

## North Fork Kentucky River mouth watershed (051002-01-150)

**Geography.** The North Fork Kentucky River mouth watershed lies in northwest Breathitt County, a southern corner of Wolfe County, and eastern Lee County. The land is in the Eastern Kentucky Coal Field physiographic region, characterized by mountainous terrain, rapid surface runoff, and moderate rates of groundwater drainage. The watershed is underlain by coals, sandstones, and shales: this geology is generally conducive to productive wells, but water quality may be low for wells that draw from coal layers. Parts of the watershed lie over sandstone aquifers.

**Waterways.** This watershed includes the section of the North Fork between the mouth of Troublesome Creek (at Haddix) and Beattyville. Among many creeks that feed it within this watershed are Miller Branch, Mill Creek, War Creek, Big Bloody Creek, Cave Branch, Laurel Branch, and Blaines Branch. Water also flows into this watershed from the following other watersheds: North Fork Kentucky River near Chavies, Middle Fork Kentucky River mouth, South Fork of Quicksand, Quicksand Creek, Cane Creek in Breathitt County, Frozen Creek, Boone Fork, Holly Creek, Upper Devil Creek, Lower Devil Creek, Hell Creek & Walker Creek, and Crystal Creek.

**Land and water use.** Land in the watershed is largely rural and wooded but about 10% agricultural. The surface waters of the watershed supply the drinking water for municipal systems in Beattyville and Jackson. Five businesses and organizations hold permits for discharges into the creeks. See the 2000 Assessment Report for full details.

**Agency data assessment.** Four waterway segments were assessed in this watershed, and two do not support some of their designated uses, based on biological and/or water-quality data. One segment of the North Fork is impaired by bacteria from animal and human wastes. Panbowl Lake exhibited low oxygen and organic enrichment. See the 2000 Assessment Report or 2000 305(b) list and the 2002 303(d) list of impaired streams for full details.

**Kentucky River Basin Management Plan, 2002.** Information is from the first basin cycle (1997-2002), including the 1998-1999 monitoring effort and the 2000 Assessment Report. See [kywatersheds.org](http://kywatersheds.org) or [www.uky.edu/WaterResources/Watersheds](http://www.uky.edu/WaterResources/Watersheds) for the complete Assessment Report and Management Plan.

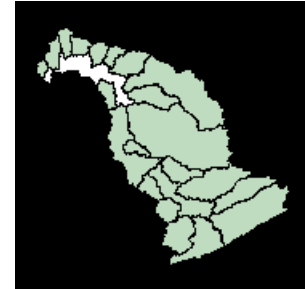
Watershed Restoration Ranking			Watershed Protection Rank	Overall Watershed Rank	Framework Mobilization Category
<i>Observed Impacts</i>	<i>Potential Impacts</i>	<i>Combined Rank</i>			
High	Low	High	Medium	High	IV

## Watershed Highlights

Watershed covers 83 square miles.  
 Provides drinking water for Jackson and Beattyville.  
 Jackson discharges treated sewage into the watershed.  
 Aquatic life in Panbowl Lake is impaired by organic enrichment and low oxygen [2000 305(b)].  
 Pathogens make contact recreation unsafe from Quicksand Creek to Jackson sewage plant [2000 305(b)].  
 Watershed Watch focused sampling showed high fecal coliform readings in the North Fork and near the mouths of tributary watersheds.  
 Covered by TMDL program's North Fork pathogen report.  
 Water supply is an issue.  
 Watershed is in PRIDE service region. PRIDE identified 64 straight pipes or failing septic systems in the watershed.



North Fork Region



See the color map of this region on p. 121.

### LEGEND

- Area of this watershed
- Sewage plants
- Public water supplies
- Other water withdrawals
- Locks & dams
- Cities and towns
- Rivers and larger streams
- Smaller streams
- County borders

