CHAPTER 3

WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE TENNESSEE WESTERN VALLEY (KY LAKE) WATERSHED

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3.1. BACKGROUND. Section 305(b) of The Clean Water Act requires states to report the status of water quality every two years. Historically, Tennessee's methodologies, protocols, frequencies and locations of monitoring varied depending upon whether sites were ambient, ecoregion, or intensive survey. Alternatively, in areas where no direct sampling data existed, water quality may have been assessed by evaluation or by the knowledge and experience of the area by professional staff.

In 1996, Tennessee began the watershed approach to water quality protection. In the Watershed Approach, resources—both human and fiscal—are better used by assessing water quality more intensively on a watershed-by-watershed basis. In this approach, water quality is assessed in year three of the watershed cycle, following one to two years of data collection. More information about the Watershed Approach may be found in Chapter 1 and at http://www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/watershed/

The assessment information is used in the 305(b) Report (The Status of Water Quality in Tennessee) and the 303(d) list as required by the Clean Water Act.

The 305(b) Report documents the condition of the State's waters. Its function is to provide information used for water quality based decisions, evaluate progress, and measure success.

Tennessee uses the 305(b) Report to meet four goals (from 2002 305(b) Report):

1. Assess the general water quality conditions of rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands

2. Identify causes of water pollution and the sources of pollutants

3. Specify waters which have been found to pose human health risks due to elevated bacteria levels or contamination of fish

4. Highlight areas of improved water quality

EPA aggregates the state use support information into a national assessment of the nation's water quality. This aggregated use support information can be viewed at EPA's "Surf Your Watershed" site at http://www.epa.gov/surf/.

The 303(d) list is a compilation of the waters of Tennessee that fail to support some or all of their classified uses. The 303(d) list does not include streams determined to be fully supporting designated uses as well as streams the Division of Water Pollution Control cannot assess due to lack of water quality information. Also absent are streams where a control strategy is already in the process of being implemented.

Once a stream is placed on the 303(d) list, it is considered a priority for water quality improvement efforts. These efforts not only include traditional regulatory approaches such as permit issuance, but also include efforts to control pollution sources that have historically been exempted from regulations, such as certain agricultural and forestry activities. If a stream is on the 303(d) list, the Division of Water Pollution Control cannot use its regulatory authority to allow additional sources of the same pollutant(s) for which it is listed.

States are required to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for 303(d)-listed waterbodies. The TMDL process establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can assimilate without exceeding water quality standards and allocates this load among all contributing pollutant sources. The purpose of the TMDL is to establish water quality objectives required to reduce pollution from both point and nonpoint sources and to restore and maintain the quality of water resources.

The current 303(d) List is available on the TDEC homepage at:
http://www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/publications/2004_303dlist.pdf

and information about Tennessee's TMDL program may be found at:
http://www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/tmdl/.

This chapter provides a summary of water quality in the Tennessee portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed, summarizes data collection and assessment results, and describes impaired waters.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION. Comprehensive water quality monitoring in the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed was conducted in 1999-2000. Data are from one of four site types: (1) Ambient sites, (2) Ecoregion sites, (3) Watershed sites, or (4) Tier Evaluation sites.

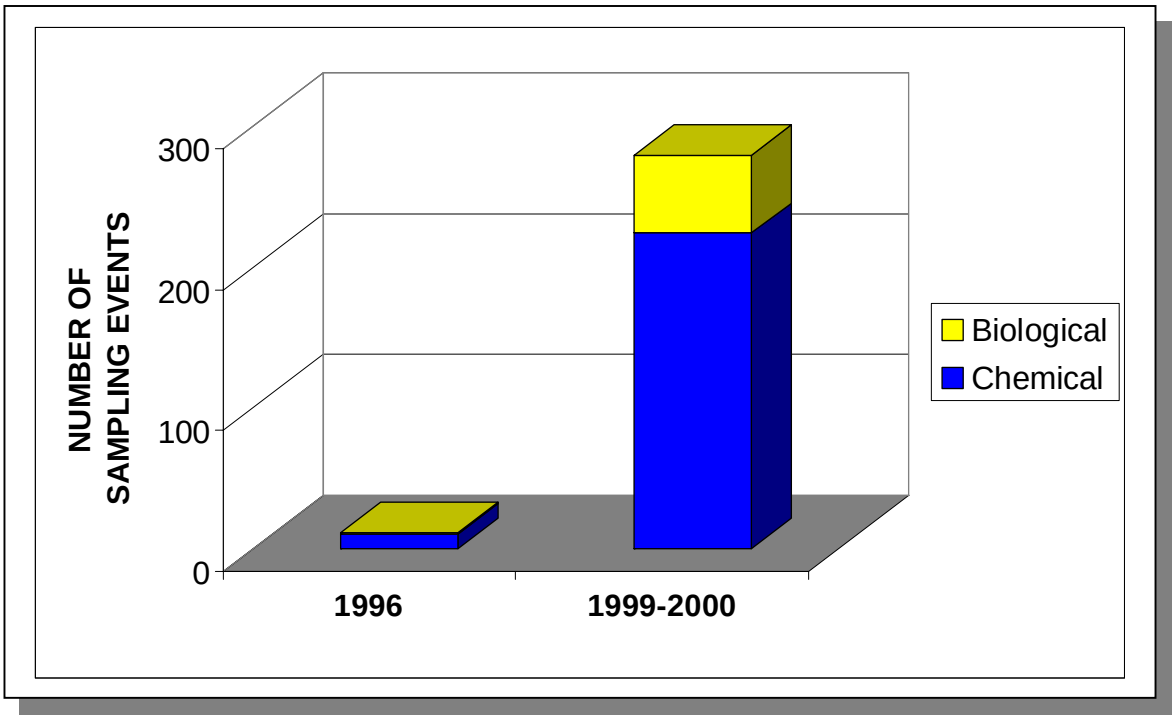

Figure 3-1. Number of Sampling Events Using the Traditional Approach (1996) and Watershed Approach (1999-2000) in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed.

