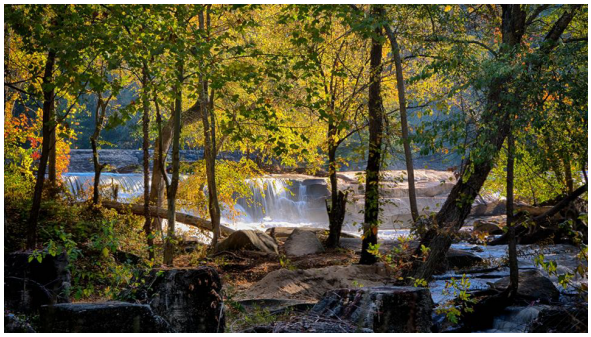
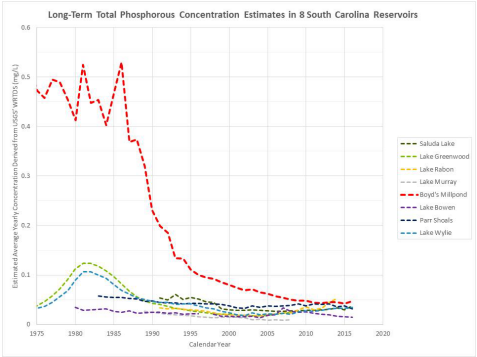
Reedy River REPORT CARD 2019



The Reedy River at Cedar Falls

THE GENERAL HEALTH OF THE RIVER

The news is encouraging! The river is getting better every year, and we have come a long way since the days of the Rainbow Reedy! The river's health has significantly progressed since 1972, which is the year the Clean Water Act passed into legislation.



This chart shows the significant drop in phosphorus in Boyd's Millpond on the Reedy River. Phosphorus levels are now comparable to other local lakes. Water quality in the Reedy River and the lakes it feeds, such as Boyd's Millpond, are similar and in some cases better than other rivers in the Upstate.

STORMWATER PROGRAMS

Greenville County, the City of Greenville, ReWa, and the SC Department of Transportation maintain DHEC compliant stormwater programs to address many sources of pollutants to reduce potential impacts to the river.

ADDITIONAL EFFORTS

The County, City, ReWa, and conservation organizations including Friends of the Reedy River and Upstate Forever are active and voluntary leaders in the Reedy River Water Quality Group. This group leads Reedy River watershed efforts with SC DHEC and US EPA that specifically target nutrients. Wastewater and industrial plants also have SC DHEC permits to ensure they are not negatively impacting the Reedy.

WATER QUALITY

The Good News

- Since the 1990's, phosphorus concentrations have decreased by more than half throughout the Reedy River watershed. In fact, the Reedy has been removed from SC DHEC's impaired water list for phosphorus at Boyd's Millpond in 2016.
- The general population has an active, individual role to play in lowering nitrogen levels in the river.
- Additional data is now being collected through the SC Adopt-a-Stream program, an active citizen science network.
- Greenville County and the City of Greenville continue to maintain their stormwater managemet programs with a major element to reduce erosion (ie. sediment) during construction.

The Bad News

- The river has an excess of nitrogen, based on the SC DHEC lake standards. Unfortunately, increased population means that it is likely that these levels will increase because of the nature of population density on rivers.

Boyd's Millpond

RECREATION

The Good News

- Lake Conestee Nature Park (LCNP) currently offers approximately six miles of natural surface trails, six miles of paved trails and approximately 4,000 linear feet of boardwalks and bog-walks with learning loops teaching about wildlife and wetlands.
- The Reedy is deemed safe for fishing, except in the Lake Conestee Nature Area.
- *E. coli* levels in the Reedy tend to be above acceptable levels only after a rain event. Most of the time, the Reedy is safe for wading and boating.
- Upstate Forever recently published a Blueways map with boat inputs along the Reedy.
- Park space is increasing in the Reedy watershed. Recent additions include Unity Park and the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

The Bad News

- You still can't swim, fish or boat in Lake Conestee and will not be able to in the future. LCNP is deemed a Brownfield Site.
- E. coli levels rise and make the river unsafe for swimming immediately after a rain. E. coli is discharged to the river from sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), malfunctioning septic tanks, urban runoff, and overland flow.

Lake Conestee Nature Park

WILDLIFE

The Good News

- Lake Conestee Nature Park has been designated as an Important Bird Area of Global Significance by the National Audubon Society.
- Deer, raccoon, beaver, fox, river otter, and various small mammals inhabit LCNP, along with numerous species of reptiles and amphibians.
- The Dissolved Oxygen levels, of paramount importance to aquatic wildlife, always exceed acceptable limits in the Reedy, meaning there's lots of air to breathe!
- Virtually all rivers in the state and region have elevated turbidity during storm events, yet the river is only elevated for a small fraction of the year.
- Buffers are important to river health. During construction, per state law, all permitted construction sites must maintain a 35' buffer. The City currently has legislated buffer areas along the Reedy. The county requires a 45' forested buffer along waterways for all new development.
- The City of Greenville has recently gone to great lengths to remove invasive vegetation along the banks of the Reedy and stabilize the river bank, and in some areas, very steep stream banks.

The Bad News

- Both the City and County have riparian buffers to capture and treat for nutrient pollution and sediment, and mitigate flood concerns. A minimum 100' riparian buffer has been proven effective. Nutrients, specifically, are better captured in wider buffers of a minimum of 100'.
- Like many metropolitan areas, urban runoff includes metals from vehicles and carcinogens from coal tar sealants that end up in the Reedy River and in fish tissue.
- There is a strong connection between land use and the health of fish communities. By 2030, it is predicted that approximately 75% of the Reedy watershed will contain streams with "poor" biological conditions resulting from extensive urban development.
- Suspended sediment levels are elevated following storm events.
- Riparian zones are typically dominated by nonnative, invasive plants such as kudzu, alanthus (Tree of Heaven), mimosa trees, and Chinese privet. In the past few years, Japanese knotweed is also beginning to expand along the Reedy's banks. The rapid growth of these nonnative species decreases biodiversity in the Reedy River watershed.