

Section VII: Critical Areas

As previously discussed, the pollutant load calculations for these watersheds showed that the non-point sources within them are producing much greater amounts of the identified pollutants of concern for this plan than national averages for the current land uses would indicate. Therefore, critical areas have been identified based on the results of the stream reach survey, land use mapping, previous sampling and sampling conducted as part of this plan. The input of the steering committee was also taken into consideration for the delineation of critical areas. Figure 7.1 identifies the critical areas within the study area. A note of caution though, the sampling for this plan was very limited and a more extensive sampling program may be needed to confirm these findings and further isolate sources and critical areas.

Watershed 07120003030050

The critical areas identified in the Little Calumet River E-W Split watershed include the areas inside of the levee system currently being built by the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) and the natural areas surrounding the system. The area inside of the levee system will be protected from development based on the ownership of the land. The natural areas around the levee system were also identified to be part of the critical area by the steering committee so that structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) could be implemented to treat the water before reaching the levee system.

The natural areas along the Little Calumet River were the only areas to be identified as critical due to the highly urbanized state of this portion of the study area. The heavily populated area generates high pollutant loads but little space to implement structural BMPs.

Watershed 04040001040020

The ACOE levee system continues into the Little Calumet – Deep River Watershed to approximately Martin Luther King Blvd. in the City of Gary. The land within the levee system in this watershed is also included in the identified critical areas. The natural area located to the east of Martin Luther King Blvd. is also identified as being critical. This area includes Three Rivers County Park and Rooster Park inside the Lake Station boundaries.

The natural areas along the Little Calumet River were identified as critical areas due to the highly developed state of this portion of the watershed. The incorporated areas of Gary and Lake Station are both highly developed and leave little opportunity for structural BMPs to be implemented anywhere except current natural areas. The riparian buffer along Deep River was not identified as being critical by the steering committee because since there is currently a natural buffer in good working condition along the water body the committee thought it

best to focus the critical area delineation on areas that need improvement or prevention and not on maintaining areas.

The south eastern portion of this 14-digit HUC watershed is located in unincorporated Porter County. This is an area that is expected to see large population growth in the next 20 years, Figure 3.12. With housing developments already being planned and the expectation that more will be built the steering committee has identified this area as being critical so that preventive BMPs can be implemented and ordinances can be enforced.

Watershed 04040001040030

The land along the Portage-Burns Waterway in the Little Calumet – Willow Creek Watershed is mostly in a natural state with industrial sites being located on the northern edge of the watershed boundary. Due to the land use north of the area and the little urbanization along the river a buffer was used on both sides of the river for critical area identification. The critical area around the channelized portion of the Portage-Burns Waterway spans 700 meters to the north and 500 meters to the south. This combines for approximately 3,000 acres for implementation of various structural BMPs.

The unincorporated area in Porter County south of Lute Road is also identified as critical. The reasoning for this area being included in the critical area delineation is the same as the unincorporated area that it is next to in Porter County and is included in the Little Calumet – Deep River Watershed.

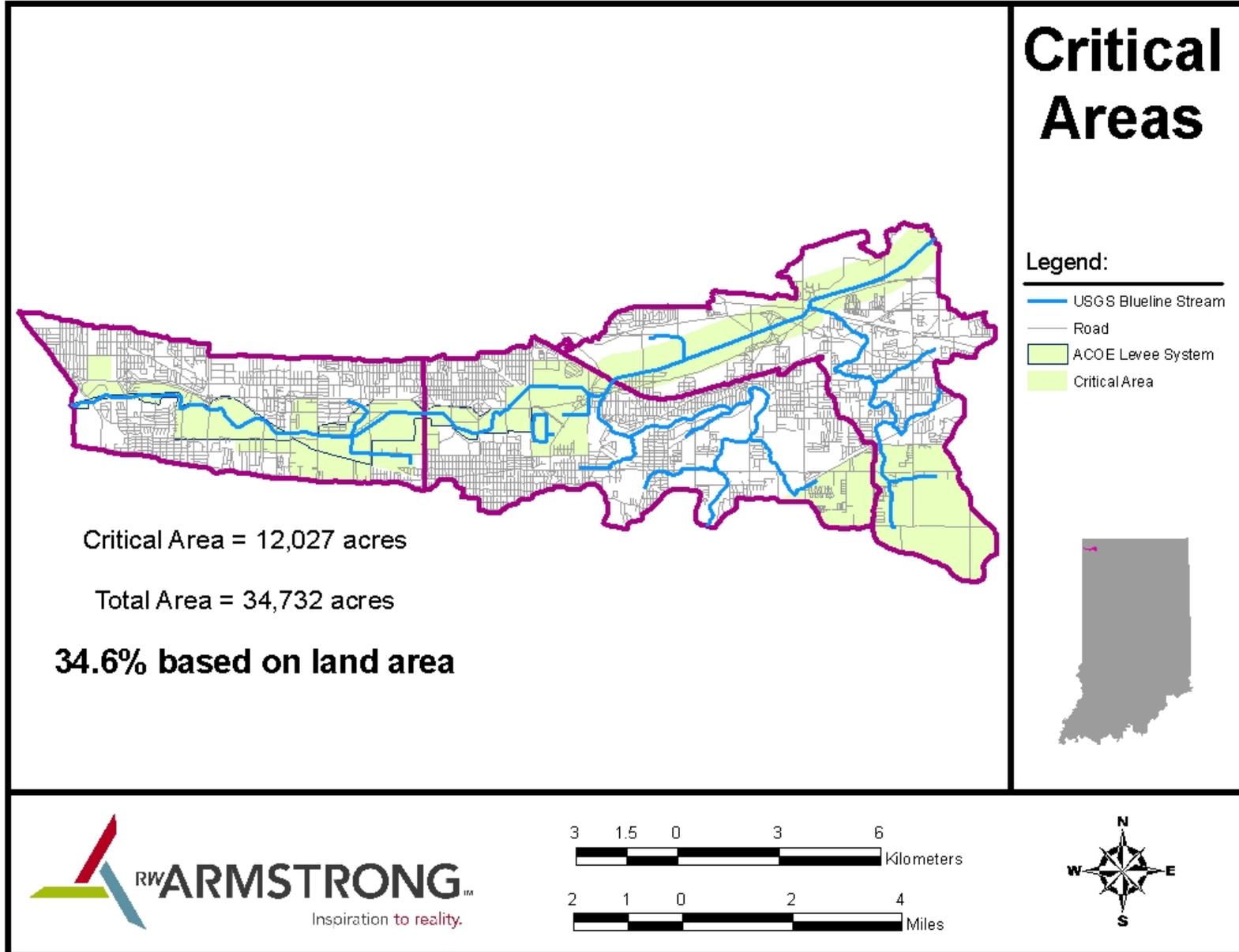


Figure 7.1: Critical areas delineated in the watershed.