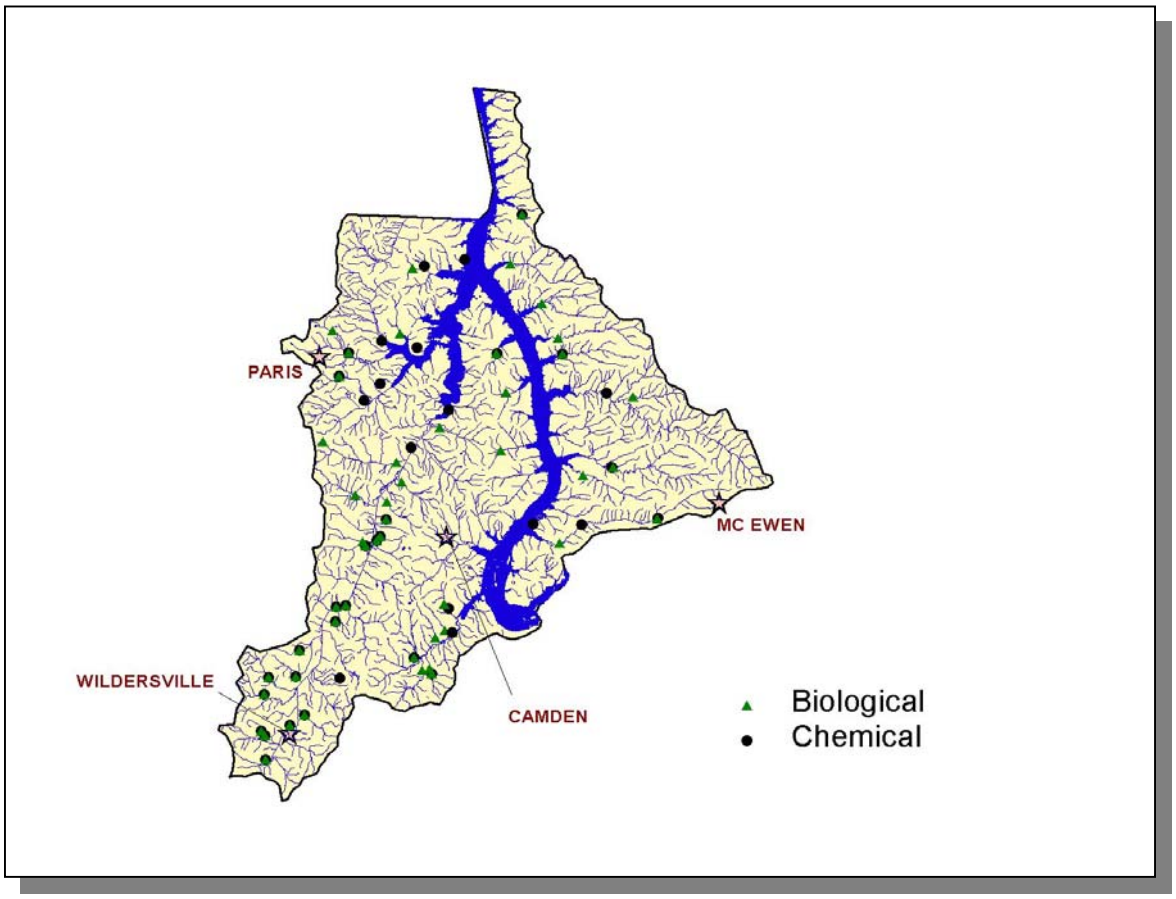

Figure 3-2. Location of Monitoring Sites in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Locations of Camden, McEwen, Paris, and Wildersville are shown for reference.*

	1996	1999-2000
Biological	1	55
Chemical	10	224
Total	**11**	**279**

Table 3-1. Number of Sampling Events in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed During the Data Collection Phase of the Watershed Approach.

3.2.A. Ambient Monitoring Sites. These fixed-station chemical monitoring sites are sampled quarterly or monthly by the Environmental Field Office-Jackson and Environmental Field Office-Columbia staff (this is in addition to samples collected by water and wastewater treatment plant operators). Samples are analyzed by the Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Environmental Laboratory Services. Ambient monitoring data are used to assess water quality in major bodies of water where there are NPDES facilities and to identify trends in water quality. Water quality parameters traditionally measured at ambient sites in the Tennessee portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed are provided in Appendix IV.

Data from ambient monitoring stations are entered into the STORET (Storage and Retrieval) system administered by EPA.

3.2.B. Ecoregion Sites. Ecoregions are relatively homogeneous areas of similar geography, topography, climate and soils that support similar plants and animals. The delineation phase of the Tennessee Ecoregion Project was completed in 1997 when the ecoregions and subecoregions were mapped and summarized (EPA/600/R-97/022). There are eight Level III Ecoregions and twenty-five Level IV subecoregions in Tennessee (see Chapter 2 for more details). The Tennessee portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed lies within 3 Level III ecoregions (Southeastern Plains, Interior Plateau, and Mississippi Valley Loess Plains) and contains 3 subecoregions (Level IV):

- Southeastern Plains and Hills (65e)
- Western Highland Rim (71f)
- Loess Plains (74b)

Ecoregion reference sites are chemically monitored using methodology outlined in the Division's Chemical Standard Operating Procedure (Standard Operating Procedure for Modified Clean Technique Sampling Protocol). Macroinvertebrate samples are collected in spring and fall. These biological sample collections follow methodology outlined in the Tennessee Biological Standard Operating Procedures Manual. Volume 1: Macroinvertebrates and EPA's Revision to Rapid Bioassessment Protocols for use in Streams and Rivers.

Ecoregion stations are scheduled to be monitored during the watershed sampling time period.

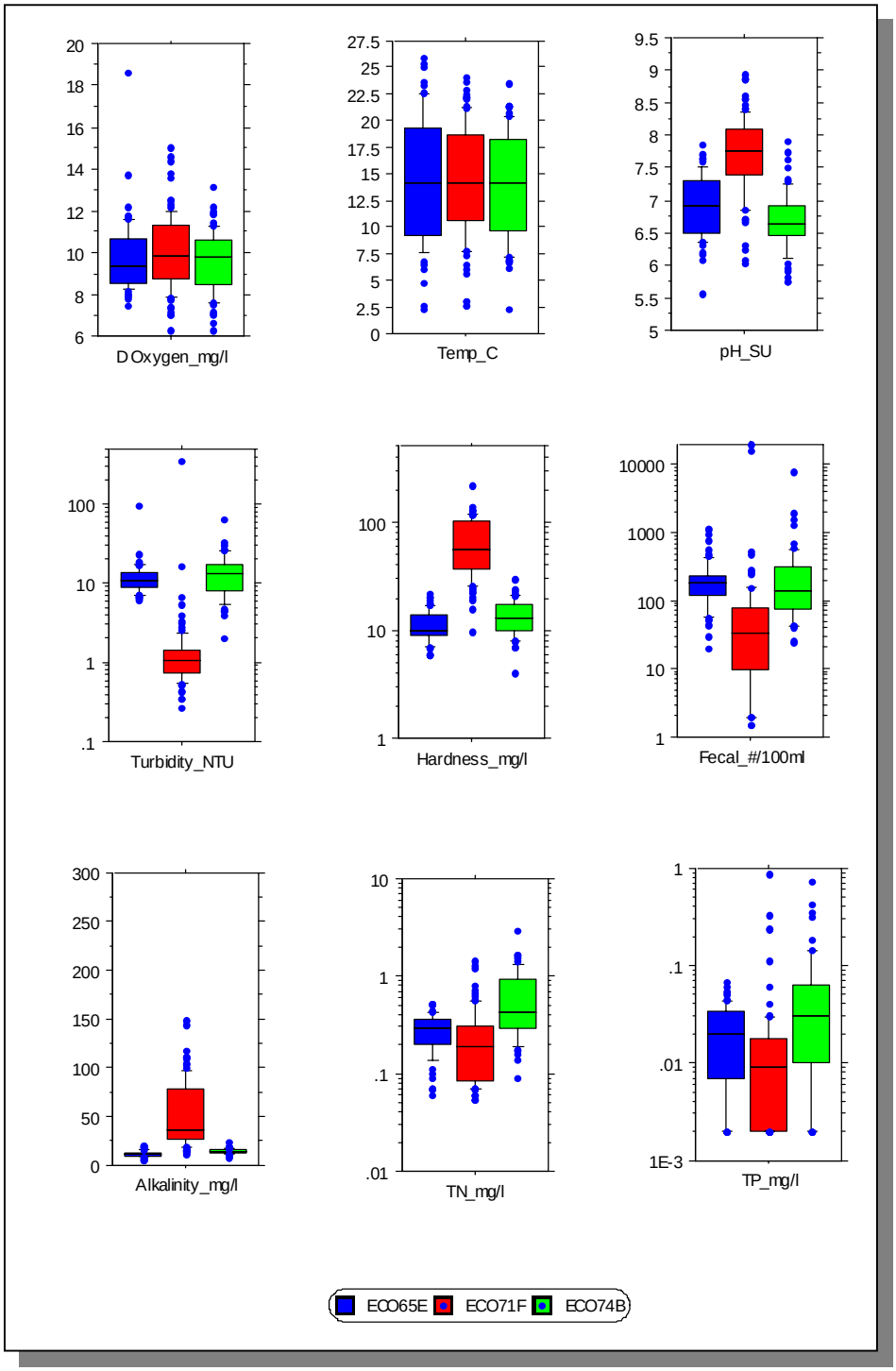

Figure 3-3. Select Chemical Data Collected in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed Ecoregion Sites. *Boxes and bars illustrate 10th, 25th, median, 75th, and 90th percentiles. Extreme values are also shown as dots. Fecal, fecal coliform bacteria; TN, Total Nitrogen; TP, Total Phosphorus.*

