

Spring Creek Embayment Pickwick Reservoir Intensive Basin Survey 2009

PICL-2: Spring Creek approx 1 mi upstream of confluence with TN River (Colbert Co 34.73944/-87.73083)

BACKGROUND

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) began monitoring lake water quality statewide in 1985, followed by a second statewide survey in 1989. In 1990, the Reservoir Water Quality Monitoring Program (now known as the Rivers and Reservoirs Monitoring Program (RRMP) was initiated by ADEM.

The current objectives of this program are to provide data that can be used to assess current water quality conditions, identify trends in water quality conditions and to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and water quality criteria. Descriptions of all RRMP monitoring activities are available in ADEM’s 2012 Monitoring Strategy (ADEM 2012).

In 2009, ADEM monitored the Spring Creek tributary embayment of Pickwick Reservoir as part of the intensive basin assessment of the Tennessee River under the RRMP. This site was selected using historical data and previous assessments. The purpose of this report is to summarize data collected in the Spring Creek embayment (PICL-2) during the 2009 growing season (Apr-Oct). This is the second intensive basin assessment of the Tennessee River since ADEM began sampling on a basin rotation. Monthly and/or mean concentrations of algal biomass/productivity [chlorophyll *a* (chl *a*); algal growth potential testing (AGPT)], sediment [total suspended solids (TSS)], and trophic state [Carlson’s trophic state index (TSI)] from 2009 were compared to ADEM’s 2003 data and established criteria.



Figure 1. Photo of Spring Creek at PICL-2

WATERSHED CHARACTERISTICS

Watershed land uses are summarized in Table 1. Spring Creek is classified as a *Fish & Wildlife (F&W)* stream located in the Interior Plateau ecoregion (71g). Based on the 2006 National Land Cover Dataset, land use within the 108 mi² watershed is mixed (Fig. 3). The lower portion of the watershed is predominantly agriculture and urban while the upper portion is mostly forest. As of October 1, 2013, ADEM has issued a total of 41 NPDES permits within the watershed. Twenty-three of those permits are located within 10 mi of the station (Fig. 2).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Spring Creek embayment at PICL-2 is located just west of Sheffield/Tuscumbia, AL. Spring Creek has a mean bottom depth of 4.8 m (Table 2) at the sampling location and is dominated by filamentous algae in the spring and submersed vegetation like *Hydrilla sp.* and parrot’s feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) much of the summer.

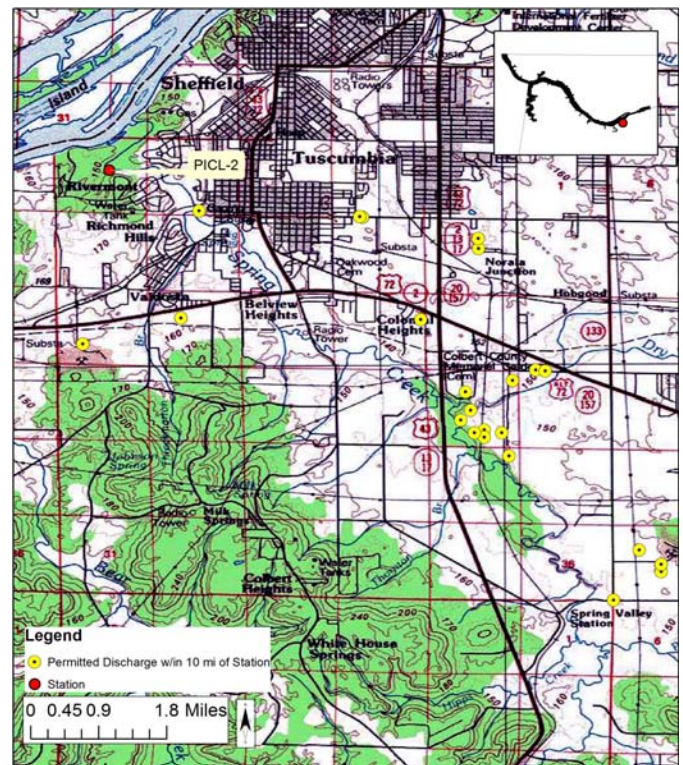


Figure 2. Map of Spring Creek Embayment of Pickwick Reservoir. Though additional permits may occur in the watershed (Table 1), only permitted discharges within 10 miles upstream of the station are displayed on the map.

