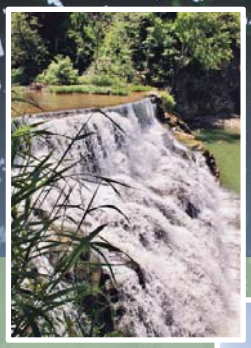
CUMBERLAND RIVER
COMPACT

CORDELL HULL
WATERSHED



Waterloo Falls

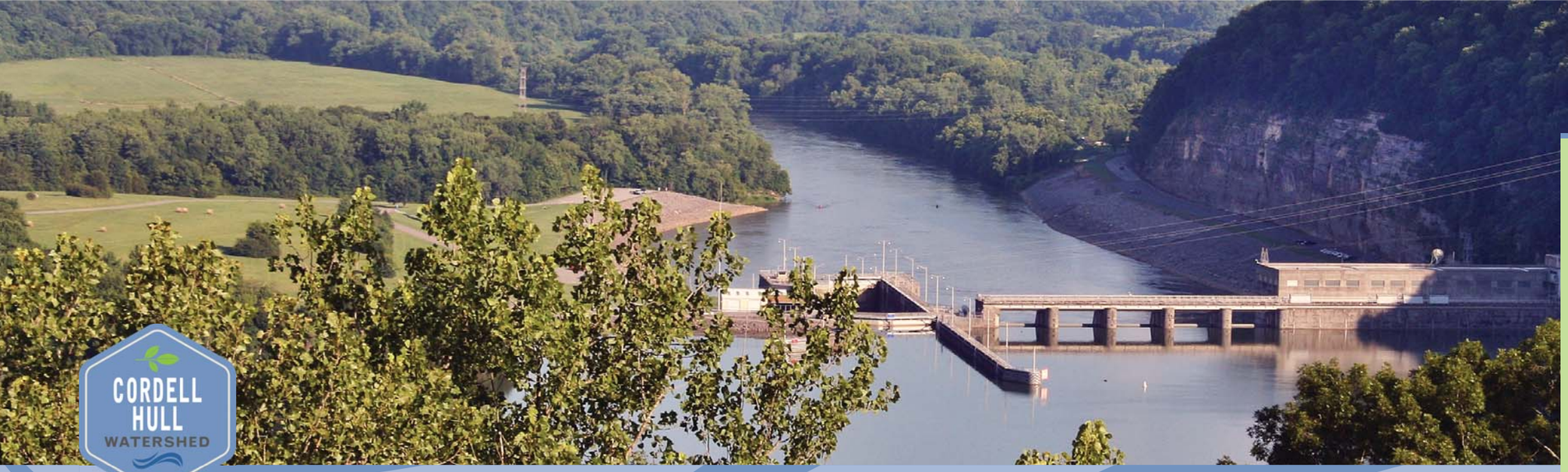
Cordell Hull Dam

An overview of our water quality

WELCOME TO THE CORDELL HULL WATERSHED!

The Cordell Hull Watershed, one of 14 major watersheds within the larger Cumberland River Basin, is generally rural in character. Without the pressures of urbanization or historical mining activity, it is arguably one of the least polluted watersheds in the Cumberland Basin. However, threats to the watershed still exist, and the water quality of many of the streams in the watershed remains unknown.

The Cumberland River Compact developed this brochure to describe the water quality of the Cordell Hull Watershed. It is based on current water sampling collected and interpreted by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.



THE CORDELL HULL WATERSHED

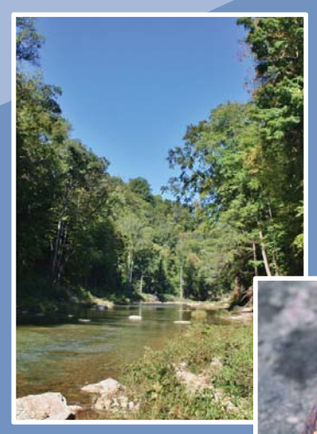
encompasses the land draining to the Cumberland River from its confluence with the Obey River downstream to its confluence with the Caney Fork. The watershed is named for Cordell Hull Lake, a major reservoir impounding the Cumberland River near Carthage. The watershed is 797 square miles in area, with a population of about 60,000, making it the least populous of the 6 watersheds along the main stem of the Cumberland River.

WATER QUALITY

The Cordell Hull Watershed contains approximately 1,020 miles of streams and rivers, including 72 miles of the Cumberland River. Of this 1,020 miles, roughly 7% is considered impaired, but a staggering 74% remains unassessed. Of those streams that are impaired, most are contaminated with pathogens such as *E. coli*, making them potentially unsafe for swimming or fishing. The remaining streams are considered unimpaired, though not necessarily in pristine condition. The Cordell Hull Watershed also contains 93 miles of streams that are listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, which details exemplary scenic and recreational streams. Roaring River, Spring Creek, and Blackburn Fork are also listed as State Scenic Rivers, out of only 13 such rivers in the state. Unfortunately, even some of these streams are polluted.

