

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



2005 Targeted Watersheds Grants: Little River

Tennessee and North Carolina

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Little River originates in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and flows 60 miles through the cities of Townsend, Alcoa, and Maryville and portions of Blount, Knox, and Sevier Counties in southeastern Tennessee. It drains a 380-square-mile area and flows to the Fort Loudon Reservoir. The Little River supplies drinking water to 100,000 residents in Blount County and adds millions of dollars in recreation tourism to the local economy. Most of the Little River Watershed is located in Blount County, one of the most rapidly developing counties in Tennessee. The watershed supports several state and federally protected species, including the endangered duskytail darter, the fine-rayed pigtoe mussel, the threatened snail darter, and the longhead darter. The Little River is one of the few remaining high quality rivers in East Tennessee. In fact, the section of the river within the National Park is classified as an Outstanding Natural Resource Water and is used as a benchmark to assess the health of other Blue Ridge Mountain waterbodies.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Little River is also considered threatened by the State of Tennessee. This threatened designation means that if current trends continue, within five years the Little River will be impaired. Blount County's population is expected to grow approximately 40,000 by 2020 to reach 143,000. Due to increased development and agricultural pressures in the watershed, several tributaries of the Little River have become impaired.

- Agricultural activities in the watershed have led to an increase in the sediment and bacterial loads to Little River.
- Failing septic systems in the watershed are contributing to bacterial contamination.
- Habitat alteration, including reductions in wetland and riparian areas, has increased sediment and bacterial loads.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Little River Water Quality Forum, a consortium of over 23 different agencies that all have concerns with water quality issues, works to improve and protect the water quality of the Little River watershed. The Targeted Watershed Grant funds will be used to reduce bacteria and sediment loads to the watershed by:

- Developing an outreach campaign and providing a cost-share program to enable farmers to install Best Management Practices, including conservation practices such as rotational grazing, livestock exclusion fencing, alternative watering sources and riparian buffers.
- Developing a residential homeowner educational campaign to increase awareness and understanding of the impacts of residential land management practices on water quality. The program will focus on maintenance of septic systems, restoration and stewardship of wetlands and riparian buffers, and management of pet waste and lawn care.
- Developing a septic system maintenance cost-share program to assist low-income families in repairing failing septic systems.
- Conducting water quality monitoring to track progress.



Alternative watering system and heavy use area protection.



Targeted Watersheds

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Little River Water Quality Forum (LRWQF) is dedicated to water quality improvement and protection initiatives within the Little River Watershed. Efforts of the LRWQF along with strong community support for improving and protecting the Little River has resulted in multiple watershed improvement projects through grants and partnerships.

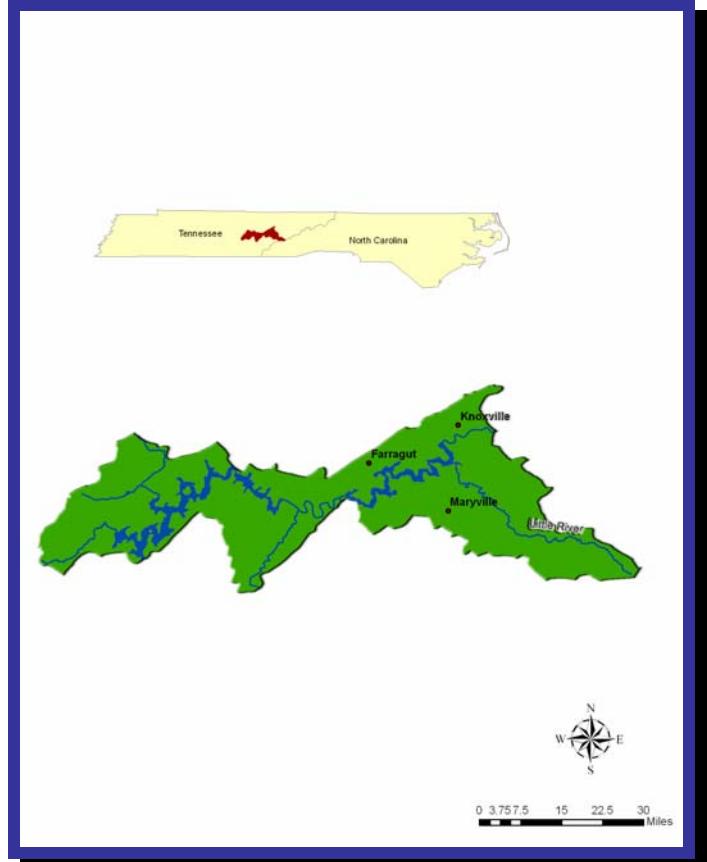
LRWQF partners include but are not limited to:

- Blount and Knox County Soil Conservation Districts
- Keep Blount Beautiful
- Blount and Knox Counties
- The Cities of Alcoa and Maryville
- Foothills Land Conservancy
- Little River Watershed Association
- University of Tennessee
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- University of Tennessee Extension Service
- Tennessee Dept. of Environment and Conservation
- Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Great Smoky Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Conservation Fisheries Incorporated
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Geological Survey
- Blount County Livestock Association
- Blount County Chamber of Commerce
- Blount County Environmental Health Action Team
- World Wildlife Fund



Stream in Springbrook Park with no riparian cover.

After restoration, the stream has riparian plantings, which will minimize pollutants, provide habitat and control temperature.



For More Information Contact:

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EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.