

## Herbert Run – Halethorpe Train Station/Hollins Ferry Road Sub-Watershed Investigation (Saturday, April 25, 2009)

Participating Stream Watch Committee Team members: Kit Valentine, Betsy McMillion, Teddy Betts and Lee Moser.

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, an investigation was made along a section of Herbert Run off Southwestern Boulevard, near the Halethorpe MARC Train Station parking lot. This investigation was based on information received from our stream watcher, Lee Moser, who was concerned about the amount of trash and debris in this section of stream, bank stabilization and sanitary sewer system issues.

The stream watch team walked an estimated one-mile section of Herbert Run beginning at Southwestern Boulevard, near the southern section of the Halethorpe MARC Train Station parking lot (ADC Map 42 A-9). This stream runs through an industrial area, owned primarily by CSX, Baltimore County and the State of Maryland, mainly because of nearby highways and parkland. Our recon began under the exit ramp onto the eastside of Southwestern Boulevard. ATV traffic and a large volume of floatable trash (i.e., trash that was washed down the nearby storm drains) were evident. Little stream life and/or wildlife were evident along this area. The observed Gabian baskets at selected locations appear to be working well to stabilize the stream banks.

Further downstream, significant erosion was evident despite the concrete armoring and/or Gabian baskets used. This area showed signs of a possible sewer structure leaking with gray colored water (GPS coordinates 39.23100; 076.69182). Baltimore County Utilities needs to be contacted for further investigation. In this same area, the Gabian baskets are functioning, however, some of the baskets hanging along the stream banks are in need of repair. Storm water coming off the Southwestern Boulevard Bridge flows down a pipe, which has significantly eroded the hillside adjacent to the bridge pier.

Walking further downstream, there is significant erosion apparent along both stream banks. Due to the large volume of trash in the stream (i.e., bottles, cans, plastic bags, tires and other large embedded items in the stream and stream banks), a group cleanup event is planned for the summer and fall 2009.

We observed mostly sand and fine gravel in the streambed. One stream strider was observed, however, no other evidence of stream life was apparent. There was also evidence of deer tracks, presumably browsing near the water and bed-down areas.

A channel made from riprap discharges from an older Baltimore County detention pond facility (estimated to be approximately 20-30 years old) in this area where runoff slowly discharges into the stream. There is no vegetation along the stream banks in this area.

Near the viaduct (i.e., CSX stone bridge), we observed a sewer valve manhole which is badly eroding away from the stream bank, most likely caused by heavy water flow (GPS coordinates 39.22879 76.69019). Inside the viaduct, the stream channel has been partially filled with sediment (sand) on both sides of sewer pipe, although passable (with caution) on the concrete bottom. Although the channel is still working, the concrete floor/bottom and stonewalls are deteriorating and may cause increased flooding and structural problems in the future.

Further downstream, a piece of leftover sewer construction debris is apparent along the streambed. Also, near a large pond at the west end of Hollins Ferry Road, algae bloom is evident, especially near the viaduct. Construction work for the installation of the new sewer line has greatly altered the watershed area since our last recon off of Hollins Ferry Road. Trees and vegetation were removed to create an access road for construction vehicles. Although most of the junk and trash were removed, even with the silt fence, the natural habitat has been disturbed. There is evidence of heavy ATV traffic in the construction right-of-way. Trees or other vegetation should be planted if Baltimore County chooses to fully restore this area.

In the area near the Route 895 Bridge, there is little indication of erosion. Approximately 50 yards before Herbert Run flows into the Patapsco River (near the high voltage line), a temporary bridge was put in as a pipe support during construction. The pipes have been removed, but the temporary bridge is still in place.

Our recon ended at the southwest end of Hollins Ferry Road. Photos of this recon can be viewed at <http://patapscofriend.myphotoalbum.com> under the album titled "4.25.09 Herbert Run Recon – Halethorpe near Southwest Boulevard."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Baltimore County:

- repair broken Gabian Baskets (GPS coordinates 39.23100; 076.69182)
- investigate gray water discharge (GPS coordinates 39.23100; 076.69182)
- investigate erosion downstream
- inspect sewer valve (GPS coordinates 39.22879 76.69019)

FPVHG:

- schedule a future cleanup along this area of stream
- report suspected sewer overflow problem to Baltimore County Utilities – completed.

Report eroded sewer structures to Baltimore County Utilities – completed.