

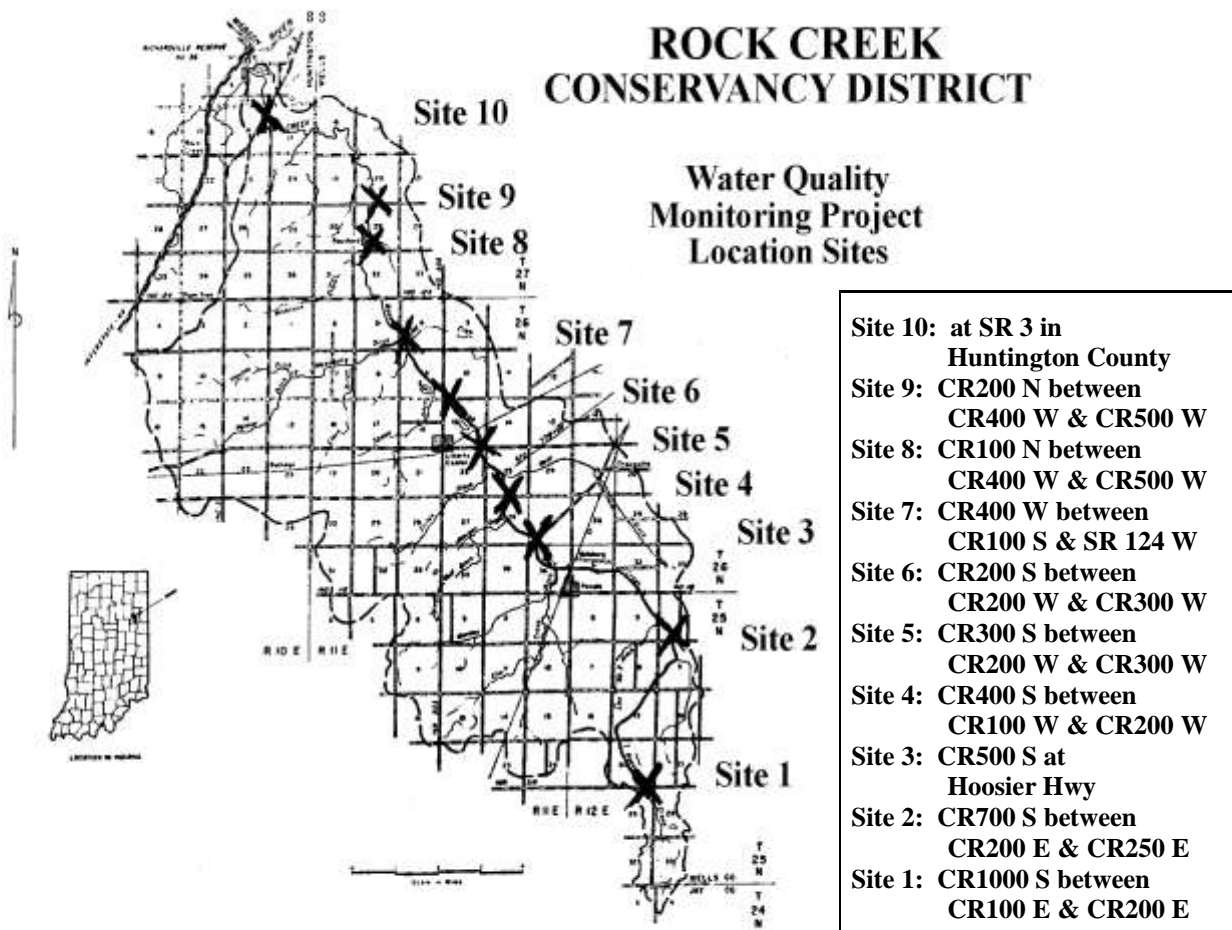
RCCD Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Rock Creek Water Quality Monitoring Program began in 1999 under the direction and guidance of Water Quality Program Coordinator, Mark Grimm. Student volunteers collected water samples from 10 sites along the Rock Creek and the samples were taken to a lab for chemical analysis for possible contaminants to the creek.

In 2002, biological monitoring (the collection of benthic macro-invertebrates and habitat assessments) was added to the program. Biological stream monitoring is based on the fact that different species react to pollution in different ways. Unlike chemical monitoring, which provides information about water quality at the time of measurement; biological monitoring can provide information about past and/or episodic pollution.

In an effort to make the program more cost effective, the RCCD stopped the lab testing for chemical pollutants in 2006, but continued the biological monitoring and added some field chemical tests to the program.

Over the years, the sites on the Rock Creek have been rated from excellent to poor, which is very common for streams and rivers in Indiana that have a primary use as drainage for cropland, small towns, and rural housing. It has been noted that fish and wildlife in and around the Rock Creek appears abundant, even during periods of low flow.



RCCD Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Rock Creek Conservancy District did not conduct water quality monitoring in 2013 due to the resignation of coordinator Mark Grimm; however, the RCCD has contracted with Neil Ainslie, of Meadow-Wood Environmental Labs to coordinate the monitoring program in 2014. Quarterly monitoring will be conducted at the 10 Rock Creek sites during the months of March, May, July, and September. Student volunteers are being recruited to assist with the monitoring events.

The field measurements that will be collected are: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, percent dissolved oxygen saturation, turbidity, conductivity, and flow. Biological monitoring will include macro-invertebrate investigations and completing the Citizens Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index. Laboratory analysis will be added to the program in 2014; testing for *E. coli*, total phosphate, nitrate-nitrite, and Nitrogen as nitrite.

The water quality data that was collected in the past will continue to be used to evaluate changes to the water quality in the Rock Creek. Past reports are available by contacting Financial Clerk, Stacia Henderson at 260/273-0972.

Watershed Management Planning

The Upper Wabash River Basin Commission is currently working on a Watershed Management Plan for a portion of the Wabash River. The project area includes the Rock Creek watershed, in addition to the Wabash River-Griffin Ditch and Eight Mile Creek watersheds.

The planning process includes investigating and inventorying the watershed characteristics; conducting water quality monitoring activities, analyzing the findings, and indentifying the water quality problems; and setting goals and proposing future actions to address non-point source pollution in the watershed.

The Upper Wabash River Basin Commission is seeking input from landowners and land users for the development of the plan and will use that input to help determine future watershed management projects. This planning effort connects the community's decision making to data collection and defensible analysis of the issues. Recording this information in the watershed management plan increases the probability that the problems will be addressed, and provides a way to track progress with measureable results.

Rock Creek watershed landowners are encouraged to participate in this planning effort by contacting the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission Watershed Coordinator, Stacia Henderson at 260/273-0972.