METHODS

Water quality assessments were conducted at monthly intervals, April-October. All samples were collected, preserved, stored, and transported according to procedures in the ADEM Field Operations Division Standard Operating Procedures (ADEM 2009), Surface Water Quality Assurance Project Plan (ADEM 2008a), and Quality Management Plan (ADEM 2008b).

Mean growing season chl *a*, TSI, and TSS were calculated to evaluate water quality conditions. Monthly concentrations of these parameters were graphed with ADEM's previously collected data to help interpret the 2009 results. Carlson's TSI was calculated from the corrected chl *a* concentrations.

Table 1: Summary of Watershed PICL-2

Basin		Tennessee R
Drainage Area (mi ²)		108
Ecoregion ^a		71g
% Land use		
Open Water		<1%
Developed	Open Space	8%
	Low Intensity	4%
	Medium Intensity	1%
	High Intensity	<1%
Barren Land		<1%
Forest	Deciduous Forest	22%
	Evergreen Forest	4%
	Mixed Forest	4%
Shrub/Scrub		8%
Herbaceous		2%
Hay/Pasture		29%
Cultivated Crops		13%
Woody Wetlands		3%
# NPDES Permits ^b		TOTAL 41
Construction Stormwater		10
Mining		3
Small Mining		1
Industrial General		17
Industrial Individual		4
MS4		1
Municipal Individual		3
Underground Injection Control		2

a. Interior Plateau

b. # NPDES permits downloaded from ADEM's NPDES Management System database, Oct 1, 2013.

oligotrophic conditions in September (Fig. 4).

The mean growing season TSS value was lower in 2009 than 2003 (Fig. 4). Monthly TSS concentrations were highest in June and low most other months sampled.

AGPT results show that PICL-2 was phosphorus limited in both 2003 and 2009 (Table 3). The mean maximum standing crop (MSC) value from 2009 was above the 5.0 mg/L value that Raschke and Schultz (1987) defined as protective of reservoir and lake systems.

The DO concentration in the PICL-2 station was above the ADEM criteria limit of 5.0 mg/l at 5.0 ft (1.5 m) in all months (ADEM Admin. Code R. 335-6-10-.09) (Fig. 5).

