, leaking On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (septic systems), illicit dumping (RV).
- Wildlife: Waste from birds, raccoons, deer, geese and other fauna living on or near water can contaminate waterways with their feces.
- Pet Waste: 350,000 dogs in the Colorado Springs area, averaging ~0.75 pounds of waste daily, producing ~92,400 pounds per year of waste.
- Livestock

SUMMARY OF DATA FINDINGS FROM THE "EPA NINE-ELEMENT WATERSHED PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF *ESCHERICHIA COLI*"

Most exceedances occur during the recreation season of May-October

- Wastewater treatment facilities must meet permit limits and report permit violations
- No wastewater effluent reported as exceeding stream standard
- At multiple locations effluent contributes flow with very low *E. coli* levels, diluting overall concentrations
- A 2007-2008 USGS *E. coli* DNA study suggests high *E. coli* concentrations in Upper Fountain Creek during warm months is likely attributable to birds, not humans or ruminants (i.e. cattle, goats).

For the full plan and a powerpoint overview presentation, go to http://www.fountain-crk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/E_Colo_WatershedPlan_FINAL.pdf to facilitate focus on the highest priority projects first.



HOW YOU CAN CARE FOR WATER QUALITY

Coloradans enjoy some of the best water in the West. We can all play a part to protect our water quality. Remember, what happens upstream affects those downstream. Ways that you can help care for water quality include:

1. Dispose of medicine properly: use a designated take-back program, not by flushing medicines down the toilet.
2. Don't fill storm drains: avoid placing anything but water in a storm drain. No oil, pesticides, fertilizer, paints, etc.
3. Pick up pet poop: Pet waste can run into storm drains and spread bacteria.
4. Fix the oil leak: car leaks can spread oil into the water supply.
5. Direct your downspout: ensure downspouts are pointed toward the lawn or plants, not the sidewalk.
6. Don't flush: don't flush garbage down the toilet.
7. Reduced paved areas: reduce paved areas with porous pavement materials and plantings that will allow water to soak through and not run off.
8. Sweep: dirty sidewalks and streets run into the storm drain and pollute our water.
9. Use sand or cat litter: use sand or cat litter to de-ice sidewalks instead of salt, and sweep up after the ice has melted.
10. Use mulch to control weeds and reduce evaporation.
11. Follow directions: always follow the manufacturer's label for storage, use and dispose of all household chemicals.
12. Use pesticides sparingly: use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly and consider hiring a professional applicator when necessary.
13. Use a certified car wash: a certified commercial car wash is more water efficient and does not send soapy water down the driveway and into the storm drain.
14. Compost: compost and amend soil. Healthy soil acts as a water filter.

For more info on to care for water quality, please visit ColoradoWaterWise.org



PROJECT CONTACTS

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) includes technical experts appointed by the District Board to provide recommendations on public policy or expenditures for the benefit of the watershed. They also conduct investigations, make measurements, collect data, make analyses, studies, and inspections pertaining to facilities, projects and property within and outside the district. The TAC generally meets at 1 p.m. on the 1st Wednesday of the month, Fountain City Hall, Fountain, CO, 116 Main Street, 2nd floor. The meeting date, time and location are subject to change so please check the calendar for changes.

For more information about the statutory authority and purpose of the Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District see C.R.S 32-11.5. You can also visit <https://www.fountain-crk.org/> and call 719-447-5012.