



SAVE LITTLE PIMMIT RUN

Fact Sheet
January 16, 2008

For more information, check our web page savelittlepimmitrun.org

Save Little Pimmit Run is a local watershed group recently formed to protect, preserve and restore Little Pimmit Run, a small stream which arises in Arlington County, Virginia, joins Pimmit Run in Fairfax County and enters the Potomac River in the Potomac Gorge just below Chain Bridge. Save Little Pimmit Run will advocate for implementation of comprehensive, EPA compliant stormwater and sewer management practices for the Pimmit Run watershed.

FACTS ABOUT LITTLE PIMMIT RUN

- Little Pimmit Run has been classified as “impaired” stream by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in 2006.
- In a letter in 2007, FEMA deemed Little Pimmit Run to have “hazardous velocity”.
- In the last MS4 Stormwater Management Permit Review conducted in 2001, Arlington County recognized the need to improve management practice in the “Watershed Management Plan”. Specifics actions proposed:
 - prevention of further increases in flow rate and volume of stormwater run off;
 - reducing stormwater pollution, especially sediment, nutrients and bacteria;
 - stabilizing eroded stream channels;
 - preventing further degradation of instream and riparian habitat;
 - maintaining diversity of the macro and invertebrate community;
 - expanding Stream Valley Park; and
 - improving aesthetic conditions of Little Pimmit Run.
- There have been multiple flooding events along the Little Pimmit in recent years. Some floodings have created sewage backup in the homes along the stream bank.
- The problems at Little Pimmit Run are not just stormwater management concerns. There is active, repeated sewer related problems which must be addressed.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Citizens involved in Save Little Pimmit Run have identified the following specific concerns which must be addressed by the upcoming Planning Process in order to take meaningful actions to protect, preserve and restore the watershed.

1. **Danger** from flash flooding:
 - Many of our neighborhood children and families use the stream for recreation and exploration, but they are unaware of the rapid and threatening rise of water with as little as a couple of inches of rainfall.
 - Loss of property and real estate near the stream has occurred, including cars, yard furniture and outbuildings.
2. **Water quality** is adversely affected from flooding and erosion:
 - There is incursion of sewage into the stream when the sewer pipes are overloaded with stormwater runoff from ground water tie-ins and when stormwater overflows the banks

- and into the sewer system from above.
 - Soil erosion has expanded the width and depth of the stream, at an increasingly rapid rate, undercutting walls and washing down large boulders from their protective location along the banks.
 - There is an observed increase in runoff from roadways and parking lots as more impervious surfaces are built. Less land remains to filter this polluted runoff before it enters the stream.
3. The **scouring of the stream bed** eliminates the natural habitat for the American eel, small fish, salamanders, beneficial snakes, and local nesting mallards and wood ducks.
 4. **Erosion** exacerbates the loss of tree canopy and surrounding vegetation due the washing away of the soil base.
 5. The **Resource Protection Area (RPA) and Chesapeake Bay Agreement (CBA)** limits actions of private landholders along the stream. The County's inaction to stop on-going serious streambed erosion is in effect a taking of private land.
 6. Recent road and culvert “improvements” are **pushing stormwaters and the related problems downstream** into Arlington neighborhoods, Fairfax County, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.
 7. It appears Arlington County may be **repeating the mistakes** made concerning Four Mile Run, which are now costing unknown amounts to restore.
 8. **Out-of-date engineering** is not taking into account the drainage pipes, infill development and impervious surfaces added throughout the watershed since the original Little Pimmit Run study was done.
 9. **No promised County** initiatives as detailed in the 2001 “Watershed Management Plan” have been implemented **to divert, retain and filter runoff such as**
 - Removing groundwater tie-ins to the sewer system;
 - Actively encouraging / providing rain barrels and rain gardens;
 - Adding filtration and retention systems under parks, new construction, playing fields and parking lots; and
 - Securing of federal and state grants for stream restoration as well as support for the local watershed groups along the Little Pimmit and Pimmit Run.
 10. There is **no consistent monitoring of the watershed**. There is no much needed on-going water quality testing. Much needed water velocity gages have been removed. Reports to the Fire Department of observed contaminants create no action or further prevention.
 11. **Untrained and unaware County staff** who respond to reports of pollution appear to be ignorant of basic provisions of the federal Clean Water Act and other laws, rules and regulations in place which should protect this urban watershed. management practices.