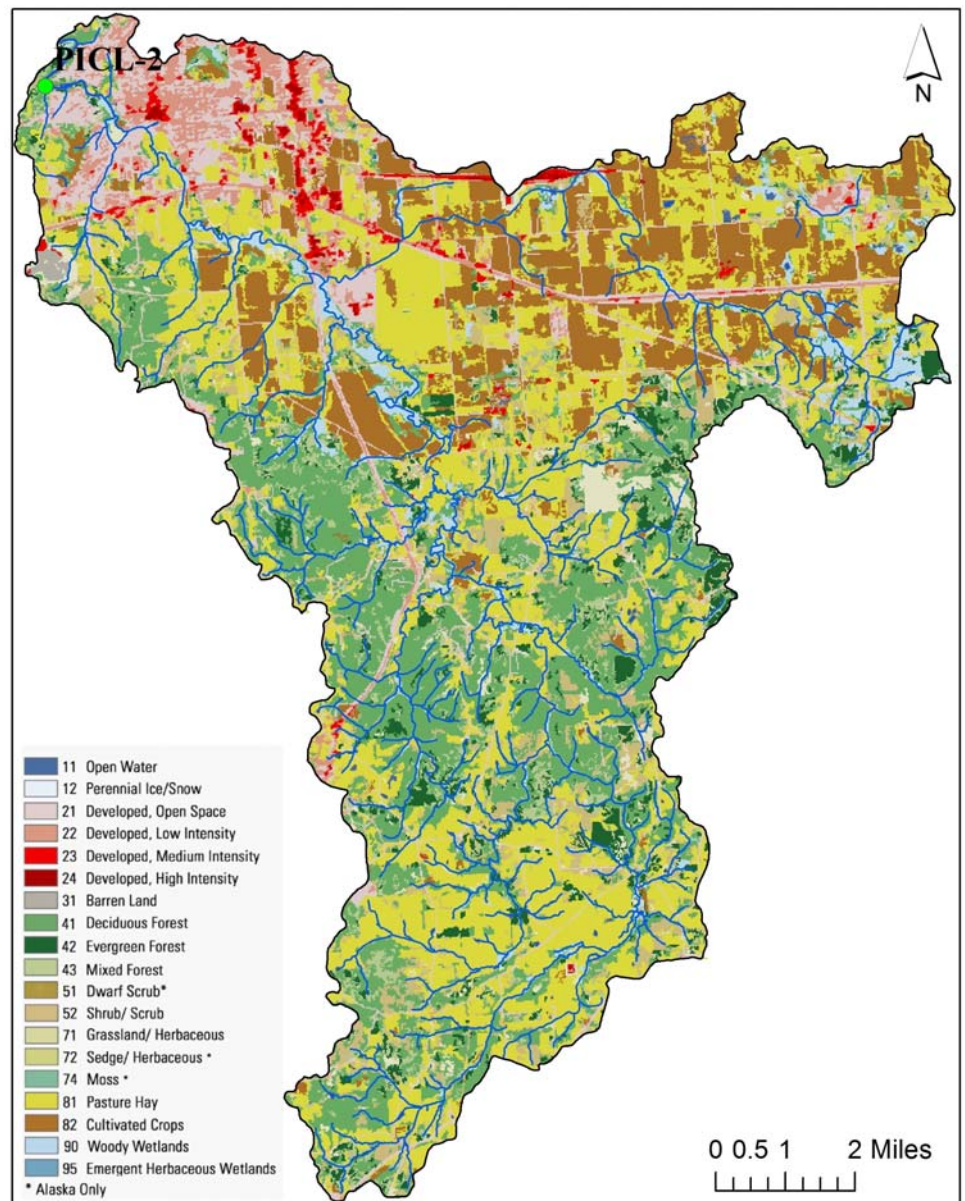


Figure 3. Land use within the Spring Creek watershed at PICL-2.

RESULTS

The following discussion of results is limited to those parameters which directly affect trophic status or parameters which have established criteria. Results of all water chemistry analyses are presented in Table 2. The axis ranges of the graphs in Fig. 4-5 were set to maximum values reservoir-wide so all embayment reports on the same reservoir could be compared.

In 2009, the growing season mean chl *a* value was higher than 2003 (Fig. 4). Monthly chl *a* concentrations sharply peaked in July.

Mean TSI was eutrophic in 2009, an increase from oligotrophic status in 2003. Monthly TSI in Spring Creek increased to highly eutrophic conditions April-July then decreased to