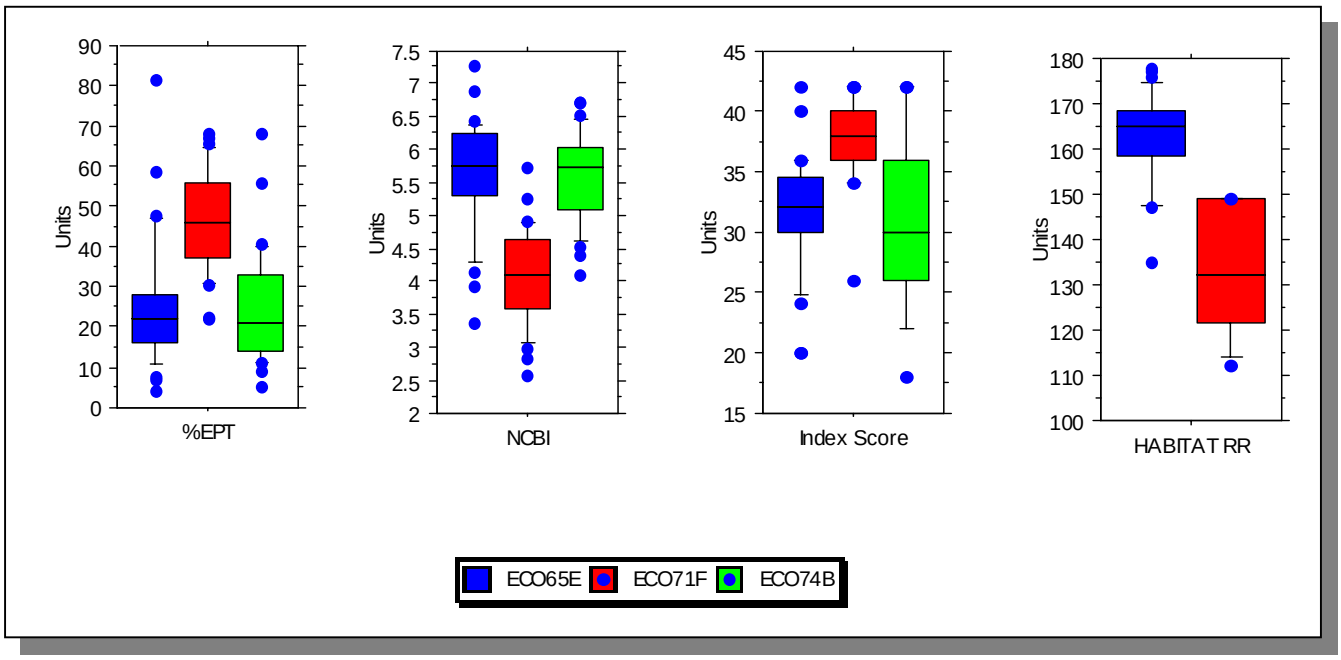

Figure 3-4. Benthic Macroinvertebrate and Habitat Scores for the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed Ecoregion Sites. *Boxes and bars illustrate 10th, 25th, median, 75th, and 90th percentiles. Extreme values are also shown as dots. NCBI, North Carolina Biotic Index. Index Score and Habitat Riffle/Run scoring system are described in TDEC's Quality System Standard Operating Procedure for Macroinvertebrate Surveys (2002).*

3.2.C. Watershed Screening Sites. Activities that take place at watershed sites are benthic macroinvertebrate stream surveys, physical habitat determinations and/or chemical monitoring. Following review of existing data, watershed sites are selected in Year 1 of the watershed approach when preliminary monitoring strategies are developed. Additional sites may be added in Year 2 when additional monitoring strategies are implemented.

A Biological Reconnaissance (BioRecon) is used as a screening tool to describe the condition of water quality, in general, by determining the absence or presence of clean water indicator organisms, such as EPT (Ephemeroptera [mayfly], Plecoptera [stonefly], Trichoptera [caddisfly]). Factors and resources used for selecting BioRecon sites are:

- The current 303(d) list,
- HUC-10 maps (every HUC-10 is scheduled for a BioRecon)
- Land Use/Land Cover maps
- Topographic maps
- Locations of NPDES facilities
- Sites of recent ARAP activities.

An intensive multiple or single habitat assessment involves the regular monitoring of a station over a fixed period of time. Intensive surveys (Rapid Bioassessment Protocols) are performed when BioRecon results warrant it.

3.2.D. Special Surveys. These investigations are performed when needed and include:

- ARAP in-stream investigation
- Time-of-travel dye study
- Sediment oxygen demand study
- Lake eutrophication study

3.3. STATUS OF WATER QUALITY. Overall use support is a general description of water quality conditions in a water body based on determination of individual use supports. Use support determinations, which can be classified as monitored or evaluated, are based on:

- Data less than 5 years old (monitored)
- Data more than 5 years old (evaluated)
- Knowledge and experience of the area by technical staff (evaluated)
- Complaint investigation (monitored, if samples are collected)
- Other readily available Agencies' data (monitored)
- Readily available Volunteer Monitoring data (monitored, if certain quality assurance standards are met)

All readily available data are considered, including data from TDEC Environmental Field Offices, Tennessee Department of Health (Aquatic Biology Section of Laboratory Services), Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, National Park Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service, universities and colleges, the regulated community, and the private sector.

The assessment is based on the degree of support of designated uses as measured by compliance with Tennessee's water quality standards.

