



Street Sweeping

Occasionally, after a big rainstorm, you may notice that the streets look beautifully clean. However, all that filth you are accustomed to seeing on the streets went somewhere... right straight into your Lake Barcroft.

In September, WID imported an EV-2 state of the art street sweeper from Illinois again this year as part of its EPA 319 grant program demonstrating urban Best Management Practices. In a comparative sweep of Annandale Road, it picked up over a ton of roadside pollution missed by an earlier sweep with a customary wet-type sweeper. These small particle materials (fines) contain heavy metals and nutrients which wash into storm drains to pollute streams, lakes and estuaries.

The EV-2 also swept all of the streets of the Lake Barcroft community and picked up 10,630 pounds of miscellaneous filth which otherwise would have washed into Lake Barcroft during the next storm. The process of removing over 5 tons of pollutants required one machine and one driver and took 12.5 hours. If you value water quality, the cost of street sweeping is relatively insignificant.

In a 1978 memo to the Directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Stuart Finley said:

“I think that a logical start for the country’s 208 program in Fairfax County is the initiation of a street cleaning program by the county (not by the Highway Department). Few people have studied the details of street sanitation sufficiently. County Officials are understandably petrified by this requirement.”

This is a complex political problem which needs support from EPA, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Transportation, Fairfax County and voters everywhere. Already, VDOT is cooperating with WID’s demonstration program. Both candidates for Mason District Supervisor are on record as favoring street cleaning. The Director of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works has indicated an interest in discussing this potential pollution control approach.

Complex problems often require interagency cooperation.
