



— MARION COUNTY —
SOIL AND WATER
— CONSERVATION DISTRICT —



Lower Fall Creek Watershed Cost Share Program

Funded by a Federal 319 Grant #91597 through the Indiana Department of
Environmental Management

September 2025

Executive Document Summary

In April 2025, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) awarded the Marion County SWCD a 319 grant to implement the Lower Fall Creek Watershed Management Plan (WMP) update. The approved WMP update includes goals to reduce the pollutant loading of nitrogen to Lower Fall Creek by 125 tons/year, phosphorus by 23.5 tons/year, and sediment by 3,400 tons/year within ten years. The Devon Creek-Fall Creek subwatershed was identified as a critical area for implementation of green infrastructure to help achieve water quality goals through capture of the first flush of stormwater runoff and filtering and treating bacteria, nutrients, sediment and suspended solids from runoff. This critical area was selected for implementation of the proposed cost share program due to having the highest nutrient loading, its position in the lower reaches of the plan update study area and being an area affected by urbanized development and associated impervious surfaces as evident by the presence of a TMDL and numerous waterbodies within the critical area that are on the 303(d) list.

This cost share program has been developed to guide the implementation of the Lower Fall Creek WMP update. The targeted Devon Creek-Fall Creek subwatershed area (HUC 051202010904) highlighted in yellow in Figure 1 below is located entirely within Marion County and represents 33% of the overall 103 square mile Lower Fall Creek watershed.

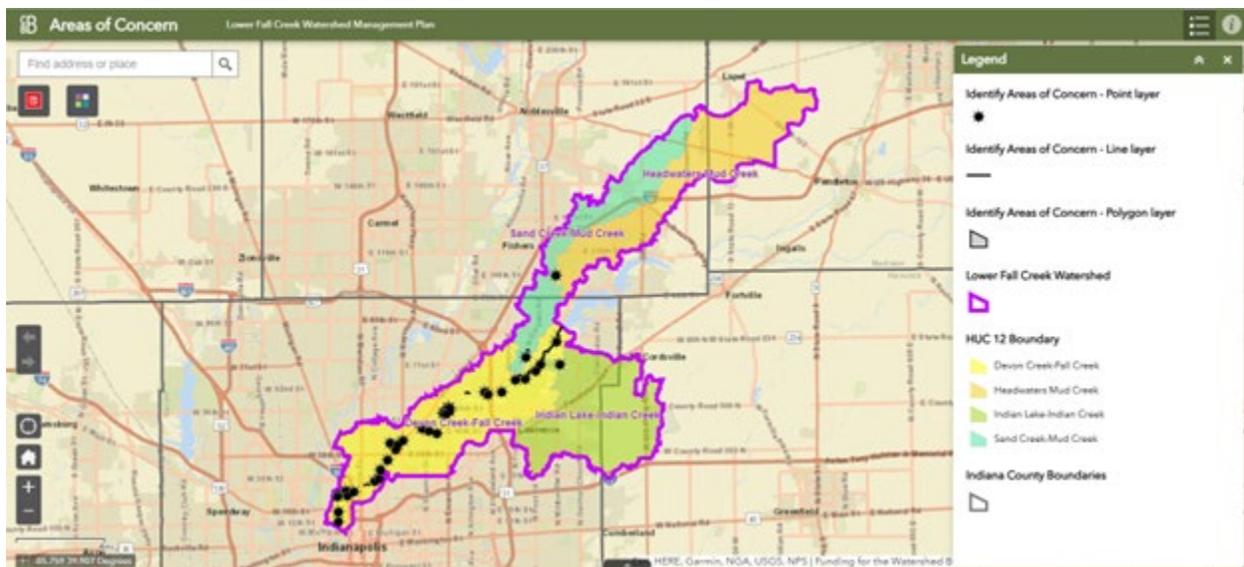


Figure 1-Critical Areas in the Lower Fall Creek Watershed

Devon Creek-Fall Creek Targeted Critical Area

The focus of the cost share program in the Lower Fall Creek watershed implementation grant is the critical area within the Devon Creek-Fall Creek subwatershed. Other critical

areas are listed on pages 62-68 of the WMP update and will be the focus of future implementation efforts. The Devon Creek-Fall Creek critical area covers 21,836 acres and contains 282 miles of streams (WMP update page 9). Of these 21,836 acres, a total of 18,969 acres or 86% of the land area is considered developed (WMP update page 25). During the update of the WMP, nutrient and sediment loading from the targeted critical area totaled 108,923 tons of nitrogen, 16,882 tons of phosphorus and 2,517 tons of sediment per year (WMP update pages 55-60). There are 79 Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUSTs) in the targeted critical area (WMP update page 28) and 938 acres of wetlands (WMP update page 11).

Due to the highly developed conditions in the targeted critical area, the cost share program will target institutional properties with large amounts of impervious areas such as schools, museums, cemeteries, multifamily developments and churches as well as residential property owners. Long term maintenance is critical to the success of the cost share program described below.