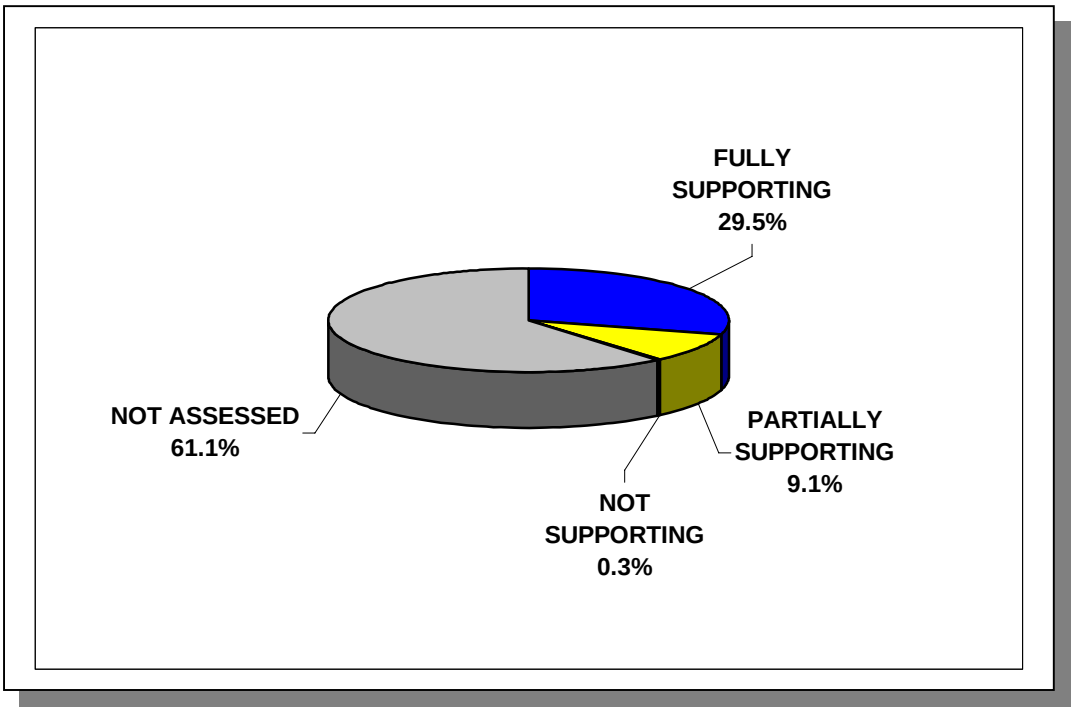

Figure 3-5a. Water Quality Assessment of Streams and Rivers in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment of 2,042.6 miles in the watershed. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

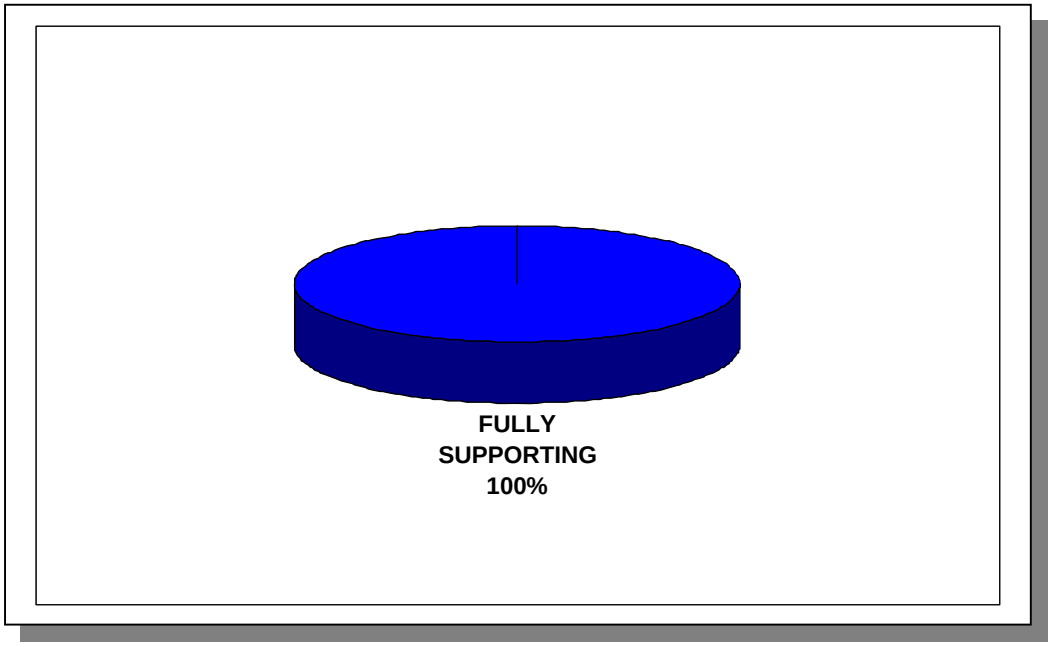

Figure 3-5b. Water Quality Assessment of Lakes in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment of 100,000 lake acres in the watershed. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

3.3.A. Assessment Summary.

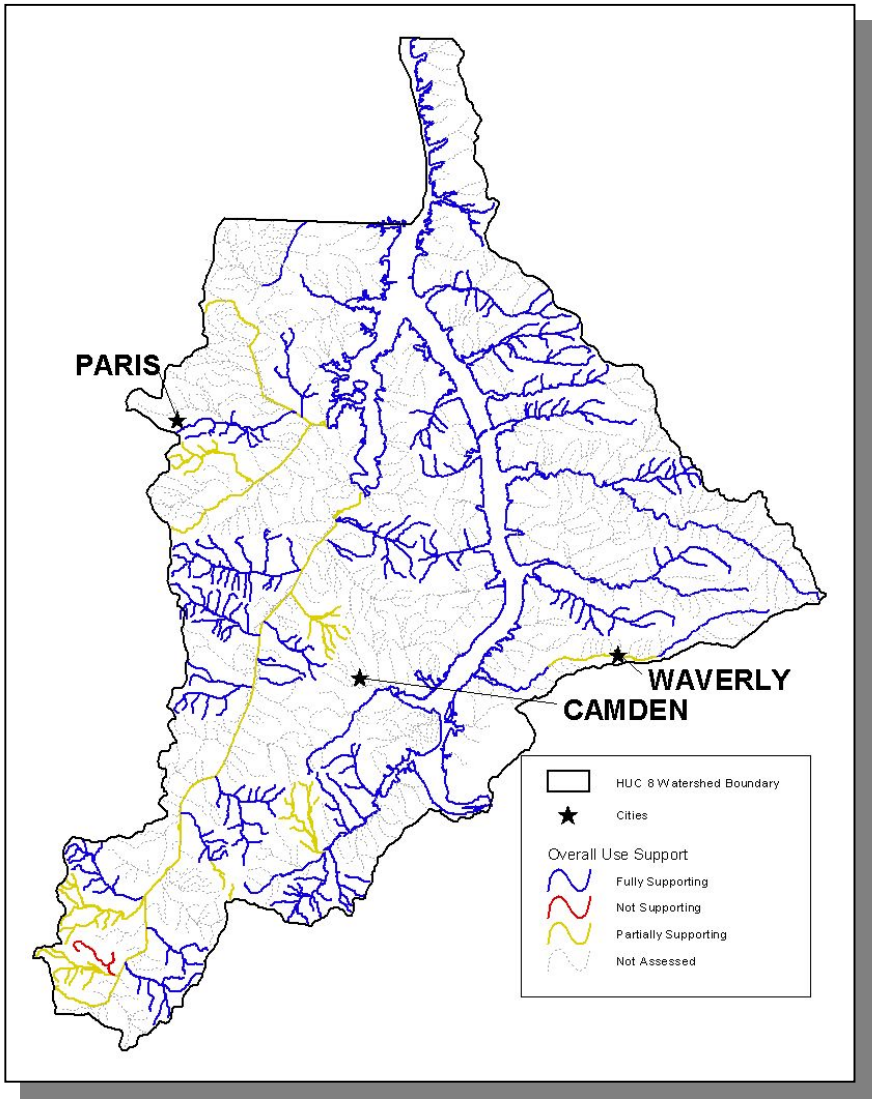

Figure 3-6a. Overall Use Support Attainment in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Water Quality Standards are described at http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-04/1200-04.htm. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

