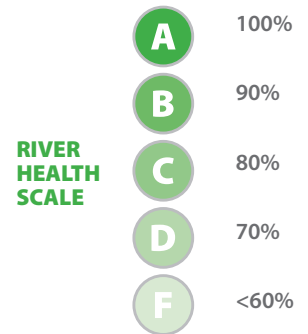


REEDY RIVER 2013 REPORT CARD



Friends of the Reedy River is a grass roots, membership based, conservation non-profit. For 20 years FORR has been an advocate for the Reedy, dedicated to promoting, preserving, and restoring the river. Our mission is to be a catalyst for strengthening and maintaining the environmental, economic, and social health of the entire watershed. In order to do this we need the understanding and support of the community – from Travelers Rest to Lake Greenwood. We present our interpretation of regular water quality sampling in order to educate and to inspire.

We have come a long way from the days before regulation and clean-up efforts began. The Reedy no longer runs with dye colors from the mills and chromium from the bleacheries. Most reaches of the Reedy are suitable for canoeing and fishing, but like any urban stream, swimming, tubing, and full immersion are generally not advised. Children, elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems should avoid wading or swimming altogether. However, we can see from the results of the on-going measurements that we are headed in the right direction with respect to water quality. But we are not yet at the ideal levels we seek. The remaining work is in our hands.



OXYGEN

Dissolved Oxygen is essential to a healthy stream and is a key indicator of ecosystem health. Low levels of oxygen are usually a result of untreated wastewater discharges or excessive algae, which deplete the water of oxygen levels as they decompose.

BACTERIA

High levels of coliform bacteria indicate potential health risks and can be caused by leaking septic tanks and sewer lines, sewer overflows, stormwater runoff, pet waste, livestock, and wildlife. Effective standards, citizen engagement, and compliance are necessary to achieve the goal for all waters to be "swimmable". However, it is widely accepted that rivers are safe for boating, fishing, or wading, even with higher levels of bacteria.

NUTRIENTS

Excess nutrients are bad for a river. Too much nitrogen and phosphorus in the river makes algae grow and negatively impacts fish, aquatic animals, and plants. Common sources of nutrients include treated wastewater and fertilizers that wash into the river from farms, golf courses and lawns.

CLARITY

Too much turbidity – basically dirt - in the water blocks sunlight from the plants that keep the water healthy, clogs fish gills, reduces fish health, and smothers fish eggs and aquatic organisms. Problems typically come from construction site stormwater runoff and eroding stream banks due to excessive stormwater runoff.

WATER QUALITY GRADES

	OXYGEN	BACTERIA	NUTRIENTS	CLARITY
% Score	100%	64% (swimming)	89% (boating)	71%
Grade for each parameter	A+	D	B+	C-
Trend over 5 year period	No change	Slight decline	Little change	Worsening



Scores are reported as the percentage of SCDHEC 2013 sampling results meeting the state water quality standards, except Bacteria-Boating. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. Users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is accurate and up to date.



OXYGEN

A+

Great news here – the river has plenty of dissolved oxygen. According to SCDHEC’s data, the Reedy has a 100% compliance rate for the last ten years.

BACTERIA

D

(swimming)

B+

(boating)

This is the primary reason for concerns with recreation and the warning signs. While the Reedy doesn’t have a great record here, 60% of the samples show it is safe for swimming. SC does not currently recognize standards for boating, fishing, and wading – but using generally accepted standards (630 CFU/100mL) 89 percent of the samples show the River is safe for boating, fishing, and wading. Like with any urban stream, to avoid the risk of illness it is wise not to ingest stream water anytime, and to avoid infections eliminate exposure to open cuts or sores.

NUTRIENTS

C-

Phosphorus levels have decreased since SC required they be removed from detergents statewide, but nutrients remain a concern. Nitrogen levels have been on the rise more recently. You can help by using less fertilizer and by composting food scraps, rather than sending them down the garbage disposal.

CLARITY

B+

Although this score dropped from an A+ to a B+ in 2013, the Reedy has a surprisingly good report for water clarity. We all know the river looks “muddier” after rain, but it is still meeting water quality standards most of the time. Preventing erosion and minimizing sediment runoff remains an important priority.

WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP

- 1** Pay attention to the condition of local streams. If you see something that doesn’t look right, report problems to SCDHEC. (864.372.3273 Emergency: 1.888.481.0125)
- 2** Minimize the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals. Native plants naturally thrive in our area without using lots of fertilizers.
- 3** Don’t dump anything down a storm drain or into a stream. Wash your car on the lawn or take it to a car wash that recycles their waste water.
- 4** Maintain and repair your septic tank, especially if you live close to a stream.
- 5** Be responsible farmers and pet owners. Keep farm animals out of streams. Pick up and properly dispose of your pet’s waste.
- 6** Don’t flush medications down the toilet! Drugs pass through waste treatment systems and are harmful to fish and water quality. Take unwanted medications to drug take-back events.
- 7** To improve the watershed as a whole, drive less—carpool, walk or bike when possible. Get involved in clean-ups, removal of invasive, non-native plants, become informed and active in stewardship of this important resource.
- 8** Help FORR by becoming a member! Visit FriendsOfTheReedyRiver.org for more information.



The health of the river is directly affected by us, the community that lives in its watershed. It can be the sparkling, happy playground for children, fishermen, and kayakers. Let’s all do our part to make the river safe and healthy for us – and future generations!