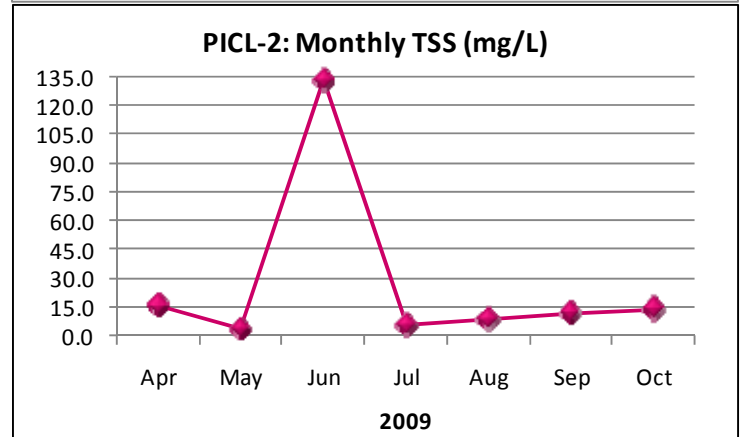
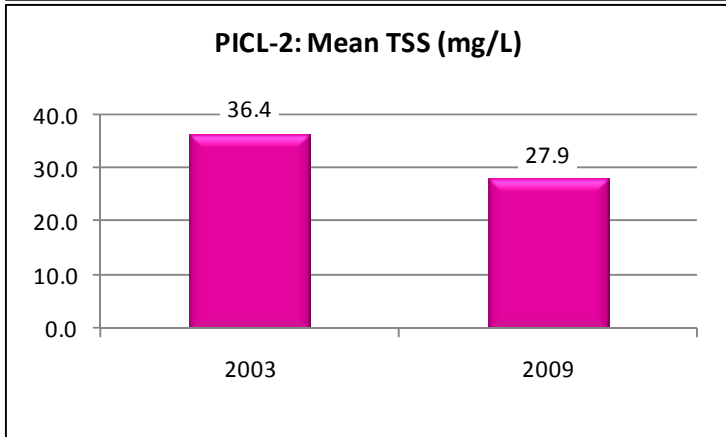
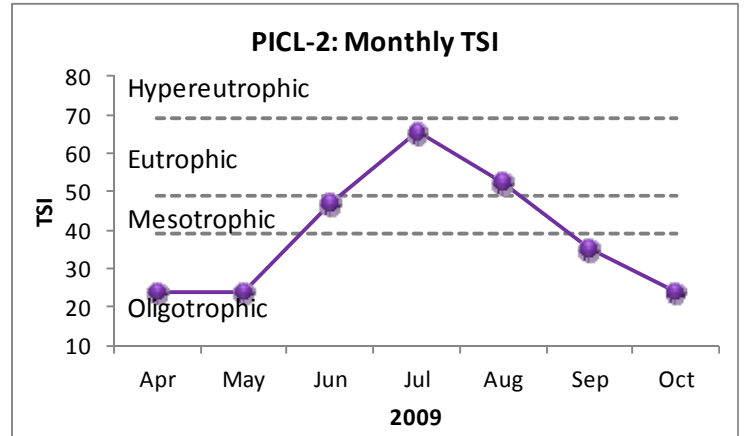
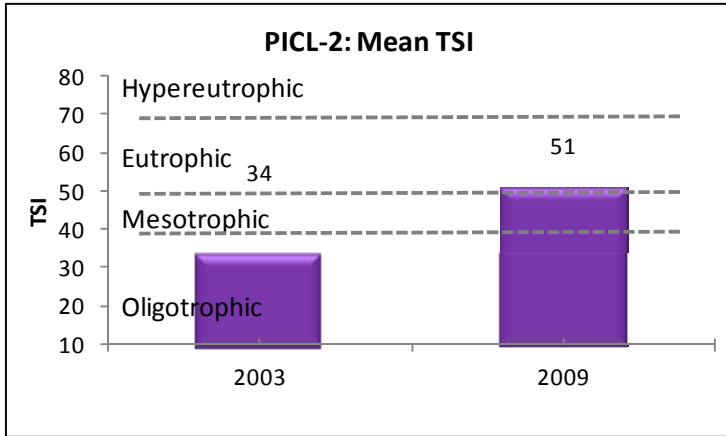
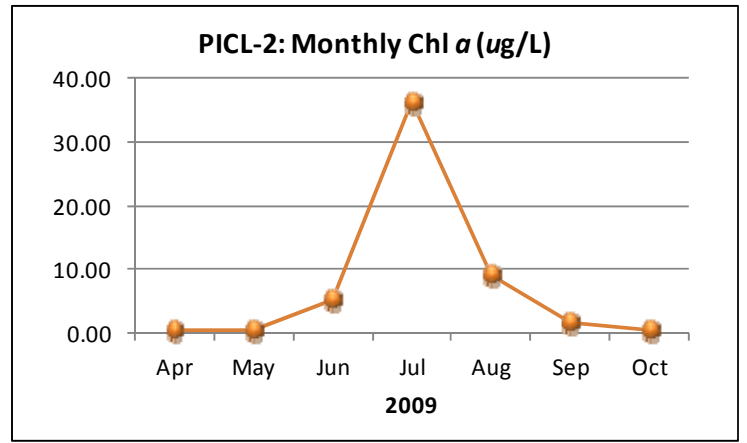
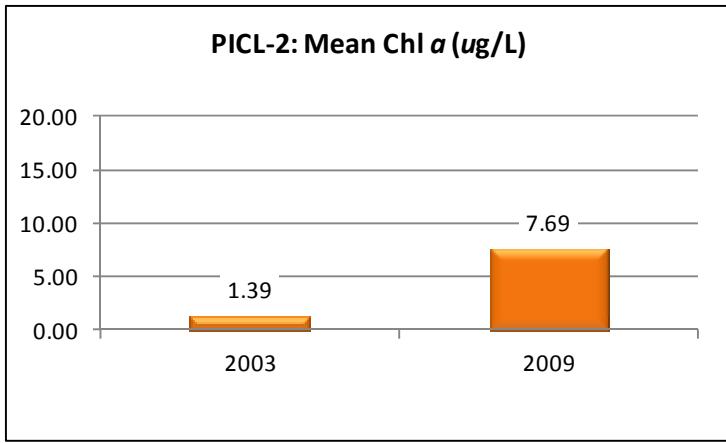


Figure 4. Mean growing season (2003-2009) and monthly (April-October, 2009) chl a , TSI, and TSS measured in the Spring Creek embayment of Pickwick Reservoir. Vertical axis ranges are set to maximum values reservoir-wide for comparability between embayment reports within the same reservoir.

