

## Elkhorn Creek watershed (051002-05-290)

**Geography.** The Elkhorn Creek watershed covers northeast Franklin County. The land is in the inner subregion of the Bluegrass physiographic region, characterized by undulating terrain and moderate rates of both surface runoff and groundwater drainage. The watershed lies partly above thick layers of easily dissolved limestone that form carbonate aquifers. Groundwater flows through channels in the limestone, so caves and springs are common in regions with this geology. Other areas lie above interbedded limestones and shales (>20% limestone, allowing groundwater flow where the clay content is low enough). Unconsolidated silts, sands, and gravels occur along the flood plain of the creek and on adjoining upland terraces.

**Waterways.** Elkhorn Creek empties into the Kentucky River in northern Franklin County. Among the creeks that feed it are Sulphur Lick Creek, Camp Pleasant Branch (Pleasant Branch), Gregory Branch, and Long Branch. Water also flows into the watershed from the South and North Elkhorn watersheds.

**Land and water use.** Land in the watershed is about 5% residential, 45% rural and wooded, and 50% agricultural. Four businesses and organizations hold permits for discharges into the creeks. See the 2000 Assessment Report for full details.

**Agency data assessment.** The assessed creek segment in this watershed does not support its designated uses. Pathogens from agricultural sources contribute to the impairment of the stream. 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.

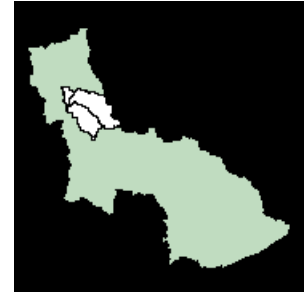
Watershed Restoration Ranking			Watershed Protection Rank	Overall Watershed Rank	Framework Mobilization Category
<i>Observed Impacts</i>	<i>Potential Impacts</i>	<i>Combined Rank</i>			
High	Medium	High	High	High	IV

## Watershed Highlights

Watershed covers 38 square miles.

Pathogens make contact recreation unsafe along the entire length of Elkhorn Creek (1st priority TMDL 2002).

Groundwater is substantially more sensitive than the basin average.











Elkhorn Creek Region



See the color map of this region on p. 135.

### 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 