The clarity and appearance of the water in the Little Cannon River is fair, with clarity quickly diminished during a rain event. This stream carries a significant sediment load and is a major contributor to the sediment impairment listing in the Cannon River. The wide range of scores for Recreational Suitability further reflects this with poor scores immediately following a rain event and excellent scores during dryer conditions (Table 1). Definitions for Appearance and Recreational Suitability are provided in Table 2. Escherichia coli (E. coli) data are described further on the following page.
**E. coli bacteria in the Little Cannon River**

The open black circles and the black dotted line show the single sample values collected by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership and the single sample standard that the Environmental Protection Agency has set, respectively. Single samples above this dotted black line indicate that unsafe levels of disease-causing pathogens may be present in the water.

The red circles and the red dashed line indicate the geometric mean calculated by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership and the Environmental Protection Agency geometric mean standard, respectively. The geometric mean helps to dampen the effect of very high or very low numbers, thus reducing bias and allowing for meaningful statistical results. Even so, the geometric mean is still above the EPA standard for safe recreation. Additionally, this is a 90-day geometric mean which means it is quite conservative.

**What is E. coli and why monitor it?**

*Escherichia coli* (E. coli) bacteria are an indicator of fecal contamination and used by the Environmental Protection Agency to evaluate public health risk in fresh waters. High levels suggest that disease-causing pathogens may be present.

The *E. coli* data from 2011 and 2012 show that the single sample values are widespread; both over and within the single sample standard. During both years, the geometric mean was above the geometric mean standard which suggests that there may be disease-causing pathogens above the level that the Environmental Protection Agency has set to protect public health.

“**What can I do to help?**”

“**Where can I learn more?**”

“**How can I monitor a stream or lake near me?**”

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