



SLIGO CREEK

WaterWatchDogs

*A Simple Model for Citizens
To Report Water Pollution
as Part of their Daily Routine*

Contact us: SligoWaterWatchDog@gmail.com

Funded by a grant to the Friends of Sligo Creek from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, through the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection's Water Quality Protection Charge Program.





What is the Water WatchDog Program



- The Water WatchDog Program is a citizen-based water pollution reporting system for the Sligo Creek watershed.
- Its centerpiece is a simple email address. By sending an email report and photo of the possible pollution, ordinary citizens can alert Montgomery County's water detectives in real time.

OUR SIMPLE SYSTEM

If you spot water pollution or pollutants heading for our waterways, just send an email and photo asap

to:
ReportSligoPollution
@fosc.org

and, after 5 pm & on weekends also call
Montgomery County Park Police 301-949-3010

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SEND YOUR EMAIL AND PHOTO ?

- Your email and photo go immediately to the Smart Phones of Montgomery County's Water Detectives - Steve Martin and his team at the Department of Environmental Protection.
- DEP will investigate as quickly as possible.
- They may do testing.
- If they can figure out what caused the pollution, they will take steps to stop it.
- They can fine polluters

WHAT SHOULD YOU PUT IN YOUR EMAIL?

In the Subject Line:

- Location, Date, Time, Very Brief Pollution Descriptor [ie, Cloudy Water, Muddy Runoff]

In the Text:

- Your Name and Contact info
- Unusual Water or Pollutant Quality, such as :
 - Color: Brown, Gray, White Green
 - Clarity: Cloudy, Muddy, Opaque, Foamy, Sudsy, Oily
 - Debris: Sewage, Trash, Tissue
 - Smell: Chlorine, Gas, Sewage, Ammonia
- Additional info you think would be helpful for DEP
- Please keep it short !

WHAT SHOULD YOU REPORT ?

It helps to keep this principle in mind:

NOTHING BUT RAIN

SHOULD GO INTO OUR STORM DRAINS !

- Report pollution in Sligo Creek and its tributaries.
- But stop pollutants from going into the Creek in the first place.
This means report pollutants you see on the road, sidewalk, and other hard surfaces which are heading for our storm drains and water.

More Specifically ... WHAT SHOULD YOU REPORT THAT YOU SEE IN THE WATER?

- **Discoloration.** Could be a pollutant. Sending a photo will help DEP assess quickly.
- **Suds, Foam, Bubbles,** especially if the odor is unnatural and there is a sheen.
- **Sewage spill.** Grayish/brownish. May have an odor and small bits of paper, but can be surprisingly hard to id.
- **An odd change in the water and its quality.** The photo and any description will help DEP identify.

WHAT STREET POLLUTANTS SHOULD YOU REPORT ?

Some are obvious, some are not:

- Car washing
- Paint dumping
- Construction clean up
- Muddy water running off construction sites and homes.
- Restaurant grease leaking from dumpsters.

Nothing but Rain should Go into our Storm Drains

Step Two: BLOG IT !

After you send your email and photo to DEP ...

Blog your report on
FOSC's Water WatchDog Action Log

<http://www.fosc.org/WaterWatchDog.htm>

Also send your blog to your neighborhood listserv

- Having a written record is important
- Maybe someone else has seen the same thing and we can put together info to figure out the problem

