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Towards An Understanding of Water Quality in a Mixed Agricultural and Urban Watershed: Eagle Creek Watershed, Indiana

Lenore P. Tedesco*, Vidon, P., Gray, M., and B.E. Hall
Ctr. for Earth & Environmental Science
* ltedesco@iupui.edu

Abstract:

As watersheds continue to undergo transformation to mixed agricultural and urban land use, new challenges face water resource managers working to improve water quality and quantity. Improving water resources in the glaciated Midwest region hinges on integrated approaches addressing not only water quality, but water use, wastewater treatment, and the physical environment. The Central Indiana Water Resources Partnership (CIWRP), a research and development partnership between IUPUI researchers and Veolia Water Indianapolis, LLC., the managers of the Indianapolis Water Company, has been conducting extensive research on water quality trends and contaminant export processes throughout the Eagle Creek Watershed. Eagle Creek watershed drains to a drinking water reservoir for the City of Indianapolis. In addition to CIWRP research, water resources research in the Eagle Creek Watershed also includes water quality monitoring associated with an IDEM 319 watershed bmp implementation grant and assessment of bmp performance through a CSREES CEAP project.

This paper will present the results of research and monitoring of the Eagle Creek watershed especially as it relates to nutrient and pesticide transport during both base and event flow on a watershed scale. Special focus will be on atrazine and nitrate export with additional information on E. coli trends. Atrazine remains an important contaminant in the watershed with spring event flow concentrations exceeding 35 ppb. This is despite the fact that a significant percentage of watershed streams are buffered suggesting that either there is a need for targeted bmp implementation or that agricultural tile drainage systems are bypassing buffers.

Impact Statement:

This watershed assessment is providing water resource managers with information to help target conservation practice implementation to key areas using the most effective bmps. Partnerships with the local drinking water company and area SWCD's make collaborative efforts more productive.

Category: Watershed Assessment and Restoration
Type of Presentation: Oral Presentation