Table 2. Summary of water quality data collected April-October, 2009. Minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) values calculated using minimum detection limits. Median (Med), Mean, and standard deviations (SD) values were calculated by multiplying the MDL by 0.5 when results were less than this value.

PICL-2	N	Min	Max	Med	Mean	SD
Physical						
Turbidity (NTU)	7	4.3	185.0	10.3	35.6	66.0
Total Dissolved Solids (mg/L)	7	100.0	217.0	179.0	169.4	45.4
Total Suspended Solids (mg/L)	7	4.0	134.0	12.0	27.9	46.1
Hardness (mg/L)	3	93.0	159.0	122.0	124.7	33.1
Alkalinity (mg/L) ^J	7	45.0	200.0	128.0	129.9	54.7
Photic Zone (m)	7	0.75	3.46	2.95	2.65	0.94
Secchi (m)	7	0.18	1.41	0.89	0.95	0.44
Bottom Depth (m)	7	4.00	5.17	4.79	4.78	0.38
Chemical						
Nitrate+Nitrite Nitrogen (mg/L) ^J	7	< 0.003	14.023	2.866	3.968	4.979
Dissolved Reactive Phosphorus (mg/L) ^J	7	0.011	0.109	0.075	0.068	0.035
CBOD-5 (mg/L) ^J	7	< 1.0	2.6	0.5	1.0	0.8
Chlorides (mg/L)	7	3.2	13.0	4.3	7.0	4.1
Biological						
Chlorophyll a (ug/L)	7	< 1.00	36.30	1.60	7.69	13.03
Fecal Coliform (col/100 mL) ^J	3	11	310	15	112	172

J= one or more of the values is an estimate; N= # samples.

Table 3. Algal growth potential test results (expressed as mean MSC dry weights of *Selenastrum capricornutum* in mg/L) and limiting nutrient status. MSC values below 5 mg/L are considered to be protective in reservoirs and lakes (Raschke and Schultz 1987).

Year	Mean MSC	Limiting Nutrient
8/19/2003	1.16	PHOSPHORUS
8/19/2009	8.09	PHOSPHORUS

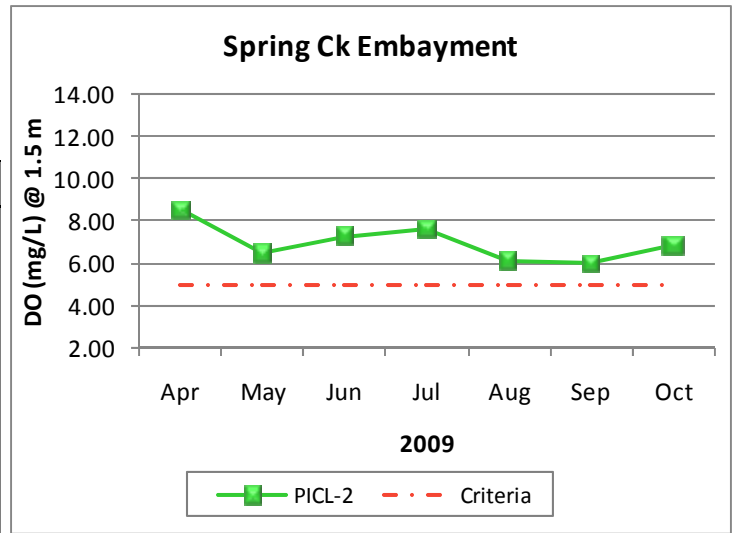


Figure 5. Monthly DO concentrations at 1.5 m (5 ft) for Spring Creek embayment station of Pickwick Reservoir collected April-October 2009. ADEM Water Quality Criteria pertaining to reservoir waters require a DO concentration of 5.0 mg/L at this depth.

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