



THE HERITAGE OF BIG ROCK CREEK

Glaciers created the Big Rock Creek watershed topography 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. The retreat of these glaciers formed the hills, moraines, plains, and waters that existed when European settlers arrived after the Blackhawk wars in 1834.

At the time of the settlers' arrival, wet and dry prairies dominated the landscape, with concentrations of hardwood forests along the creeks. The watershed was inhabited by Pottawatomie, Fox and Sauk Indian tribes. The European and Native American settlements were generally along the Fox River, with Native Americans also moving to seasonal sites on the hills and prairies to the west. The Native American population was removed to west of the Mississippi River in the late 1830s.

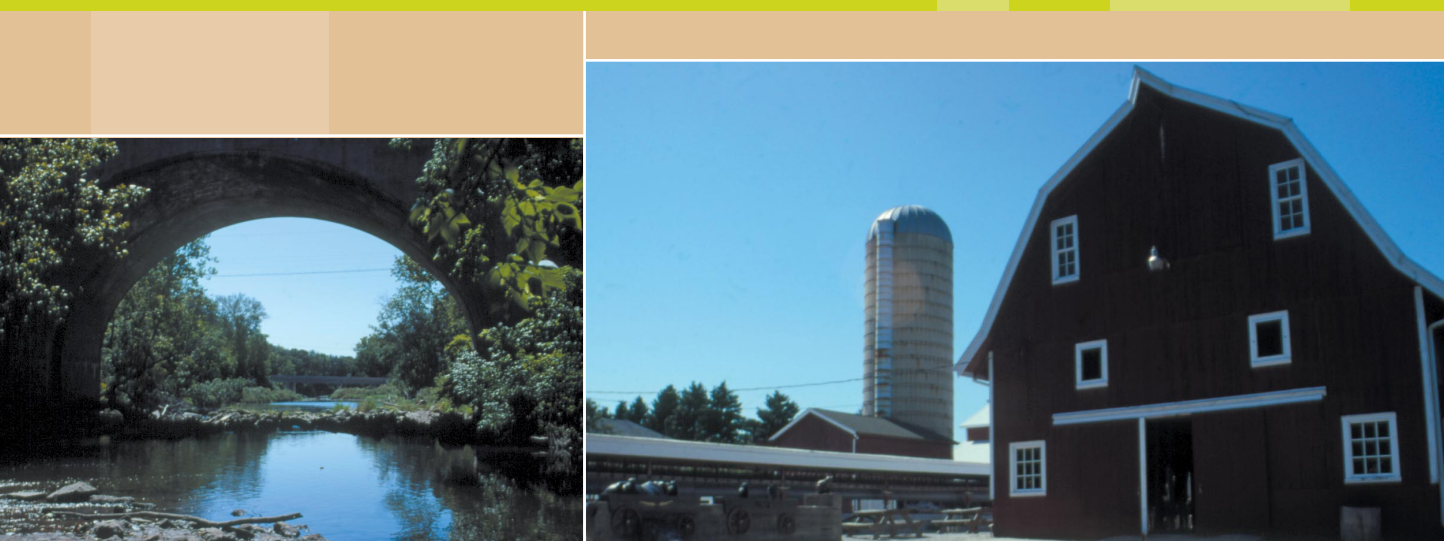
The population in the watershed continued to grow as new businesses and factories moved in.

By 1860, most of the roads that exist today were created and settlement occurred along them. This activity became more rapid after the Civil War. Settlements began to concentrate into towns and were subsequently platted, Big Rock

(1835), Kaneville (1836), Sandwich (1859), Plano (1865), Hinckley (1877), Sugar Grove (1895), and Troxel (1907). When the railroads extended into Kane and Kendall Counties dairy and crop farmers began to ship their products to market in that rapidly growing city built on a swamp, Chicago. The primary crops were wheat, oats and Indian corn.

In the 1920s the Big Rock Creek watershed was still very rural. Sugar Grove, with a population of about 160, consisted of stockyards, coal yards and cowboys driving cattle down Main Street.

