

Bull Run (Santee Branch) Sub-Watershed Investigation (Saturday, April 12, 2008, from 1-4 pm)

(Participating Stream Watch Committee Team members: Steve Schreiner, Teddy Betts and Betsy McMillion).

On Saturday, April 12, 2008, FPVHG stream team members conducted a reconnaissance of Bull Run (Santee Branch) in Catonsville, Maryland. In addition to the FPVHG stream members, 3 Catonsville neighbors who live near the Bull Run watershed joined us. EC and CW have signed up as stream watchers for different sections of the area of stream that we have investigated, and all have participated in past stream cleanups in the Catonsville area.

A section of stream that we originally thought was part of Bull Run is referred to the "Santee Branch" which appears in the Patapsco State Park "Maryland Trail Guide." CW and EC have adopted this section of stream and have hiked upstream to Hilton Terrace (towards South Rolling Road). The Santee Branch flows between Bloomsbury/Patapsco Woods, on the western side of CCBC-Catonsville Campus, where it eventually flows into the Patapsco River.

Our recon began at the dead end of Newburg Avenue (ADC Map 41 C-6). We believe the headwaters begin at Ridge Road, with an outfall at McCurley Avenue. In this area the Gabian baskets appear to be in good shape. The stream flows through the Oak Forest Community, then to the Patapsco Woods community. This section of the stream has high runoff volume and shows erosion where there are no natural rocks. As a result, the stream width is wider because of the runoff. The section of stream from McCurley Avenue to Newburg Avenue would be a good section for a scout troop or younger volunteers to conduct a stream cleanup to remove floatables and other litter along the stream banks. (ADC Map 41 C-5)

In the section of the Santee Branch that runs through the west end of CCBC Catonsville campus property (near the Athletic fields and Parking Area 6), several large pieces of concrete have been dumped. As a result, this has displaced the erosion further downstream. There are several fallen trees across the stream as a result of erosion. It is essential that storm water be controlled as the wide channel is totally washed out. (ADC Map 41 D-6)

In Parking Lot 3 at CCBC Catonsville Campus, there is a pathway near Central Receiving & Central Services Building where there is a large amount of bulk trash that needs to be removed (i.e., pallets, couch, netting and paint ball paraphernalia). It would be possible to use the grassy easement to remove the trash with a pickup truck. The entry point would be near the Central Receiving Building. We observed that many trees in this area are being strangled by tree vines and recommend that vines be clipped to help save trees. In this same area, there is also a nature trail, which would be an appropriate place for Baltimore County to stabilize. Also, near the outfall, there should be an infiltration trench or other control structure installed. CCBC is only a major source of runoff during storm events when runoff from the western parking areas picks up all the trash, washing it down some (eroding) storm gullies to the stream. Other sources of runoff within CCBC end up in Bull Run and then into the Soapstone Branch.

The last entry point was near the baseball field. (ADC Map 41 D-7) There is orange fencing where severe erosion has occurred on campus, which has resulted in a significant drop-off. We have also observed a bike path with an eroded trail. There is quite a bit of down cutting in this area.

In the recently built Fox Hill Farms town home community, the channel is in good condition due to storm water retrofits in place.

The last area of the stream visited was in Patapsco State Park, adjacent to the St. Gabriel's Retreat House and All Saints Convent. In this area there appears to be remnants of an old mill dam and old sediment deposits that were behind that dam. The stream has down-cut through that sediment in this area. Santee Branch flows south of this convent where it flows into the Patapsco River. (ADC Map 41 C-9)

CW, our stream watcher, has observed that during heavy rainstorms, flooding appears at the Gary Drive and Rolling Road (Route 166) junction, and appears to be the drainage basin for the stream. (ADC Map 41 D-5)

Recommendations

Baltimore County

- Work with CCBC Catonsville Campus to install storm water management controls to prevent further damage to the channel.
- Rectify downed trees near the CCBC athletic fields and parking lot 6, causing severe erosion downstream.
- Restoration of a bike path to prevent further erosion.
- Install storm water retrofit to prevent the flooding problem that occurs at the junction of Gary Drive and Rolling Road (Route 166) during heavy rainstorms.

FPVHG

- Schedule a group cleanup in the stream section from McCurley Avenue to Newburg Avenue (ADC Map 41 C-5)
- Educate residents in the Oak Forest community about the use of rain gardens and/or rain barrels (ADC Map 41 C-5).
- Schedule a group cleanup at CCBC Catonsville Campus near Parking Lot 3 and the Central Receiving & Central Services Building to remove large junk items from watershed.