

Gills Creek Watershed

An Overview of Completed And Planned Improvements

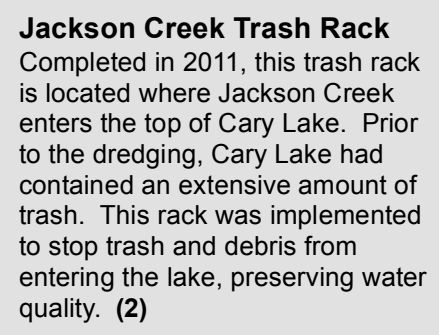
The Gills Creek Watershed is a large system of streams, creeks and tributaries encompassing the eastern side of the greater Columbia area, flowing into the Congaree River. It is considered one of the largest impaired watersheds in South Carolina. The watershed contains over 70 miles of streams and covers roughly 47,000 acres of land, including the cities of Columbia, Cayce, Forest Acres, Arcadia Lakes, and the US Army's Fort Jackson. Though the watershed is governed by each city or town's authority, as well as Richland County, it is chiefly managed by the Gills Creek Watershed Association. It is a goal of the Association to be considered a national model for watershed management and planning. To do so, much work needs to be done. Here are the improvement projects either completed or planned for the near future.

Completed Projects



Cary Lake Dredging

Completed in March 2011, this project intended to remove sedimentation and debris in order to improve water quality. Around 28,000 cubic yards of sediment was removed from two critical areas. (1)



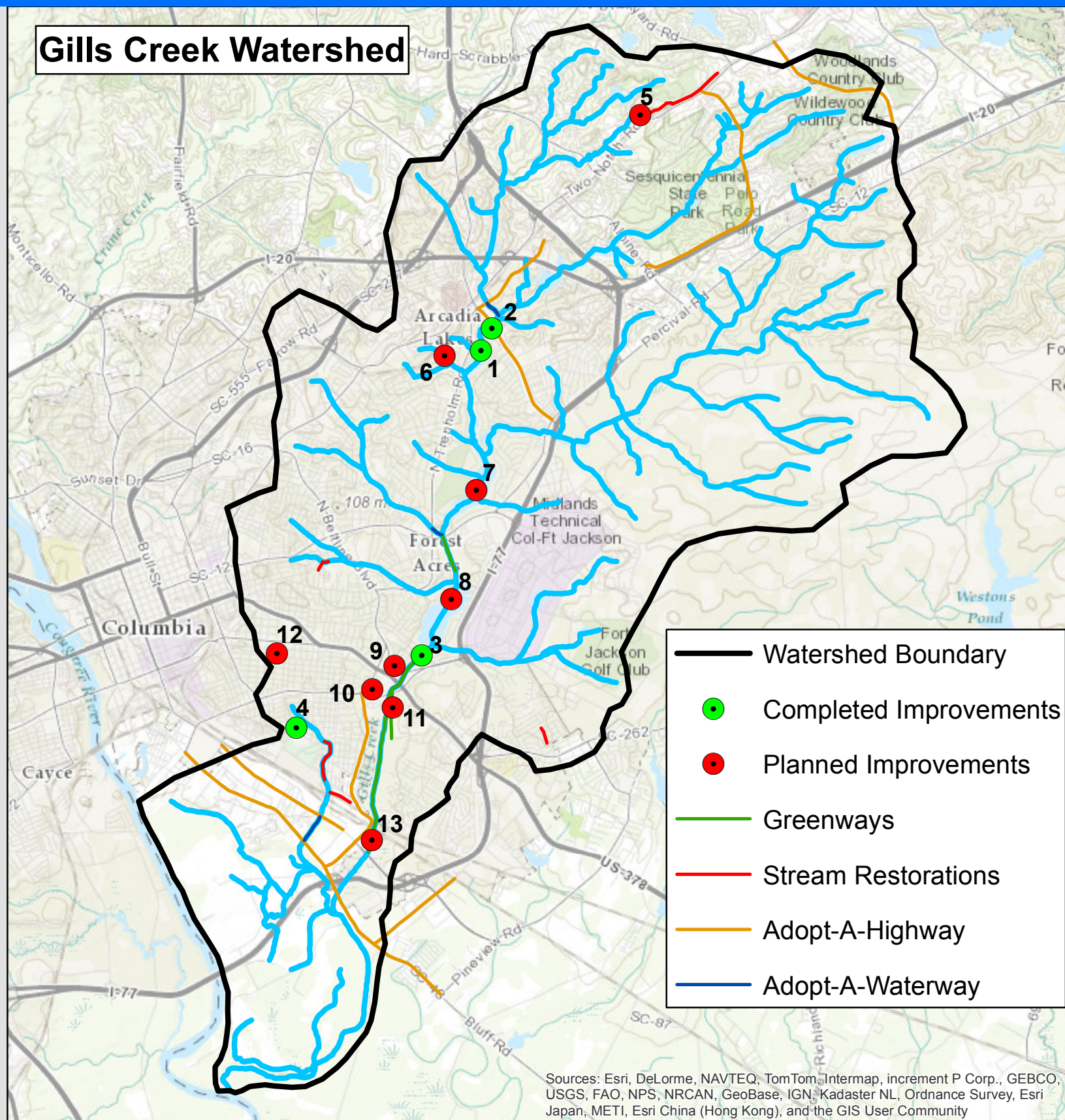
Jackson Creek Trash Rack
Completed in 2011, this trash rack is located where Jackson Creek enters the top of Cary Lake. Prior to the dredging, Cary Lake had contained an extensive amount of trash. This rack was implemented to stop trash and debris from entering the lake, preserving water quality. (2)