Some Water WatchDog Success Stories

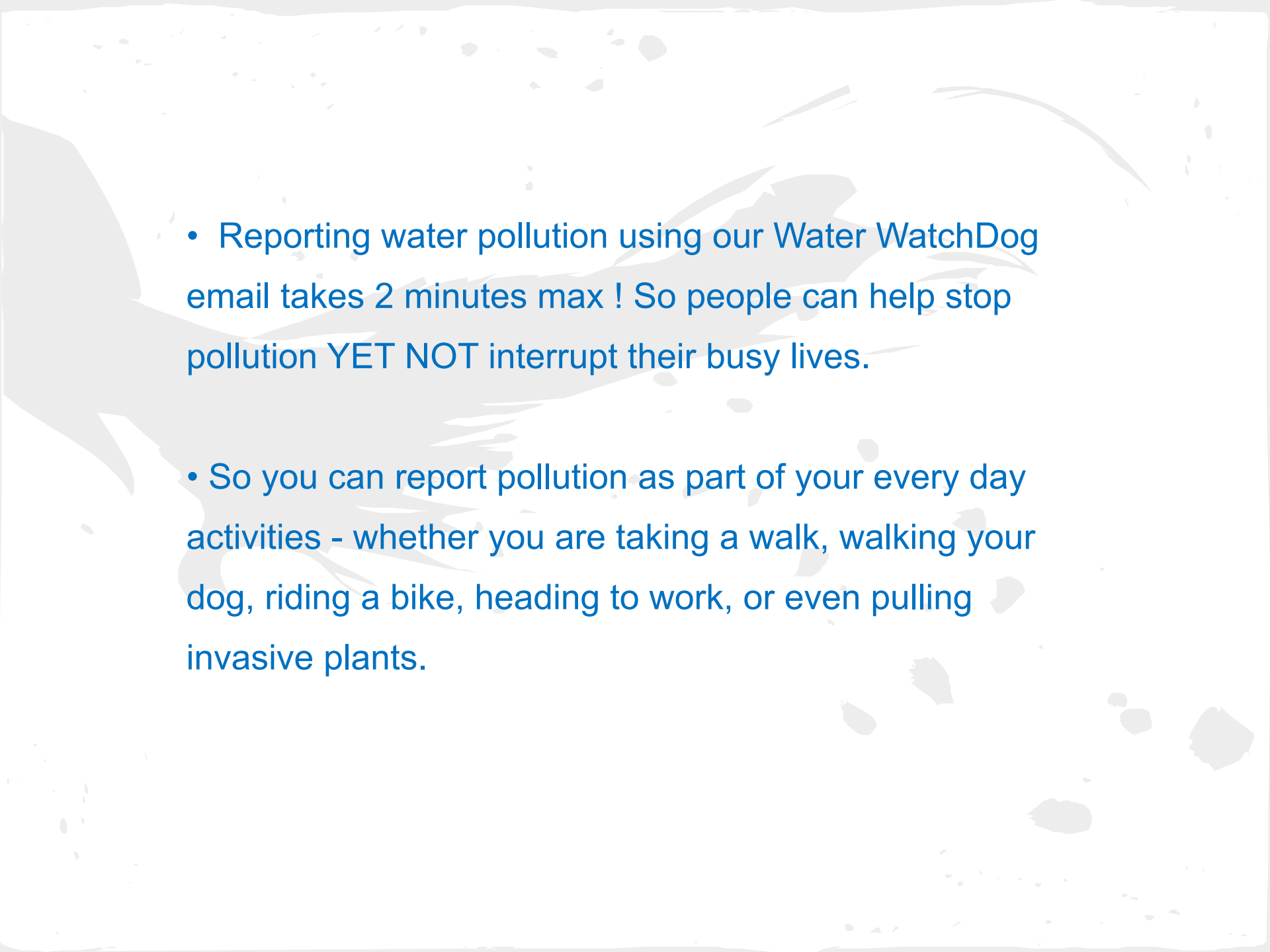
The Veterans Plaza Ice rink in
downtown Silver Spring

Hazardous sewage spill in the
Bennington Tributary

City Place Mall loading dock

Chelsea Heights construction
runoff

WSSC Modernization: Summer of Dirt
Piles

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- Reporting water pollution using our Water WatchDog email takes 2 minutes max ! So people can help stop pollution YET NOT interrupt their busy lives.
 - So you can report pollution as part of your every day activities - whether you are taking a walk, walking your dog, riding a bike, heading to work, or even pulling invasive plants.

What's Next for The Water Watchdog Program ?

FOSC recently received a 2 year grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to expand the Water WatchDog Program in several ways.

The idea is to give citizens tools to help the County improve our water quality by reporting pollution they see :

- We are holding workshops on water pollution ID and reporting throughout the Sligo Creek Watershed over the next year and a half. Open to everyone!
- We are developing Pollution ID Cards and Wallet Cards to help citizens know what and how to report.

The CBT grant will also fund The Bike Ride for Clean Water, from the head waters of Sligo Creek to the Anacostia, probably this year.

Know your watershed, including where and what it drains.

If you have this knowledge, you can be a better citizen water detective. You may be able to back trace pollutants you see to their source if you know how and what your area drains.

Take our Simple Quiz:

What watershed do you live in ?

Where is your nearest waterway ?

What drains into your nearby waterway ?

For our part of Sligo Creek, turns out we drain large parts of downtown Silver Spring, including City Place Mall, Veterans Plaza, the Chelsea Heights townhome development, the old library, the new dog park on Ellsworth, the Whole Foods parking lot, parts of Colesville Road, possibly the YMCA near the Beltway, several schools, to name just a few. The entire drainage area comprises 155 acres.

It took us years to understand all this.





If you have any questions, please contact the Water Watch Dog Program:



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Anne Vorce and Kathleen Samiy, Co-founders

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