

Lake Decatur Watershed

The City of Decatur has committed to a long-term watershed program to bring opportunities and funding into the watershed. In 2020, the City hired Northwater Consulting to lead watershed planning, coordination and implementation efforts for several years. Northwater is a small business specializing in water resources and based in Springfield, Illinois.

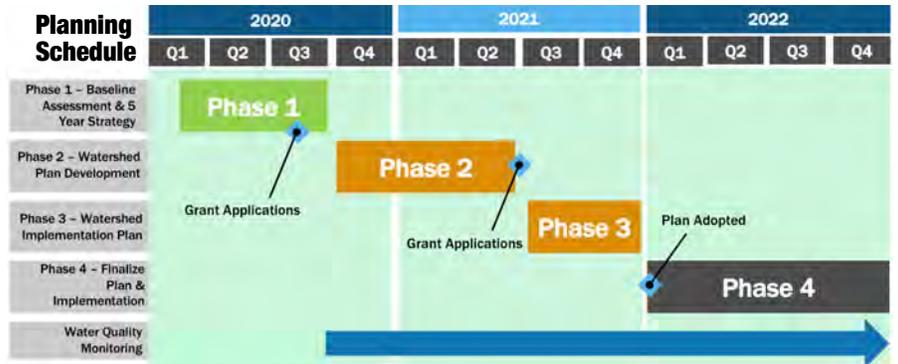
Quick Takeaways

- Lake Decatur is approximately 3,090 acres in size and was created in 1920-1923.
- The watershed is 592,665 acres, seven counties, over 80% of which is in cultivated crops.
- An approved watershed plan enables stakeholders to secure funding to implement best management practices.
- **Partnerships are critical for success!**

Why?

Lake Decatur is the water supply for the City of Decatur and Village of Mt. Zion. Decatur recently invested \$92 million dredging the lake and has taken the initiative to produce a watershed plan and strategy. The goal is to align efforts and secure funding to implement projects that reduce sediment and nutrients delivery to waterways.

With a plan in place, the City intends to lead efforts over many years to bring funding into the watershed to achieve measurable improvements in water quality.



Watershed Planning.....

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains precipitation to a body of water, such as a lake, stream, or wetland. They can be as small as few acres for a pond or as large as the Mississippi Basin. The Lake Decatur watershed comprises the upper portion of the Sangamon River.

The Drivers

Nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment from various sources can impair drinking water quality, harm aquatic life, and cause algal blooms. Recent and major investments in lake dredging and water treatment technologies have led the City to make strong financial investments in the watershed and bridge partnerships across diverse sectors and geographies.

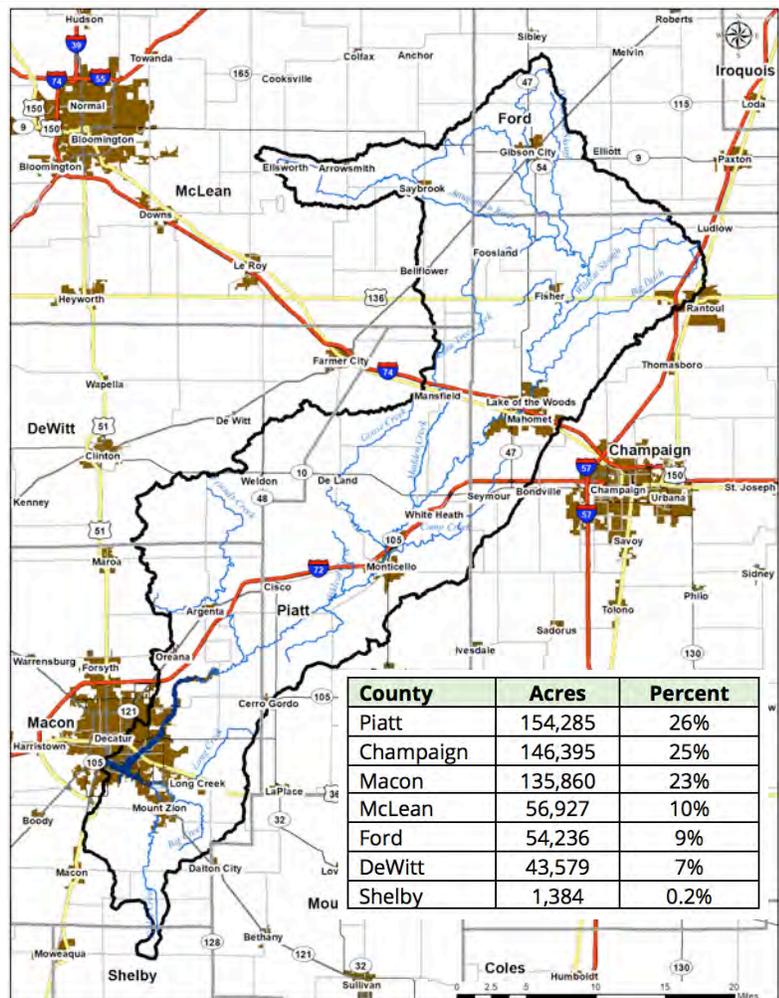
A Critical Component - Agriculture Sector

The agricultural community is constantly approached to participate in various initiatives. Our philosophy is to engage the sector in the front-end to help design this opportunity.

With 80% of the watershed under cultivation, input is key to define realistic and straightforward voluntary actions that can be considered. We also need input on how and where to best to allocate financial resources. We seek to forge a pathway together to move the needle on reducing sediment and nutrient delivery to Lake Decatur.

The Plan

A watershed-based plan summarizes the overall condition of the watershed. It outlines clear objectives, project opportunities, and a pathway for funding implementation. The end goal of the plan is to do actual work on the ground and improve and protect water quality. Watershed planning and implementation is a voluntary effort. Active watershed stakeholders are needed to assist in developing a plan that results in actions.



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