THE ECOLOGY

Among the wildlife that can be found in the streams and rivers of the Cordell Hull Watershed are several federally endangered aquatic species. The watershed contains 5 species of endangered freshwater mussels, including the Pink Mucket *(Lampsilis orbiculata)*, the Spectaclecase Mussel *(Cumberlandia monodonta)*, and the Cumberlandian Combshell (*Epioblasma brevidens*).



Snapping Turtle

Pink Mucket mussel *(Lampsilis abrupta), Photo by: Craig Stihler/USFWS*

How the CUMBERLAND RIVER COMPACT helps.

TEACH

- The Compact works regularly with residents and organizations – from schools, to businesses, to neighborhoods and elected officials. Together we share water quality improvement methods ranging from policy solutions to planting rain gardens.

PROTECT

- We work with developers, city planners, and the agricultural community to take proactive steps in protecting water resources throughout the Cumberland Basin. We promote sustainable development, restore impaired urban streams and work with area farmers to improve soil conditions and conserve water.

CONNECT

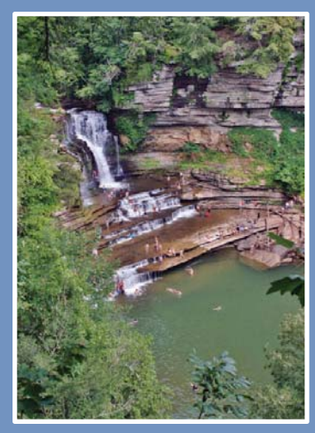
- The Compact provides many opportunities for residents to enjoy local waterways, resulting in a greater appreciation and awareness of water resources. These include the annual Cumberland River Dragon Boat Festival, the annual Catfish Rodeo and numerous area river and stream clean ups throughout the year.

CORDELL HULL WATERSHED: How our water is being affected

#	STREAM SEGMENT	MILES	IMPAIRMENT	SUSPECTED SOURCES OF IMPAIRMENT
1	Mill Creek	2.9	Flow Alteration	Upstream impoundments
2	Flat Creek	23.6	Pathogens	Grazing in riparian zones
3	Town Creek	6.2	Pathogens, nutrients, dissolved oxygen depletion	Sanitary sewer system failures and urban runoff
4	Carr Creek	4.5	Dissolved oxygen depletion	Upstream impoundments
5	Blackburn Fork	15.9	Pathogens	Undetermined source
6	Spring Creek	20.7	Pathogens	Grazing in riparian zones

THREATS TO THE WATERSHED

Compared to other watersheds in the area, the Cordell Hull Watershed is relatively undeveloped. The land in the north and west of the watershed is mostly forested, with some agriculture in the floodplain of the river, while the southeastern third of the watershed is primarily agricultural. Very little of the watershed is heavily developed, and the largest town entirely in the watershed is the 4,000 person town of Livingston. The Cumberland River itself has been heavily altered and now takes the form of a dam-controlled impoundment, the Cordell Hull Lake reservoir, for much of its length within the watershed. The Cordell Hull Watershed appears to suffer less from pollution than other watersheds in the Cumberland Basin, but pollution is still significant, much of it deriving from agriculture. Both urban and rural streams are most often contaminated by pathogens such as *E. coli* (which generally originate from animal waste and sewer or septic system failures), excess sediment (from increased runoff from degraded or developed land) and excess nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen (the result of over-fertilizing lawns or agricultural fields). Both urban and rural streams also suffer from loss of riparian (streamside) vegetation, due to development or overgrazing. These problems are often related, as riparian vegetation can act as a buffer, limiting how much runoff reaches streams directly and helping reduce pollution and erosion.



We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." - NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB

CUMBERLAND RIVER COMPACT

CORDELL HULL WATERSHED

Our mission is to enhance the health and enjoyment of the Cumberland River and its tributaries through education, collaboration and action.

Our water. Our future.

Cumberland River Compact
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Nashville, Tennessee 37213

