Metal Menace! An Analysis of Water Quality and Biota in Birds Creek

Fisher, Sterling

This study examines water quality and biota in Birds Creek to determine if levels decrease as the stream flows past a solid waste transfer station. Data collection Site #1 was 1600 meters upstream from the solid waste transfer station. Site #2 was beside the solid waste transfer station. Site #3 was 1600 meters downstream from Site #2. On seventeen dates water samples were collected at each site for chemical tests to examine pH, dissolved oxygen, heavy metal concentration, and coliform levels. The highest mean pH was a level of 7.11 at Site #1. The lowest mean pH, 6.52, was found at Site #2. A biotic inventory was also conducted at each site during each visit. Using guidelines established by the Save Our Streams Organization, a Stream Index Value was calculated for each site. Site #1 yielded a Stream Index Value of 161. Site #2 had a value of only 68, and Site #3 had a value of 98. Coliform tests showed that every site was in violation, based on guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency. Levels at Site #2 exceeded the limit by more than three times. Heavy metal concentrations were especially high at Site #2 and #3. Laboratory analysis supported that data. Data analysis suggests that water quality is best at Site #1 and decreases as the stream flows past the solid waste transfer station.

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