

FOSC Outfall Monitoring Blog – Maple Ave Mystery Update

FOSC Outfall Monitoring Team – Outfall Time Lapse Data, Part 2

Our efforts to learn more about the source(s) of the detergent discharges in the Brashears Run tributary of Sligo Creek have been on hold as other work, holidays and winter weather have taken precedence. We'll be back out soon to monitor the Maple Avenue outfall and assess the suds situation. To recap what we know so far:



Late last fall, Environmental Restoration Specialist Lori A. Lilly installed a time lapse camera to monitor the frequency of the detergent discharge. The camera took one photo every 10 minutes, 24/7, for almost two weeks. We learned that the discharges appear to come almost exclusively from the southwestern pipe (left below, designated KE01A by the County). Bands of dried detergent can be seen on the shore and tree roots that line the receiving pool.



After an initial look at the findings, the data indicate that there may be some patterns to the discharges. It appears that Thursdays and Sundays see the largest number of discharges, with Mondays not far behind. Most of the suds are released between 9 AM and 6 PM, and mid-morning and late afternoon appear to receive the heaviest flows. The average illicit detergent discharge lasts for about half an hour, but some continue for almost 90 minutes – a lot of detergent for such a small stream to handle.

There are about a dozen apartment buildings along this stretch of Maple Avenue, as well as Piney Branch Elementary School, the Takoma Park Recreation Department and the Takoma Park Community Center. These two stormwater outfall pipes at Brashears Run also carry water from even farther up the Maple Avenue hill, so there are many potential sources of the detergents. If you have any information, suggestions or ideas about the source of these discharges, please contact FOSC [FOSC Water Quality](#) or Montgomery County DEP [MoCo DEP](#) and help us protect these waters. Thanks again for taking an interest in Sligo Creek, and we hope you get a chance to get out and explore the watershed as winter lets go and spring takes hold.