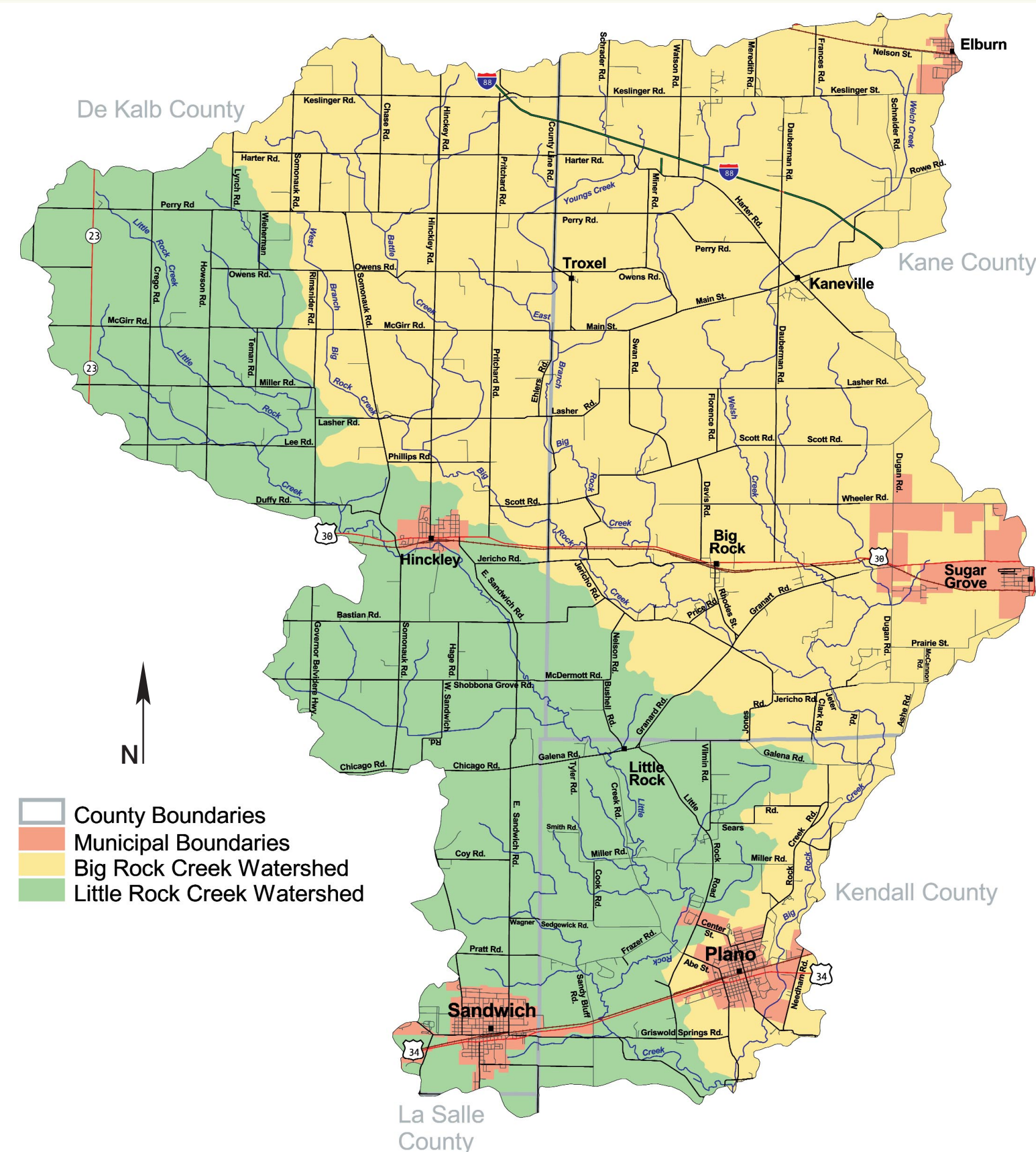
As demand for farm products grew, drainage districts were formed, ditches were dug and drain tiles laid to create more tillable acreage. The population in the watershed continued to grow as new businesses and factories moved in. Plano, where an early reaper was invented in the 1830s, was the center of the manufacturing growth.



MISSION STATEMENT:
To protect and preserve the resources, and promote the responsible stewardship of our Big Rock Creek Watershed.



BIG ROCK CREEK
WATERSHED



RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROTECT THE WATERSHED

WATERSHED RESIDENTS

- Maintain or plant native buffers along streams, ponds and wetlands to help prevent soil erosion, filter run-off and increase wildlife habitat.
- Use native plants to landscape your yard to allow more water to naturally soak into the ground to recharge our drinking supply.
- Cut back on lawn chemicals by reducing excessive lawn areas. Native or naturalized landscapes are generally much less costly to maintain since they do not require applications of fertilizers and pesticides, which have a negative impact on the environment.
- Participate in citizen monitoring programs such as Illinois Department of Natural Resources EcoWatch to increase your understanding of why a healthy environment is important to you. (See Sources of Watershed Information for contact.)
- Regularly inspect and maintain mechanical or septic systems to protect water quality in our streams.
- Prevent pollution from entering storm drains - they drain directly to the creek.
- Recycle/ properly dispose of household hazardous wastes, oil, and paint.

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

- Create affordable, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods that feature open space protection and are composed of mixed residential (e.g. multi-family with single family) and mixed use (e.g. commercial with residential) areas.
- Include ample natural buffers along streams, ponds and wetlands to protect water quality.
- Develop a sustainable means to maintain open, natural areas including detention areas with clear management guidelines.
- Design hydrologically sensitive stormwater detention areas in harmony with natural systems, planted with appropriate native vegetation to increase infiltration and filter stormwater.
- Employ conservation easements to permanently protect open space amenities.
- Wherever possible, retain water where it falls, treating the water as a resource, not discharging it as a waste product.
- Integrate sustainable land and water resource management into developed areas.

PUBLIC AGENCY STAFF

- Review zoning and ordinances to:
 - ✓ Promote livable, walkable community designs.
 - ✓ Encourage mixed use (e.g. commercial with residential) and mixed residential (e.g. multi-family with single family) developments.
 - ✓ Minimize impervious surfaces in new developments.
 - ✓ Promote native vegetation in new and existing developments.
 - ✓ Require the use of effective soil erosion controls for all construction.
 - ✓ Review land use plans to include greenways along all waterways to protect water quality and facilitate wildlife migration.
 - ✓ Review land use plans to maintain open space corridors between communities.
- Address environmental impacts of development at the watershed scale.
- Strictly enforce soil and erosion controls on construction sites.
- Implement alternative wastewater treatment options to handle future growth.
- Develop and support local water quality protection and enhancement programs.

FARMERS

- Use best management practices to protect water quality.
 - ✓ Plant and maintain native buffers along streams, ponds and wetlands.
 - ✓ Manage pasture lands to minimize soil and streambank erosion.
 - ✓ Use conservation tillage and contour farming to reduce soil erosion.
 - ✓ Establish grassed waterways where appropriate.
- Participate in cost-share programs like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to protect water quality and promote wildlife habitat.
- Develop a nutrient management plan to utilize nutrients efficiently and reduce runoff that can contaminate both ground and surface waters.
- Cap abandoned wells.
- Recycle/ properly dispose of hazardous waste, oils and paints.
- Consider conservation easements to preserve farmland.