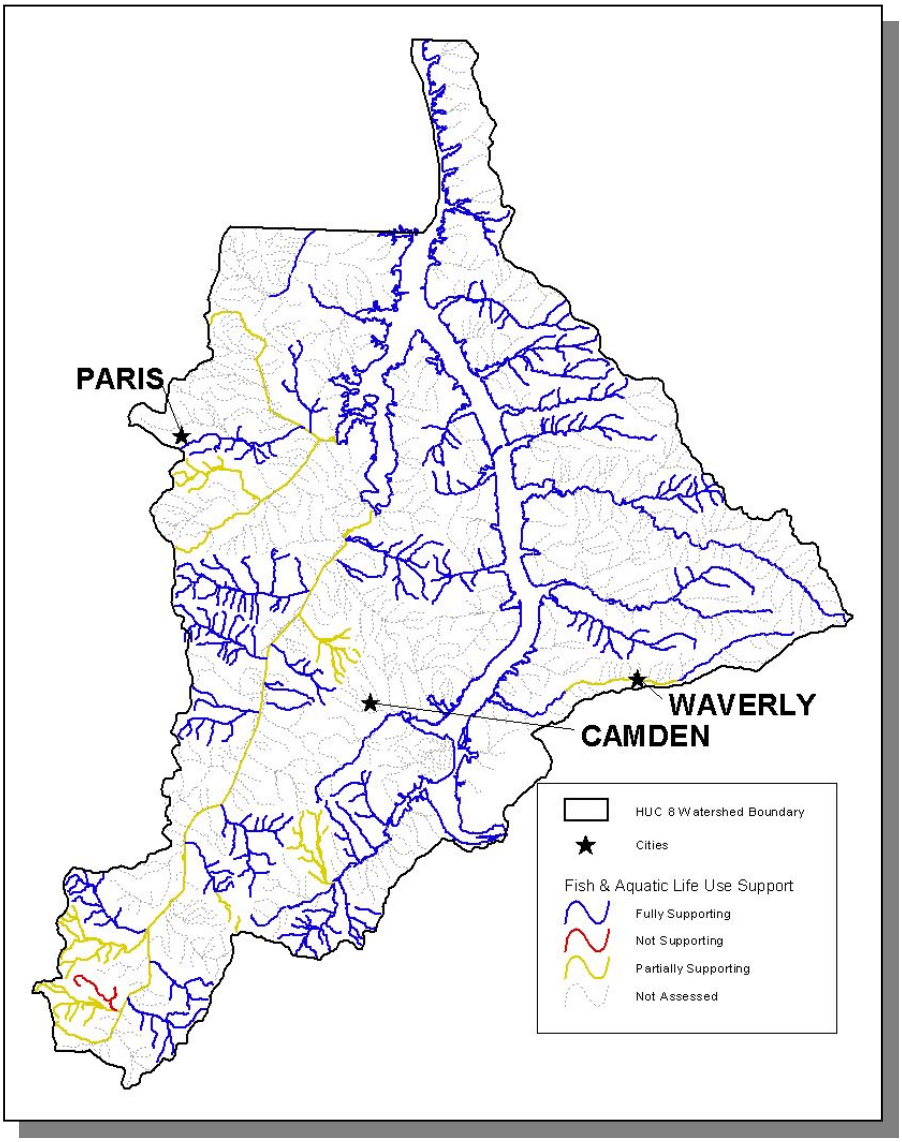

Figure 3-6b. Fish and Aquatic Life Use Support Attainment in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Water Quality Standards are described at http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-04/1200-04.htm. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

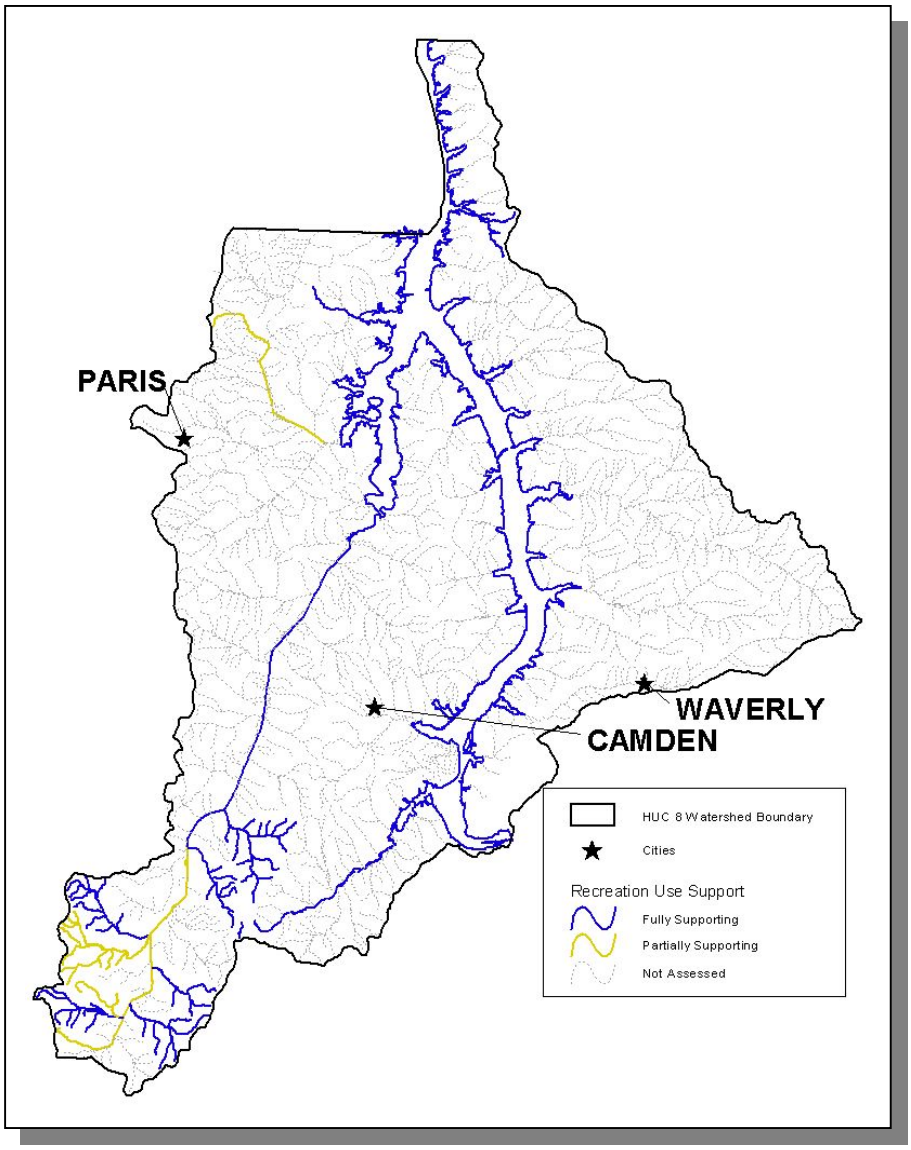

Figure 3-6c. Recreation Use Support Attainment in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Water Quality Standards are described at http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-04/1200-04.htm. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

