

Early Action Projects To Reduce Sewer Overflows



The City of Mishawaka knows its future relies on a clean and healthy St. Joseph River.

The Mishawaka Riverwalk, now in its final phases of construction, is a cornerstone of the city's economic development efforts. When completed in 2009, the three-mile biking and walking trail will connect downtown Mishawaka to many neighborhoods and parks along the river.

Mishawaka's economy also benefits from hundreds of sport fishermen who visit each year to catch migratory salmon and trout at the foot of the Twin Branch Dam. The fishing is so good that the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has nicknamed the city "Fishawaka."

To protect this valuable resource, Mishawaka has spent \$90 million since 1990 to reduce sewer overflows by 85 percent and improve sewage treatment. This makes Mishawaka a state leader in reducing sewer overflows.

The city's investments to date include:

- An \$18 million expansion of the wastewater treatment plant in 1993 that increased the plant's wet-weather treatment capacity by 50 percent, reducing sewer overflows by a third;
- \$30 million to separate sewers in neighborhoods covering about 2,000 acres, reducing overflows by another 101 million gallons per year;
- \$42 million from 2004-08 to expand wet-weather capacity at the wastewater treatment plant from 24 to 42 million gallons per day, reducing overflows by an additional 53 million gallons per year;
- Another \$18.5 million to separate sewers in the Milburn Boulevard area, a project that began in 2007.



Mishawaka has worked closely with South Bend and Elkhart to protect the entire river. The cities formed a water-quality alliance and have received nearly \$200,000 in federal grants to develop a computer model of the river and its major tributaries. The model is helping the communities choose the most cost-effective pollution control measures for the river.

Although more improvements will be required in future years, Mishawaka will continue to work toward cost-effective solutions to a cleaner St. Joseph River.