

[Septic, agriculture grants available in Roseberry Creek Watershed](#)

[November 2, 2017 Shannon Carey N/E Knox County](#)



Tracy Jones of Knox County Stormwater Management

Failing septic systems can be difficult hurdles for country folks, often costing thousands of dollars to repair. Likewise, local farmers may see the benefit of fencing livestock out of the creek and just can't shoulder the cost up front.

But there's a grant program in place to help residents of the [Roseberry Creek Watershed](#) in Northeast Knox County fix septic and ag issues, and it's available through Knox County Stormwater Management. With a cost-share of 75 percent of the finished project, it can move these needed repairs from costly to affordable.

Roseberry Creek Watershed includes the runoff area that feeds into Roseberry Creek, starting on East Emory Road near Boruff Road and stretching past the west side of House Mountain, across Rutledge Pike into Shipetown, where it empties into the Holston River. It's listed as an impaired stream due to e coli and other bacteria, a designation that Tracy Jones of Knox County Stormwater Management says is at least partly due to failing septic systems and poor pasture practices for livestock.

She added that the area's geology may be contributing to septic system failure.

"It's a lot due to the poor infiltrative properties of the soil, and a lot of the area has a high water table or a low depth to bedrock," she said. "The point is to let the system percolate out into the ground."

Grant applicants for septic can use the grant to repair their existing septic systems, or if they are close enough to sewer access the grant can be used to hook into sewer. For agriculture, the grant can be used for creek-exclusion fencing, alternative water facilities, creek crossings, pasture-rotation fencing and more.

Mascot resident Greg Bates called the program a “godsend” for him and his family. The drainfield had filled up at his home on Roseberry Creek, and he’d had it pumped twice. With grant funds, a contractor diverted around the existing drainfield and dug a new one.

“It was good for me and good for the creek,” he said. “They were all just great.”

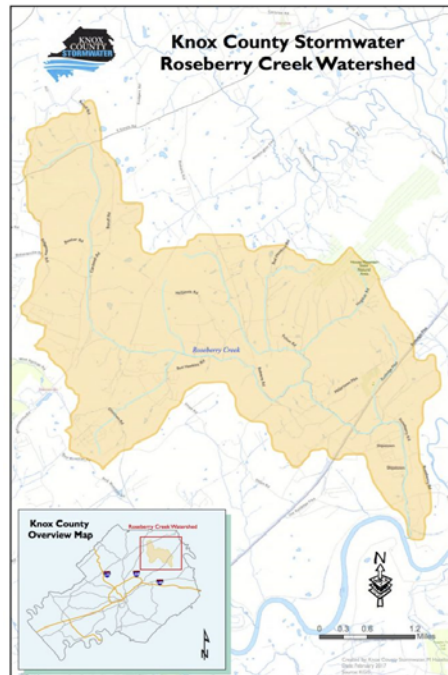
Washington Presbyterian Church in Corryton will also benefit from grant funds as they plan an expansion of their building to fit a growing congregation. Calvin Thompson of the church’s building and grounds maintenance committee said the expansion will include a fellowship hall and two bathrooms, and the grant will help the church hook into sewer service.

“It’s going to be an expensive endeavor to add onto the church as small as we are,” Thompson said. “This will just help defray some of the cost of the addition.”

The program is funded through a grant from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Knox County Stormwater has offered similar programs in Stock Creek Watershed and Bull Run Creek Watershed with great results, Jones said. Residents of Roseberry Creek Watershed can apply for funds by contacting Jones at Tracy.Jones@knoxcounty.org or 865-215-5811. Funds are limited, so those interested should apply as soon as possible.

Signs of a failing septic system include sewage backing up into the home, a foul smell near the tank or drain field, a spongy feeling in the grass above the drain field or tank, gurgling sounds in pipes and drains, or a patch of bright green or lush vegetation over the drain field.

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Roseberry Creek Watershed stretches from Corryton to Mascot in Northeast Knox County.