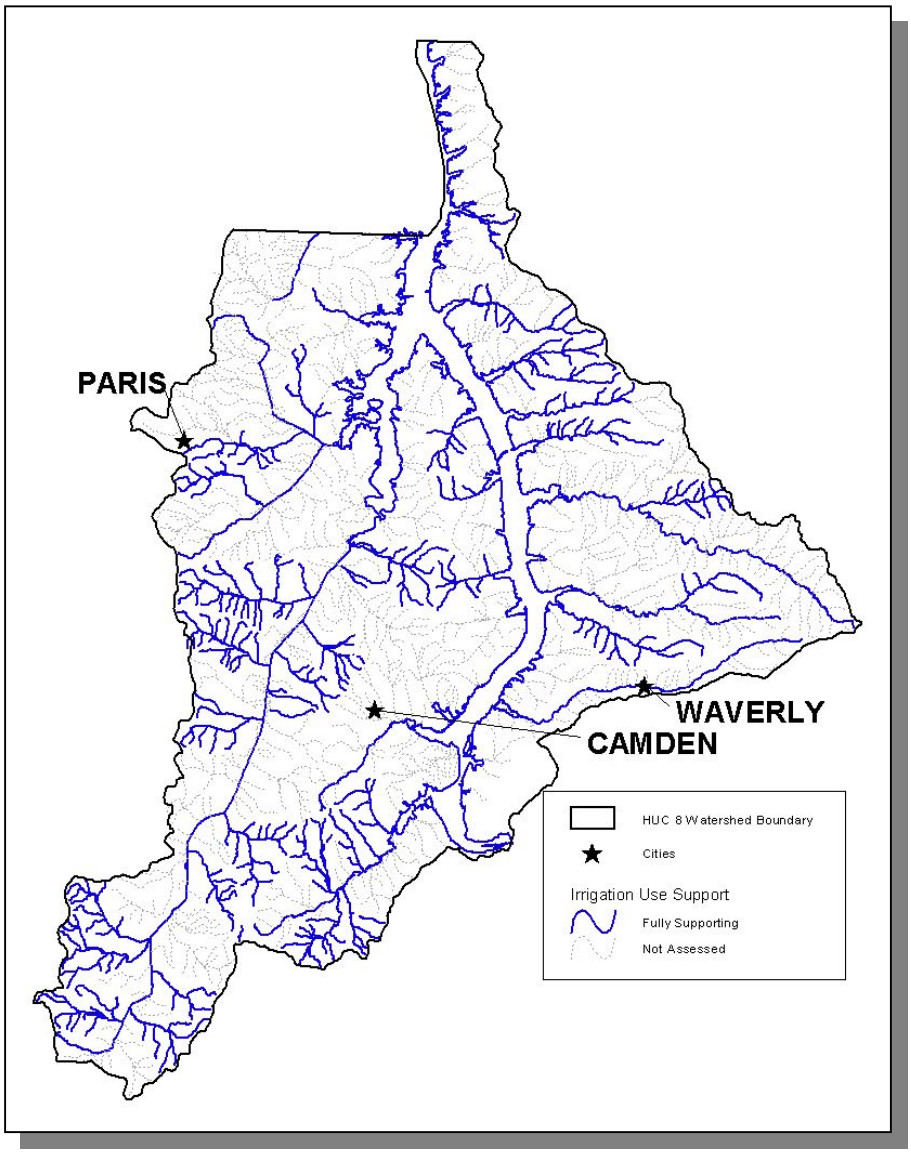

Figure 3-6d. Irrigation Use Support Attainment in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Water Quality Standards are described at http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-04/1200-04.htm. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

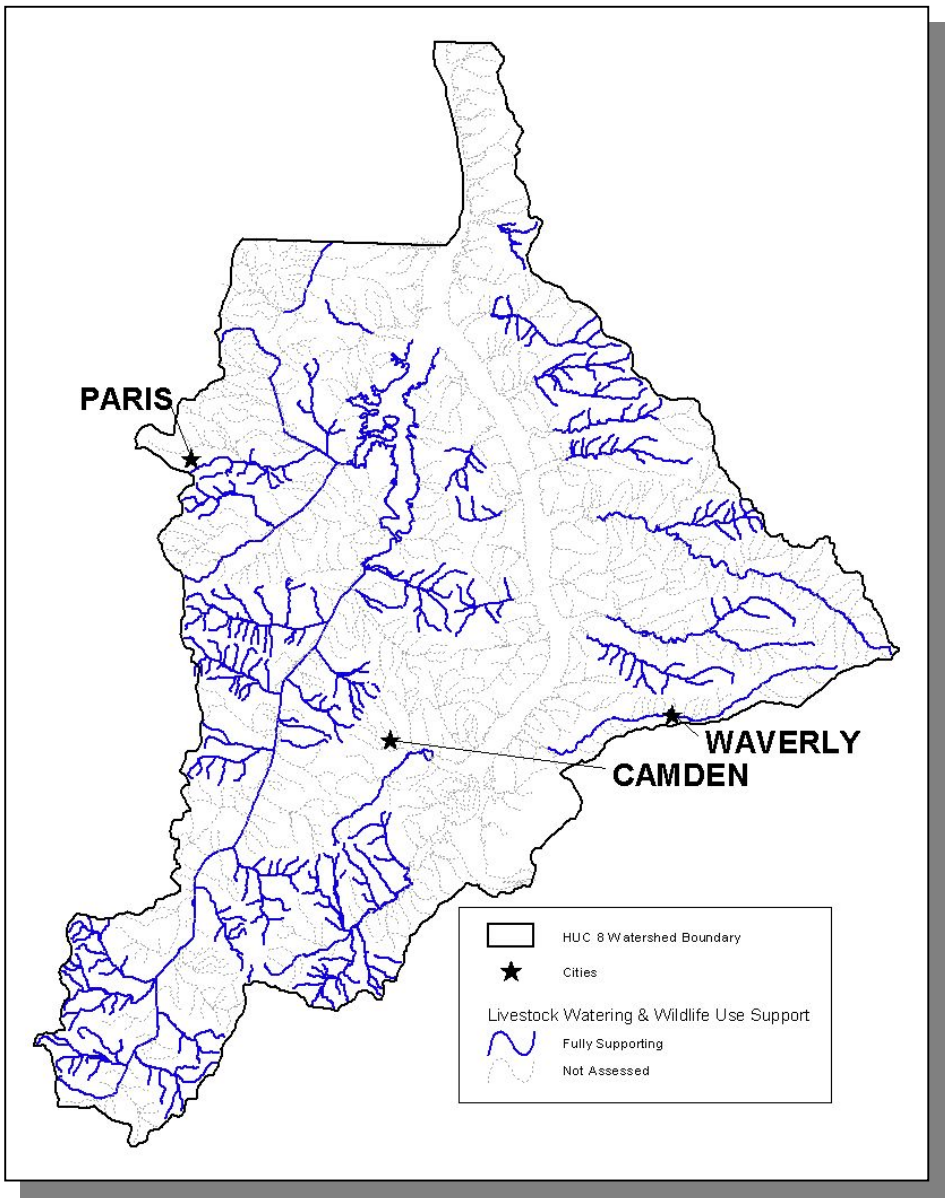

Figure 3-6e. Livestock Watering and Wildlife Use Support Attainment in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Water Quality Standards are described at http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-04/1200-04.htm. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

3.3.B. Use Impairment Summary.

