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### Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the interview is St. Joseph County, Indiana. Approximately one quarter of the land area of the county is contained in the Lower River Valley Segment of the St. Joseph River Watershed. The remaining land is in the Kankakee Watershed. The majority of the jurisdiction of the interview is occupied by the urban areas of South Bend, Granger and Mishawaka. The St. Joseph River, Juday Creek, Baugo Creek and Willow Creek are included.

### Projects/beneficial watershed features

The Designated Use Tables for the project had indicated that indigeous aquatic wildlife was impaired. However, it was noted that it may be threatened in the county, but was not impaired. Monitoring conducted by the Hoosier River Watch was resulting in the identification of mayflies and stoneflies at some stations. Some habitat cover remains, as well. Fish species are also found in the cities. However, mollusc populations were noted to be declining.

A Section 319 Grant was used to hire a livestock management specialist in LaGrange County, IN. His work involves the promotion of intensive grazing, filter strips and livestock exclusion from streams in Elkhart, LaGrange, Noble, St. Joseph and Kosciusko Counties. In St. Joseph County, his work is primarily in the Baugo Creek Subwatershed.

Overapplication of atrazine has been an issue in St. Joseph County in the past. However, it has been improving over time because, agricultural producers are applying the herbicide at lower rates. They now apply according to the labels, as it is too expensive to waste the product. Additionally, an increasing number of subdivisions are being constructed near farms. This causes farmers to be more cautious when spraying pesticides.

An ordinance protecting prime agricultural areas restricts residential development on former agricultural lands. Only one residence may be constructed on each twenty-acre parcel in these areas. Prime agricultural areas in the St. Joseph River Watershed are found in the southern portions. Many of the twenty-acre lots are utilized for horse farms, while some remain as crops, and some become wildlife areas. Some equine owners seek assistance from the district regarding recommended forage species and the EQIP program. The Grazing Initiative (Grasslands) in the Farm Bill will provide additional assistance in these regards. Equine owners also seek district assistance on the construction and use of dry stack facilities, which are cement bunkers for storing manure.

The Juday Creek Task Force is a volunteer group working to restore Juday Creek. The group is working to prevent runoff from Grape Road and Main Street by promoting filtering systems. Several large parking lots and commercial businesses have been constructed in the approximately two-mile stretch along Main Street. They have also been involved with stream bank stabilization near the confluence with the St. Joseph River. The creek is in a good condition, due to the work of the Task Force, considering the large amount of new development which has occurred over the past five years.

Streambank stabilization projects have also been ongoing on Eller Ditch at the "Res", near Capitol Street. The "Res" is a privately owned park where scout camping occurs and buildings can be rented for summer

gatherings. It was also noted that the lower reaches of the St. Joseph River are healthy. One bank is bordered by the Notre Dame and St. Mary's campuses, Izaak Walton League property, Clay Township Park and Roseland Township Park. The other bank is paralleled by a road, which restricts space for building along the riparian land. Additionally, a large stretch is owned by the City of South Bend and contains the waste water treatment plant.

The eligibility for the Conservation Reserve Program has been expanded in the past few years. Previous restrictions only allowed cost share for runoff flowing directly into ditches. Some landowners had been interested in the program but were not eligible due to berming and the nature of the drainage of the land. The latest text of the program allows these landowners to participate. The county surveyors office also tries to promote the use of buffers by providing tax incentives.

### Challenges in the watershed

Rapid suburban growth is occurring in the northern portions of the county. It has been noted that suburban landowners tend to apply more fertilizers and pesticides to the land than farmers. This has been noted as a source of water pollution. Rapid development has occurred in the Juday Creek Subwatershed over the past five years. Willow Creek, a naturally reproducing trout stream, is threatened by the Highway 331 expansion in Penn Township. There is no volunteer support group to protect Willow Creek, as there is for Juday Creek.

It was noted that it may be difficult for the river and tributaries to meet the designated uses in the urbanized areas of the county. However, the NPDES Phase II permits should alleviate stormwater inputs. It will be difficult or impossible to restore habitat or conduct natural resource inventories in the main stem.

Some landowners still prefer to farm their fields to the edges of ditches and streams. Some do not install buffers even when the district designs them. Farmers in the Baugo Creek Subwatershed typically do not participate in the district's programs. There is a resistance to government assistance (financial and technical) and the management of private property. It was noted that it would be helpful to get 1-2 buffers installed as demonstrations. The landowners may become interested if some of their neighbors recommend the BMPs. Some landowners will install buffers or fences, or switch to intensive grazing without cost assistance once the benefits of such practices are clear.