

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Formed in 1995, Friends of Deckers Creek (FODC) is a non-profit watershed organization that serves to protect the 64 square mile Deckers Creek Watershed. Through large-scale water remediation projects, stream-side litter cleanups, community outreach workshops, and environmental education, it is FODC's goal to make the entire length of Deckers Creek fishable and swimmable, turning the creek from a liability into a community asset.

In September of 2018, **FODC was 1 of 10 in the nation to receive an EPA Environmental Justice grant** for a project aimed at monitoring and reducing coliform bacteria levels in the Deckers Creek Watershed. The project has multiple facets, including:

- Collecting water samples to identify major sources of coliform bacteria pollution.
- Working with a consultant to develop a comprehensive stormwater management plan.
- Educating the community on the Deckers Creek Watershed, its pollutants, and safe recreation.
- Enlisting the help of Citizen Scientists to aid in sample collection.



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Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and
Twitter!

Bacteriological Monitoring



In the Deckers Creek Watershed

WHAT IS COLIFORM BACTERIA?

Coliform bacteria are present in the feces of warm-blooded animals, including humans. The level of coliform bacteria in water is used as an indicator of fecal contamination.

One type of coliform bacteria is *E. coli*. There are many different strains of *E. coli*; while many are harmless, others can make you sick. **The higher the level of *E. coli* in water, the more likely the water contains other harmful pathogens from fecal contamination.**

Problems associated with high levels of coliform bacteria:

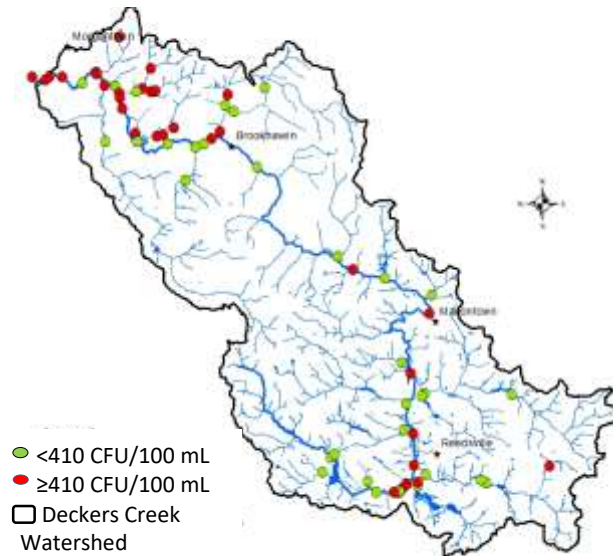
- Puts people at risk of getting sick.
- Depletes oxygen needed by fish and other aquatic animals.
- Interferes with recreation.
- Creates unpleasant smell.
- Decreases property values.

HOW DOES UNTREATED SEWAGE GET IN OUR WATERWAYS?

Potential sources include:

- **Illegal straight pipes**
- **Failing septic systems**
- **Agricultural runoff**
- **Combined sewer overflow systems (CSOs):** These systems collect and treat wastewater and stormwater together. So, when it rains hard, the system has too much water to handle and thus overflows untreated water, including raw sewage, into our streams. This is why you should limit your water exposure downstream of CSOs, especially after rainfall.

Maximum *E. coli* Level by Sampling Site (2019)



We have collected **over 400 samples at over 75 unique locations** in just over one year. This map shows the sites that passed or failed *E. coli* tests, according to the EPA's recommended limit.

Less than 410 MPN/100 mL: Pass

410 MPN/100 mL or more: Fail

% of times in which sampling site <u>passed</u> during monthly sampling in 2019	
Deckers - Zinn Chapel Rd	100
Deckers - Arthurdale	25
Kanes Creek	100
Deckers - Kingwood Pike	33
Dillan Creek	100
Deckers - Masontown	83
Deckers Creek Gorge	92
Tibbs Run	83
Deckers - Dellslow	75

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- **Volunteer as a Citizen Scientist.** Reach out to us if interested! Check out our Citizen Scientist project on CitSci.org.
- **Cut down water usage and storm water runoff.** Attend one of our Rain Barrel Workshops!
- **Ensure that your septic system is working properly.** The Preston County Health Dept. website has useful maintenance tips and signs your system is failing.
- **Clean up after your dog.** A dog produces 10x more fecal coliform than a cow! This can wash into nearby waterways.
- **Report illegal straight pipes or failing septic systems.** Call your local Health Department or report anonymously on CreekDog.org.
- **Don't let livestock in or along streams.**

STAY INFORMED



See the latest results of routine *E. coli* testing at your favorite recreational spots at

TheSwimGuide.org

Report Deckers Creek
Watershed pollutants
anonymously at

CreekDog.org