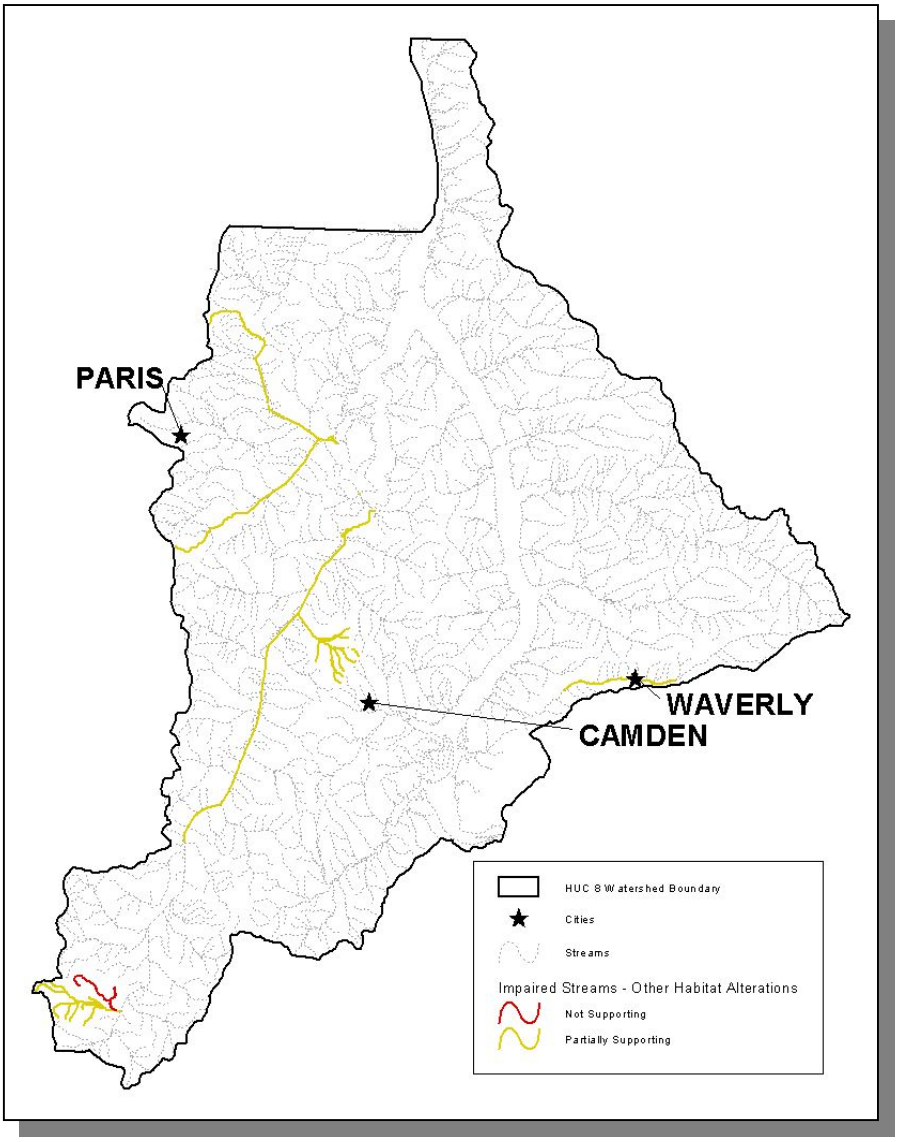

Figure 3-7a. Impaired Streams Due to Habitat Alteration in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

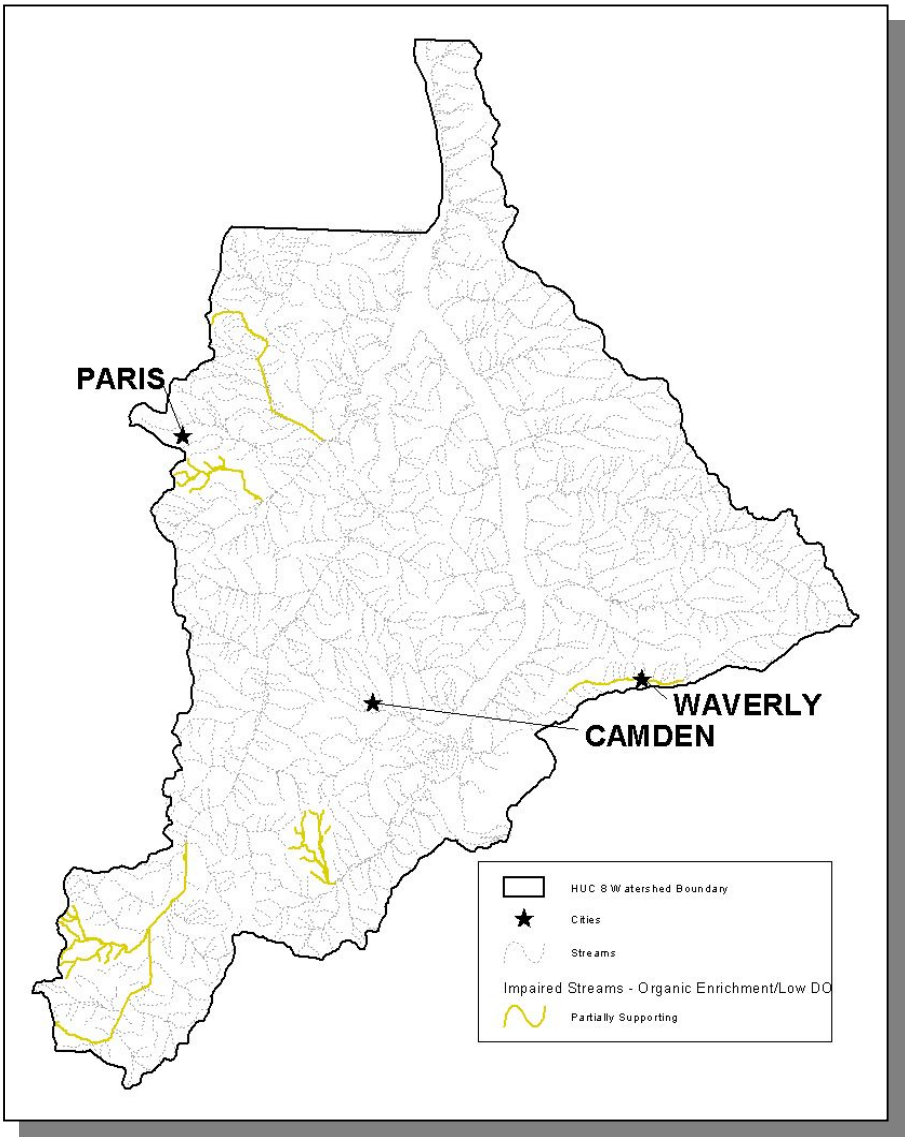

Figure 3-7b. Impaired Streams Due to Organic Enrichment or Low Dissolved Oxygen in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

