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Study Finds Upper Scioto River Recovered from 2009 Fish Kills

A newly released Ohio EPA water quality [study](#) is the first comprehensive assessment of the upper Scioto River watershed since 1995. The report focuses on the upper Scioto River and 22 tributaries located in Auglaize, Crawford, Delaware, Hardin, Logan, Marion and Union counties.

During the 2009 sampling, a series of fish kills was discovered and further investigation led to corrective actions. Follow-up sampling in 2011 showed the fish community had recovered from the 2009 incidents.

Overall, Ohio EPA staff sampled 23 streams in the watershed in 2009. Nine sites were re-evaluated in 2011. The 2011 sampling included six sites on the Scioto River mainstem and one site each on Taylor Creek, Fulton Creek and Elliott Run.

Based on the 2009 and 2011 monitoring results, the 58 miles of Scioto River which were sampled from the headwaters in Hardin County near Roundhead to the Little Scioto River near Marion, 11 of 15 sites (73 percent) fully met the assigned aquatic life beneficial use. Overall, about 41 percent of 62 sampling sites in the upper Scioto River watershed fully met the state and federal water quality standards for aquatic life use.

The most common water quality impairments identified in the report are attributed to physical habitat alterations (channelization), nutrient enrichment and fine silt and sediment runoff.

Ohio is required by the federal Clean Water Act to identify waters that do not meet water quality standards and develop plans to bring the affected waters into compliance. The biological and water quality report is the first step in that process.

The next step involves Ohio EPA writing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report that discusses strategies to improve water quality where impairments were identified. The TMDL program the maximum amount of pollutants a water body can receive on a daily basis without violating water quality standards.

The TMDL program is community based, with residents, watershed groups and local governments determining what solutions will work best locally to achieve improvements.

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