Rosewood Park Rain Garden

The Rosewood Park Rain Garden was completed in November 2012. The purpose of the garden is to collect and filter stormwater from the surrounding area. Also, the adjacent parking lot has been redone with pervious pavement, to facilitate better drainage into the rain garden (below). (4)

Other Projects
Other completed projects include a rain garden at the Tree Of Life Congregation on Trenholm Road, sewer line repairs near Kilbourne Road (3), as well as various other Better Management Practices throughout the watershed. Also showing support for the watershed are the various groups participating in the Adopt-A-Highway and Adopt-A-Waterway programs, to assist in the upkeep of the watershed.



Completed Projects

- 1) Cary Lake Dredging Project
- 2) Jackson Creek Trash Rack
- 3) Kilbourne Sewer Line Project
- 4) Rosewood Park Rain Garden

Planned Projects

- 5) Entrance Lake Dredging
- 6) Arcadia Lakes Pond Dredging
- 7) Forest Lake Dredging
- 8) Big & Little Lake Katherine Dredging
- 9) Cross Hill BMP's
- 10) Midlands Tech BMP's
- 11) Gills Creek Parkway BMP's
- 12) Shandon Area Drainage Study
- 13) Intertape Polymer Culvert Refitting

Planned Projects

As it stands, there are many projects in the works that will hopefully be completed in the near future. There are several types, consisting of dredging projects, stream restorations, greenway constructions, better management practices, and volunteer programs.

Dredging

In an effort to remove sedimentation and debris and improve water quality, several dredging projects are being planned. These include Entrance Lake, Arcadia Lakes, Forest Lake, and Little and Big Lake Katherine. Forest Lake is shown to the right. (5-8)



Stream Restoration

Multiple stream restoration projects are also pending. These will improve the health of the watershed and reduce flooding. They include Little Jackson Creek, St. Mark's Woods, Crowson Road, and Devil's Ditch, depicted on the left.

Better Management Practices

Better management Practices (BMP's) are being used more frequently throughout the watershed as awareness of poor water quality increases. Such practices as rain barrels, riparian buffers and pervious paving are increasing in implementation. To the right is an example of an attempt to reduce stormwater runoff flow into Gills Creek near Fort Jackson Boulevard. (9-11)



Gills Creek is still considered an impaired watershed. This is due to urban degradation and human manipulation of the watershed. However, by committing to improvement projects such as the aforementioned, we can greatly improve its health and quality, and can reach the Gills Creek Watershed Association's goal of becoming a national model for watershed management and planning.