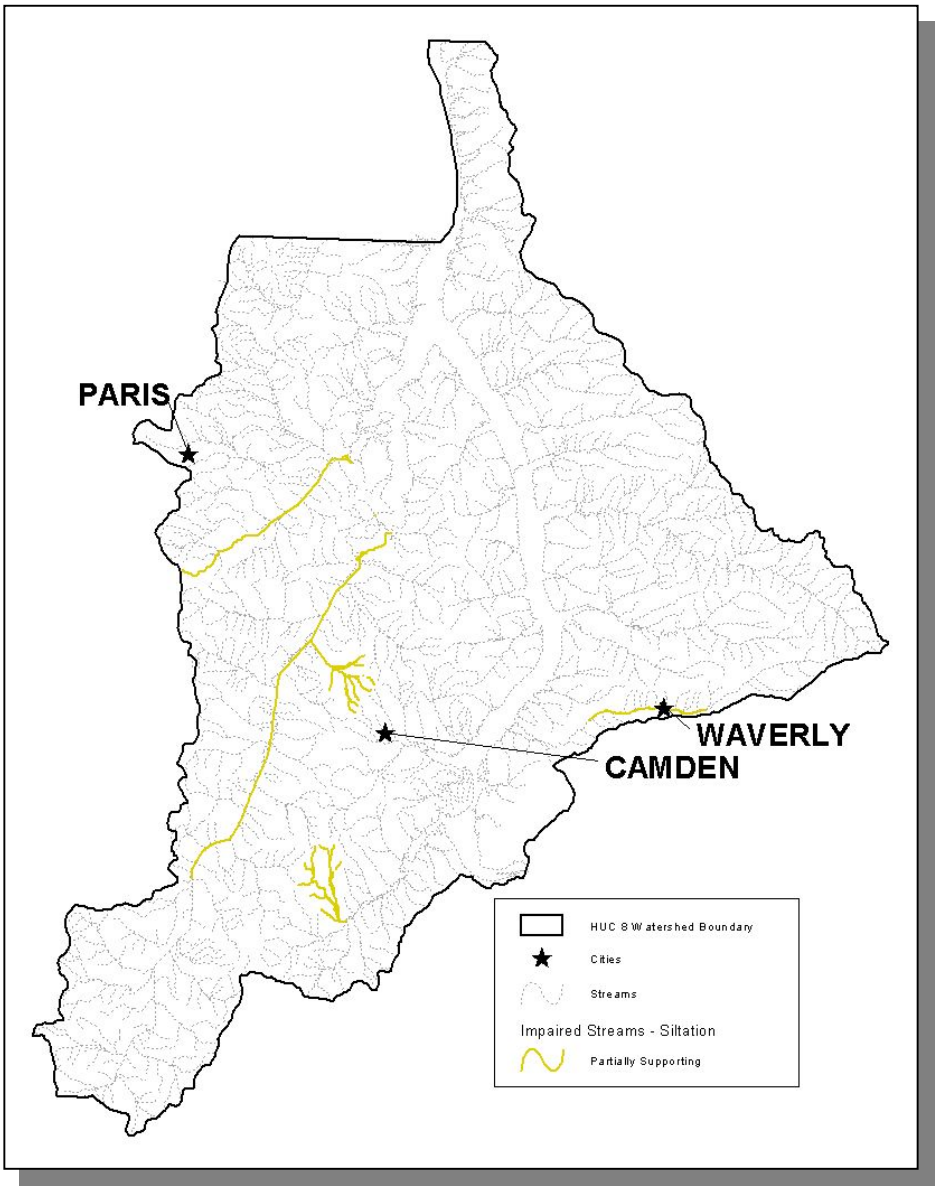

Figure 3-7c. Impaired Streams Due to Siltation in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

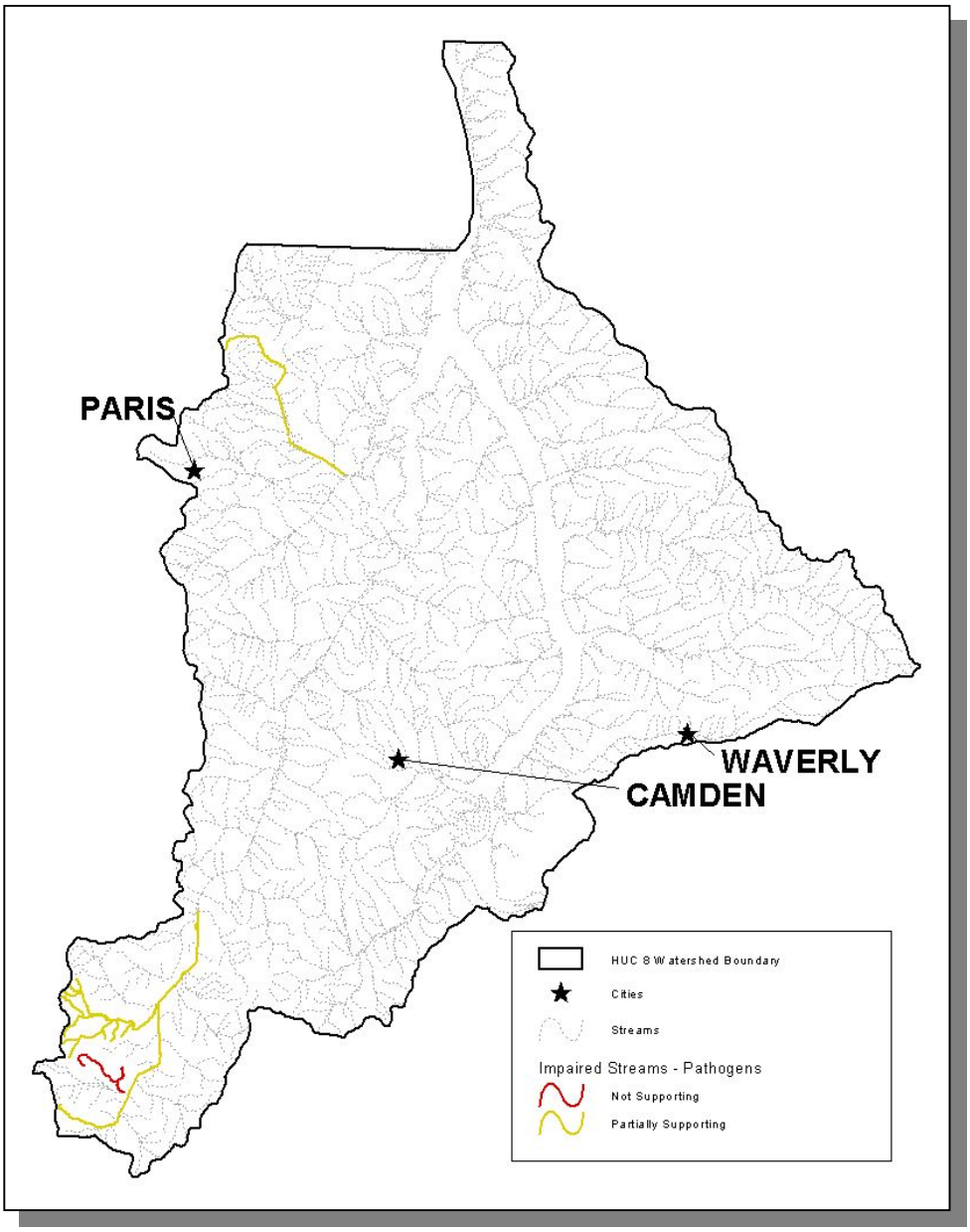

Figure 3-7d. Impaired Streams Due to Pathogens in the Tennessee Portion of the Tennessee Western Valley (KY Lake) Watershed. *Assessment data are based on the 2002 Water Quality Assessment. Locations of Camden, Paris, and Waverly are shown for reference. More information is provided in Appendix III.*

The listing of impaired waters that do not support designated uses (the 303(d) list) is traditionally submitted to EPA every two years. A copy of the most recent 303(d) list may be downloaded from: http://www.state.tn.us/environment/water.htm.

Since the year 2002, the 303(d) list is compiled by using EPA's ADB (Assessment Database) software developed by RTI (Research Triangle Institute). The ADB allows for a more detailed segmentation of waterbodies. While this results in a more accurate description of the status of water quality, it makes it difficult when comparing water quality assessments with and without using this tool. A more meaningful comparison will be between assessments conducted in Year 3 of each succeeding five-year cycle.

The ADB was used to create maps that illustrate water quality. These maps may be viewed on TDEC's homepage at http://www.state.tn.us/environment/water.htm,