



# STATE OF THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER WATERSHED 2018

## How clean is the river?

Before jumping on the water, this is the number one question people ask the French Broad Riverkeeper. This report is an answer to that question – it takes water quality data from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, the Volunteer Water Information Network, the Stream Monitoring Information Exchange, and MountainTrue and synthesizes it into an easy-to-read summary of the state of the river.

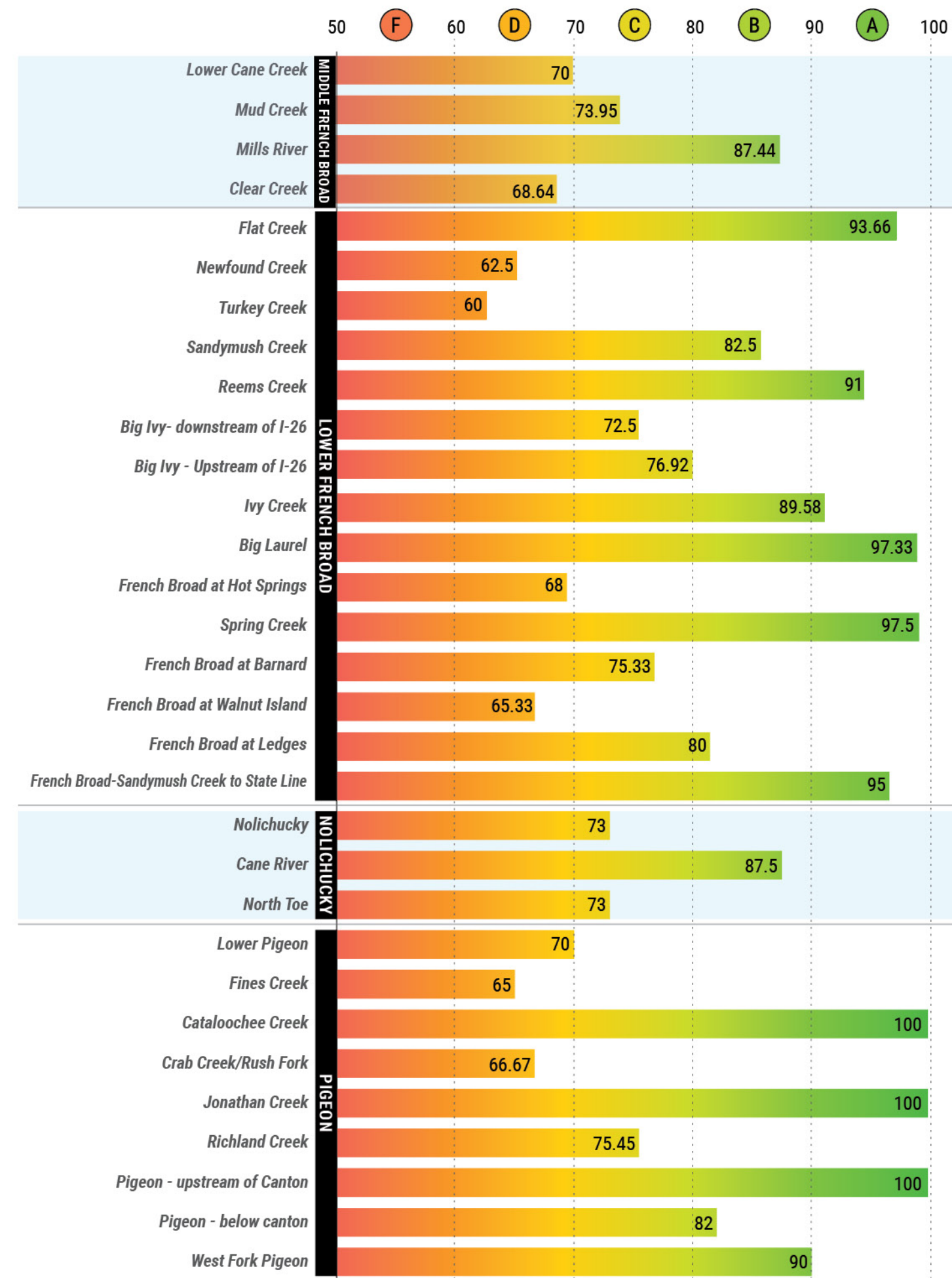
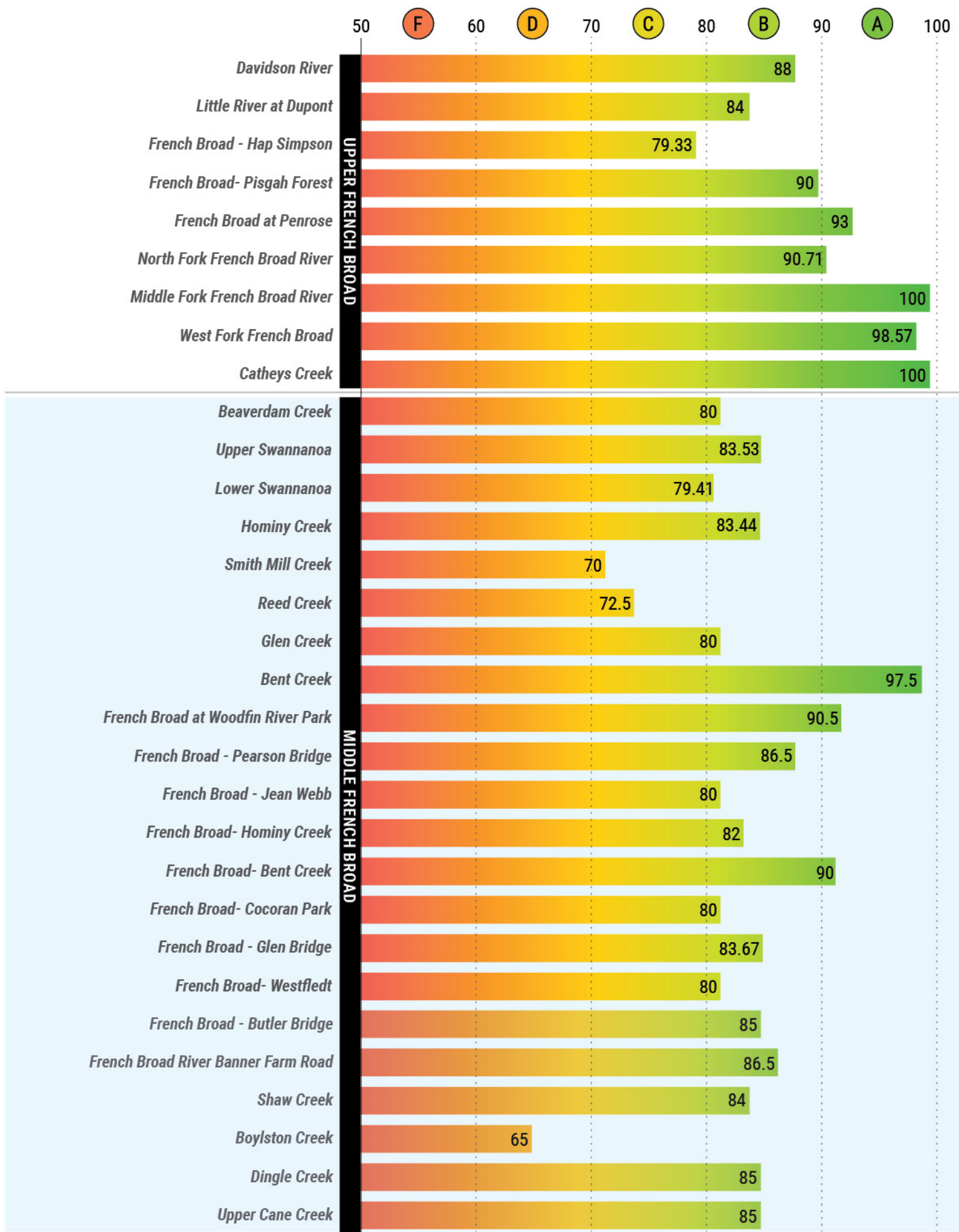
We've come a long way, but as this report shows, improvements are still needed. On the positive side: 66% of our streams are rated an A or B, with B-rated streams accounting for the largest portion of streams, at 37%. That's a dramatic improvement from decades past, but still 34% of our streams are rated as C or D.