615.837.1151
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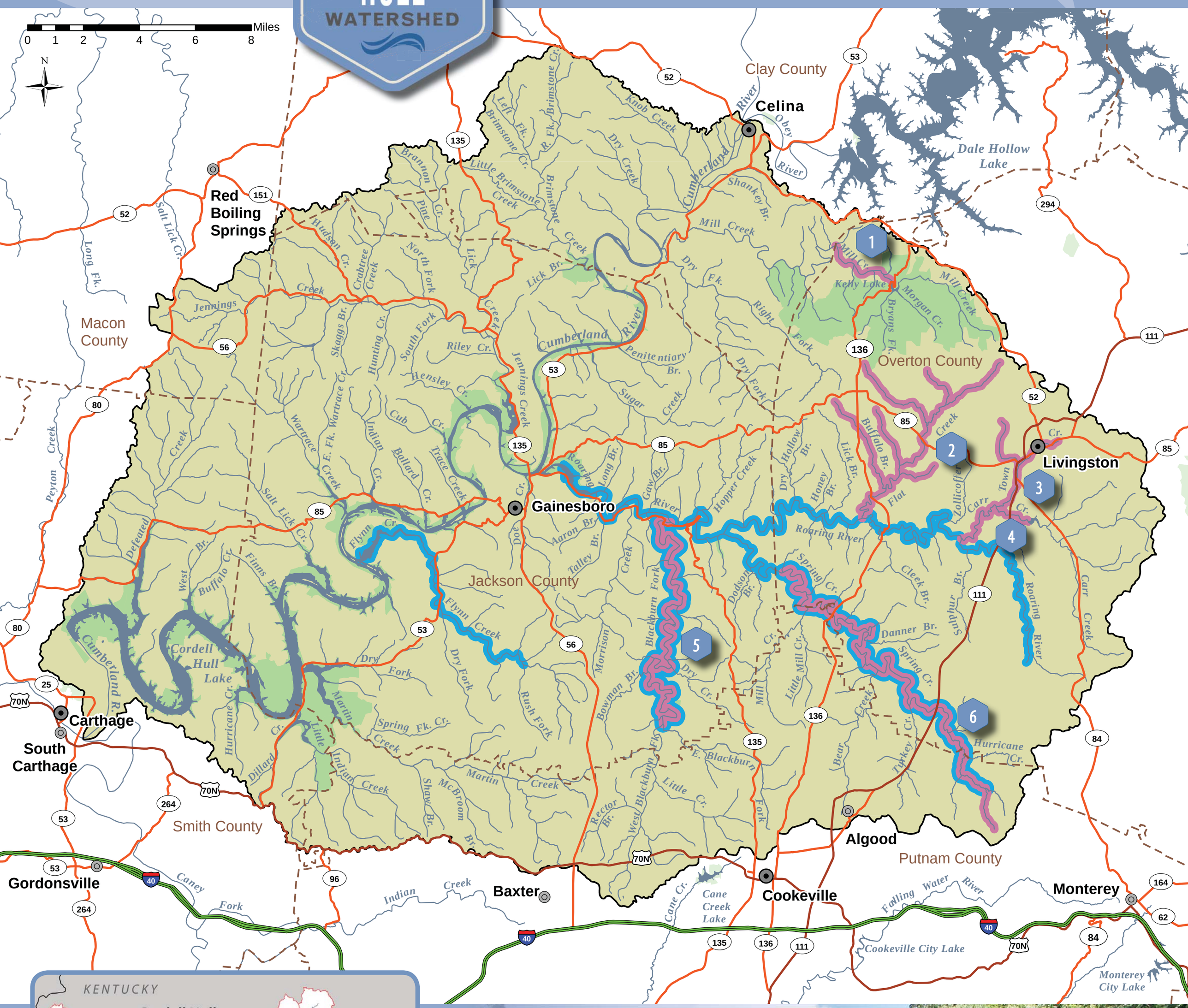

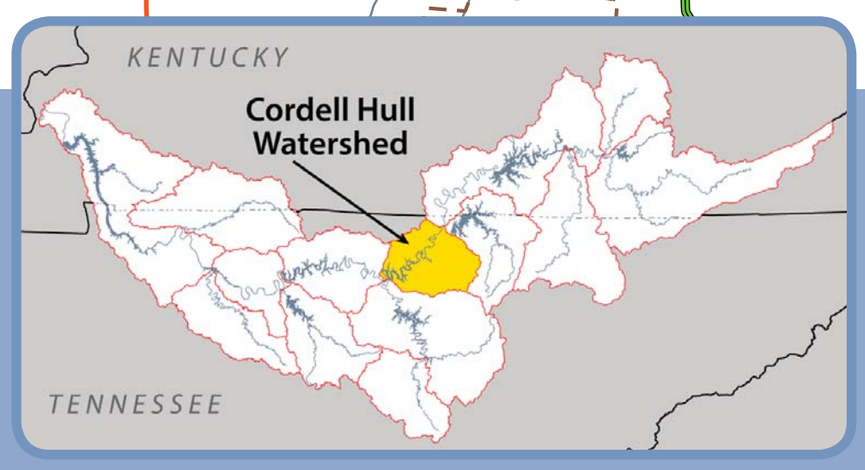

Approximately 74 miles of the waterways in the Cordell Hull Watershed are considered impaired.

CONDITIONS OF IMPAIRMENT

		Pathogens	Flow Alteration	Nutrients	Oxygen Depletion
1	Mill Creek		●		
2	Flat Creek	●			
3	Town Creek	●		●	●
4	Carr Creek				●
5	Blackburn Fork	●			
6	Spring Creek	●			

MAP KEY

- County seat
- Other incorporated town
- Streams that contain conditions that are a threat to human health and/or have an impaired ecology
- National Rivers Inventory streams: a registry of river segments noted for their scenic and recreational attributes

For more information on the National Rivers Inventory, visit nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/nri

For more information on the streams and their impairment, please see corresponding table on reverse side.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
epa.gov

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
888.891.8332
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TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WATER RESOURCES
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