Eligible BMPs and Maximum Cost Share

As described in the WMP update, green infrastructure practices (best management practices or BMPs) such as rain gardens and bioswales can reduce sediment and bacteria loads by 90% and nitrogen and phosphorus by 68-83% for rain gardens and reduce phosphorus by 9%, nitrogen by 38% and sediment by 81% for bioswales. Rain gardens and bioswales will be the eligible practices for this cost share program and will follow the design standards in the Wisconsin DNR Rain Garden Manual as well as the US EPA's Stormwater Management Practice guidelines for grass swales. Additional supplemental design guidance will be provided in local publications developed by the Marion County SWCD.

The cost share program has a residential and institutional component. Cost share will not exceed 75% of the project cost for residential rain gardens and bioswales with a funding cap of \$2,000 per residential project. For institutional projects at schools, churches and other large properties, cost share for rain gardens and bioswales will not exceed 50% of the project cost with a funding cap of \$50,000 per institutional project. Cost share match can be in kind or cash match. It's anticipated that most institutional projects will not exceed \$30,000 and these large, high profile projects are a funding priority due to their highly visible nature and potential for public education through workshops and improved water quality in the targeted critical area. Cost share funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis at the Marion County SWCD's discretion and follow the application and review process described below.

Application and Review Process

Marion County SWCD is the program administrator for this cost share program and will provide a cost share project application as a Google Form on our website. Once received, applications will be reviewed monthly by a cost share committee comprised of professionals in stormwater engineering and natural resource management who serve as staff and members of the Marion County SWCD board. These cost share committee members assisted with review of the practice standards previously described and will rank projects based on the review criteria provided in the program scoring sheet. Applicants not selected for funding will be referred to other grant resources if available and it's anticipated that many projects will not be selected for funding.

Once projects are implemented, the Marion County SWCD will review and approve any BMPs installed under the cost share program to ensure practices meet the applicable design standards.

Permits and Maintenance

Projects that disturb over an acre in Marion County are required to get drainage permit approval through the City of Indianapolis Department of Business and Neighborhood Services as well as Construction Stormwater General Permit coverage through IDEM. Any required local or state permit will be the responsibility of the cost share applicant.

Project owners will be responsible for maintaining BMPs installed through the cost share program for a 5-year period. This will allow for native vegetation typically used in these practices to establish and for completion of routine maintenance tasks required to ensure BMP performance. A maintenance checklist will be provided during the application process.

Pollutant Load Reduction Estimations

Pollutant load reductions for implemented practices will be calculated using the Simple Method provided in the 319 (h) Urban Guidance for Indiana resource and the pollutant removal rates for bioretention and vegetated swales from the Indiana Stormwater Quality Manual referenced on page 74 of the WMP update. Load reduction estimates from the Region 5 Load Estimation model may also be utilized.

Practice Geolocation

Practices will be located through coordinates obtained through Google Maps and be added to the Areas of Concern project map linked on the SWCD's website.

Deadlines and Program Advertising

The cost share program will accept applications until all cost share funds have been allocated. All practices must be installed by December 31st, 2026. The cost share program will be advertised through the SWCD’s newsletter, social media and through workshops and community events held throughout the year.

Ranking Criteria and Scoring Sheet

Project applications will be ranked by the cost share committee utilizing the scoring sheet below.

Location and Project Elements				
Project Area:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
Less than 500 feet from a waterbody			15	
500 to 1,000 feet from a waterbody			10	
Greater than 1,000 feet from a waterbody			5	
Project Contributing Drainage Area:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
Project sized to accept a drainage area no more than 5x project size			15	
Project sized to accept a drainage area no more than 10x project size			10	
Impervious Area Treated:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
At least 75% of the project’s contributing drainage area is impervious (driveway, roof, walkway etc)			15	
No more than 50% of the project’s contributing drainage area is impervious			10	
No more than 25% of the project’s contributing			5	

drainage area is impervious				
Project Visibility				
Project Visibility:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
Project located in common area/greenspace			15	
Project along public pedestrian route (sidewalks, trails)			10	
Project visible from adjacent street/roadway			5	
Project Feasibility and Maintenance				
Permitting:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
Project requires local drainage permit and permits are in place if needed			15	
Project doesn't require local drainage permit			10	
Maintenance:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
Project owner has committed to a maintenance plan beyond the required 5 years			15	
Project owner has not committed to a maintenance plan beyond the required 5 years			10	
Potential Workshop Location:	Yes	No	Maximum Possible Points	Actual Points
Project site is a potential workshop location			10	

Project site is not a potential workshop location			5	
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Contact Information:

If you are interested in the cost share program please contact John Hazlett, District Manager for the Marion County SWCD, at the following email address or office phone:

John-Hazlett@iaswcd.org

Office Phone 317/786-1776

You can also reach out using the “Contact” form on the Marion County SWCD website and indicate your interest in the cost share program (select General Inquiry from the drop down menu):

<https://marionswcd.org/contact/>