The cleanest waterways, such as Cathey's Creek, Cataloochee Creek, and the upper Pigeon River are all well protected from pollution. Most of their watersheds are located in protected public lands and

lack many agricultural, developmental or industrial pollution sources. The dirtiest streams, such as Turkey Creek, Newfound Creek, Clear Creek and Fines Creek, lack many land-use protections and are heavily impacted by bad agriculture practices and development.

Sediment and bacteria pollution are the most common sources of impairment to our waterways. Sediment pollution is caused by runoff from construction sites and agricultural operations, as well as eroding stream banks, while bacteria pollution comes from agricultural runoff, sewage leaks, and faulty wastewater treatment plants. The French Broad Riverkeeper has volunteer programs and Smartphone apps to address these concerns.

If you're interested in helping continue the improvements of the French Broad River, join us! You can find volunteer opportunities and more information on the sources of this data at [mountaintrue.org](http://mountaintrue.org).



# French Broad Watershed



These streams have excellent water quality, with low pollution levels and healthy aquatic insect and fish populations.



These streams have good water quality, but have some pollution inputs. The aquatic life and fish population is mostly healthy.



These streams have average water quality. There are some concerns about pollution levels and in general the aquatic life and fish populations are not thriving.



These streams have below average quality. Pollution is a concern and aquatic life and fish populations are not as healthy as they should be.



These streams have poor water quality. Pollution levels are often high and aquatic life and fish populations are not healthy or widespread.