

Leading Creek Watershed Fact Sheet

- A **watershed** is the area of land where the majority of the water drains into the nearby streams, rivers, or creeks. A watershed boundary is comprised of ridgetops or high elevation areas.
- The **Leading Creek Watershed** drains just over 150 square miles in the un-glaciated hills of southeastern Ohio. It is positioned in Meigs (96%), Athens (2.7%), and Gallia Counties (1.4%) and lies within the Appalachian region of Ohio. Leading Creek originates in the southern portion of Athens County and winds about 30 miles through the valleys before discharging into the Ohio River near the town of Middleport in Meigs County.
- The Leading Creek Watershed is affected by three main **causes of pollution**: sedimentation/siltation, acid mine drainage, and nutrient enrichment & pathogens via runoff from household sewage treatment systems and agricultural operations.
- In 1993, an **underground coal mine** owned by the Southern Ohio Coal Company was flooded with water from a closed connecting mine. Then an emergency de-watering event at the Meigs #31 Mine resulted in the release of millions of gallons of partially treated and untreated mine water into the Leading Creek Watershed. The discharge eliminated all life from Parker Run and the lower 16 miles of Leading Creek. The mine is no longer active but is discharging and treating with a permit. A Restoration Plan for Leading Creek has been created by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to direct the use of funds resulting from the mine disaster.
- The Meigs Soil & Water Conservation District has collaborated with other agencies and the public to complete a **Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Leading Creek Watershed**. It provides a description of the chemical, physical, and biological conditions in the Leading Creek Watershed and details actions needed to restore streams in the watershed. The plan was been fully endorsed by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Division of Surface Water and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Soil & Water Conservation and is now available online.
<http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/nps/NPSMP/WAP/WAPendorse.html>
- The Meigs SWCD and the Leading Creek Watershed Group worked with Ohio University and ODNR, MRM to complete the **Little Leading Creek Sediment Study**. This study focused on the documentation of excessive sedimentation throughout the watershed and looked into the possibility of implementing sediment removal or remediation projects. The Jewell Farm was identified in this study as a top source of sedimentation. A Leading Creek Improvement Committee project was completed at this farm.
- The Abandoned Mine Land Program of ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management has sponsored the development of the **Leading Creek Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment (AMDAT) Plan**. This plan identifies all sources of acid mine drainage and prioritizes the sources for treatment. The AMDAT Plan was completed in 2006.
- The first acid mine drainage reclamation project in the Leading Creek Watershed is planned for fall 2011. The Thomas Fork Doser Project will include construction of a lime doser along an unnamed tributary to Thomas Fork along Bailey Run Road. The goal is treat Thomas Fork with this tributary, raise the ph, and reconnect fish populations



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