

E. coli

What is E. coli?

Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) is a type of bacteria found naturally in the environment that we measure as an indicator of possible fecal contamination and the presence of pathogens. While *E. coli* is often harmless, persistently high levels can indicate an increased risk of illness when recreating in a waterbody.

How does E. coli get in our streams?

Primary sources of *E. coli* include waste from pets, urban wildlife, and livestock as well as garbage and faulty sewers and septic systems. Rain and melting snow pick up bacteria and flow directly into local streams without being treated.



E. coli in the Boulder St. Vrain watershed

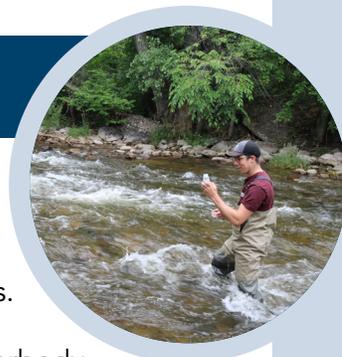
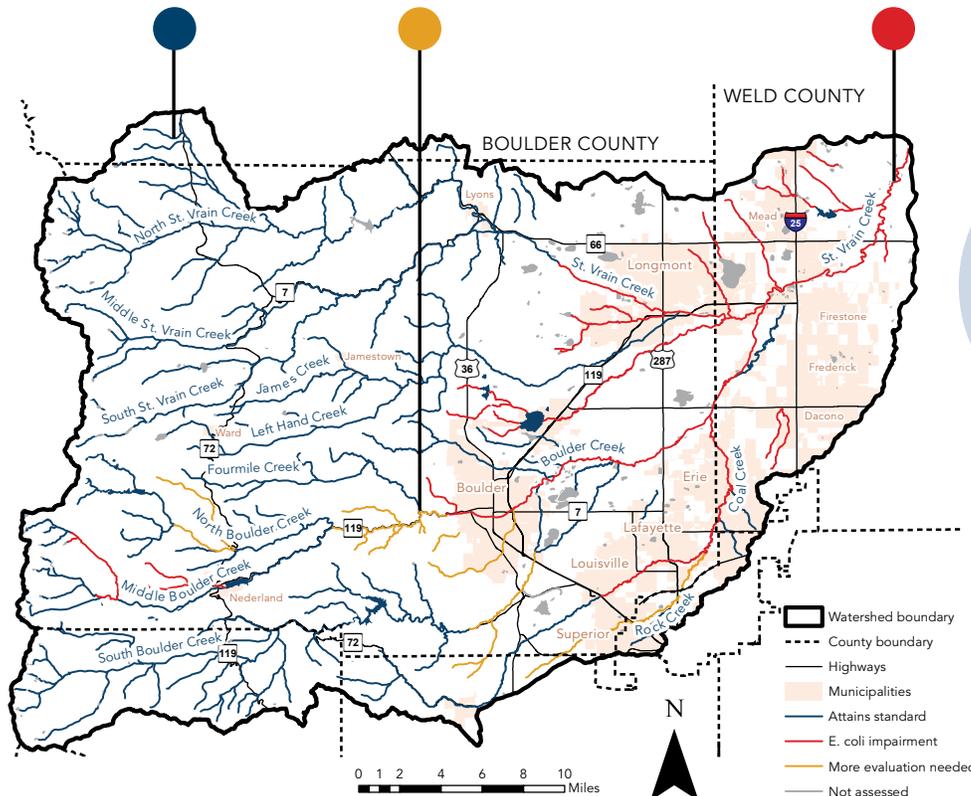
Elevated *E. coli* levels have been observed throughout the Boulder St. Vrain watershed, similar to other urban streams across the country.

Bacteria concentrations can vary dramatically within short time periods and our monitoring program has not observed a sustained increase in *E. coli* levels in the watershed. Based on available data, the State of Colorado determines which waterbodies have bacteria impairments and where potential issues require further evaluation. Local governments may be required to take specific measures to reduce bacteria in impaired waterways in addition to routine pollution prevention efforts.

523 miles
attain standards

60 miles
need more evaluation

149 miles
do not meet standards



What is your community doing?

Your local government works to limit bacteria in our streams in a variety of ways, including:

- Monitoring water quality and addressing sources of pollution
- Maintaining pollution control measures
- Responding to illegal discharges



What can you do?

You can do the following to reduce the bacteria you contribute to our watershed:

- Pick up your pet waste
- Secure your trash to keep urban wildlife away
- Reduce runoff from your lawn by watering sparingly
- Regularly inspect and maintain your septic system if you have one - visit SepticSmart.org

How can I recreate safely?



To minimize risk of illness when recreating in local creeks, do not swim in cloudy or discolored water or immediately after a rainstorm. Avoid getting water in your mouth, eyes, or open wounds.



Learn more about your watershed and how you can protect it at KeepItCleanPartnership.org