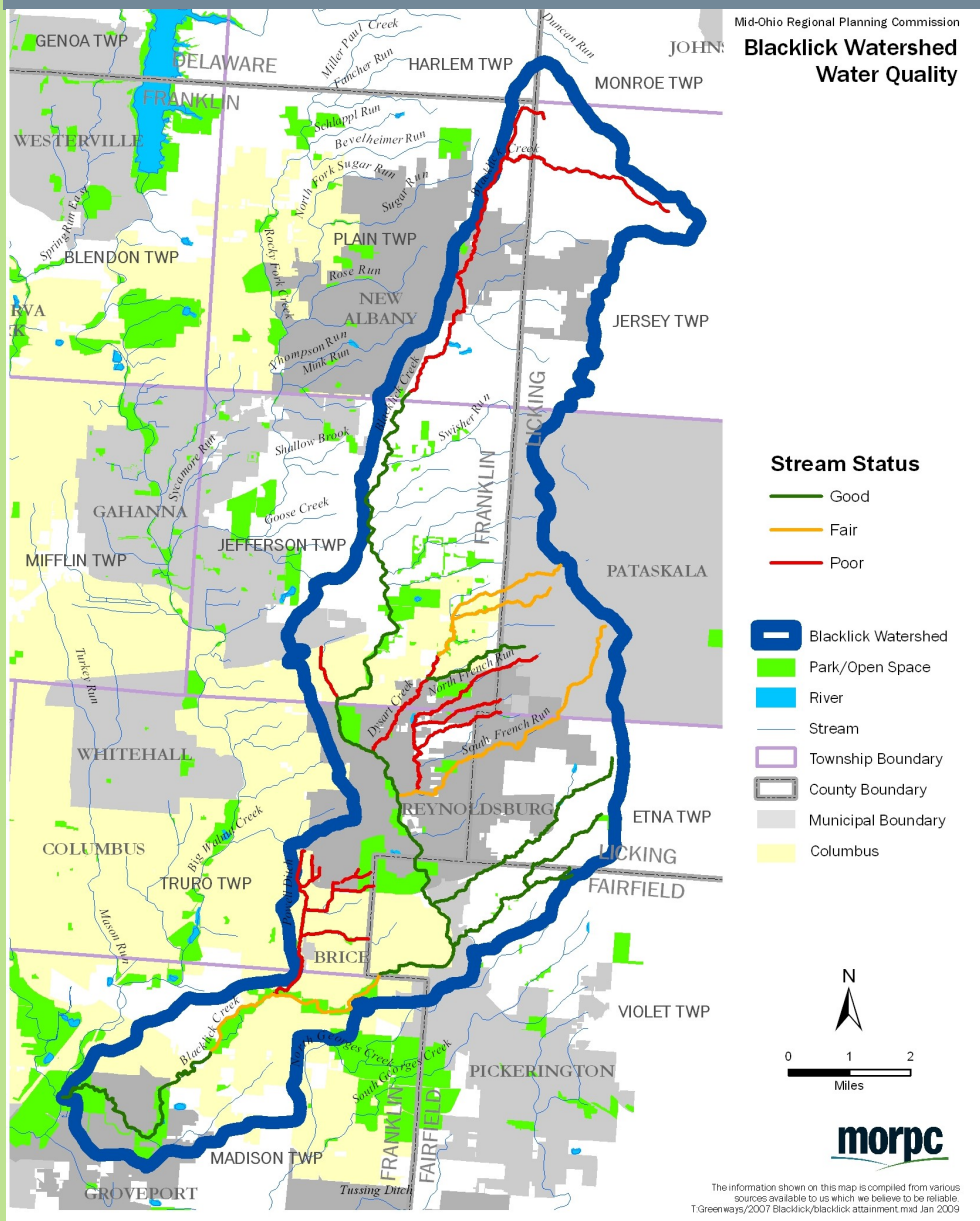
OUR BLACKLICK CREEK

a summary of the watershed action plan

http://www.morpc.org/pdf/Our_Blacklick_WAP_2010_Final.pdf



Blacklick Creek Facts

- Drains 63 square miles
- Creek is 30 miles long
- Includes 17 jurisdictions
- Flows through 4 counties
- Over 82,000 people live within the watershed
- Nearly 40% of the land is currently used for agricultural production
  The amount of land used for agriculture is projected to drop to 0.4%
- 47% rated as fair or poor for fish and bugs
- All streams not meeting requirements for swimming due to bacteria levels
- Land development has altered the streams leading to increased flows, polluted runoff, erosion, and sedimentation that buries the stream bottom
- Agricultural runoff contributes to high nutrient levels that contribute to algal growth and low dissolved oxygen levels
- Failing home septic systems dump bacteria and nutrients into the creek.

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Pollution:
causes & sources

The greatest source of pollution in Blacklick Creek comes from what is called "Nonpoint Source" Pollution (NPS) because it does not come from a single point, such as a factory pipe. Rather, it is usually caused by rain and snow washing a variety of pollutants off farm fields, streets, parking lots, and lawns into our streams.

Nonpoint source pollution in Blacklick Creek

•Fertilizers and pesticides from lawns and farm fields cause algae growth and reduce oxygen levels in the creek, killing fish and insects.

•Mud from construction sites smother the stream bottom and the organisms that live there.

•Pathogens in pet waste and sewage from failing home septic and aerator systems pose a threat to human health, and disrupts water chemistry reducing oxygen levels in the water.

•Heavy metals from industry.*

•Organic compounds from petroleum products leak onto roads and

The Watershed Action Plan

Action Plan Item Summaries

•Agricultural practices – Practices such as no till, grass waterways, and buffer strips should be put into place to reduce the amount of sediment, bacteria, and nutrients entering the creek via run-off.

•Home sewage treatment systems/septic – Many of these systems need to be serviced or replaced, so that they function properly. Where possible, the connection of homes to central sanitary sewer system is encouraged.

•Stormwater – As the amount of hard surfaces in the watershed has increased, so has the volume of water reaching the stream. This runoff carries pollution into the stream. Installing technologies that both reduce the stormwater flow and remove pollutants in both old and new developments would contribute significantly towards improving the water quality of the creek.

* - Heavy metal pollution from industry appears to be confined to Unzinger Ditch. OEPA is in the process of negotiating a clean up plan for this stream with Franklin Steel Co.

•Creek restoration – A number of streams and/or stretches of streams in the watershed have been greatly modified to accommodate housing, commercial and industrial developments, as well as agriculture. Where possible, the restoration of these streams would contribute to the health of the watershed as a whole.

•Creek protection – The areas bordering streams are key to the health of those waterways. Protecting these corridors contributes both to the well being of the watershed and reduces the risk of flood damage to property.

•Land acquisition - Where possible, land should be acquired to protect sensitive areas, open space and streams.

•Water quality monitoring – Without good data, it is very difficult to know whether the health of a stream is improving or declining. The state agencies do not have the staff to be able to monitor streams as frequently as necessary. Volunteer monitoring groups have been organized to help fill this gap in information. Starting such a group is a part of the plan.