



Public Works and Environmental Services

September 1, 2022

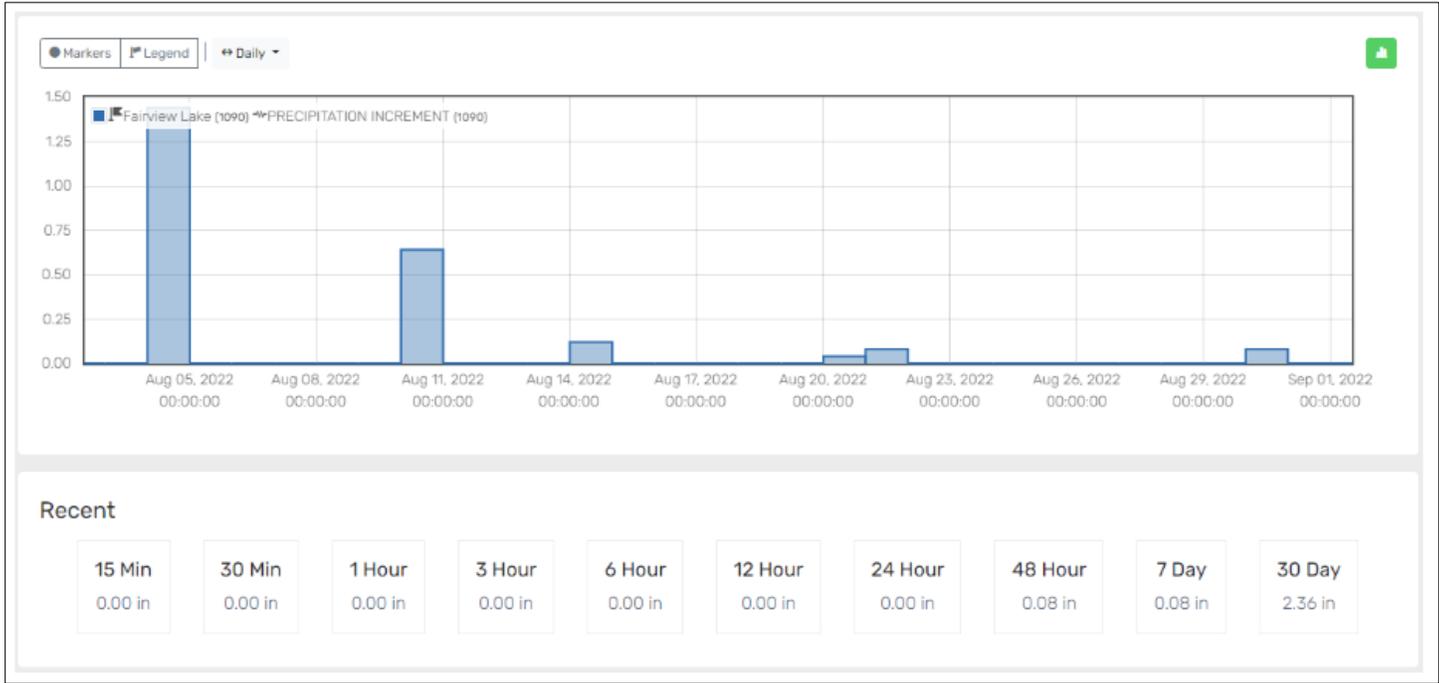
We went out yesterday (Wednesday 8/31) to take a look at this perennial tributary and found it to dry up completely by the time it flows south past the Providence CC.

To us, this stream seems way too big to be dried up to just stagnant pools. We did observe good-sized fish trapped in the pools in the dry section. We walked the entire stream from the PCC up to the I-66 crossing. We then walked the stream immediately upstream of the I-66 crossing where it heads into Oakton High School. We found the flow above 66 and below 66 to be roughly equivalent. So there was no evidence that the construction activity could be diverting/removing water from this channel or otherwise affecting streamflow. I took a lot of pictures to document flow conditions and to allow us to compare with any future site visits.

We looked at our utility/infrastructure maps in this section of stream to see if maybe buried underground lines might be drawing water away from the stream, but there is nothing in this area that really crosses the stream.

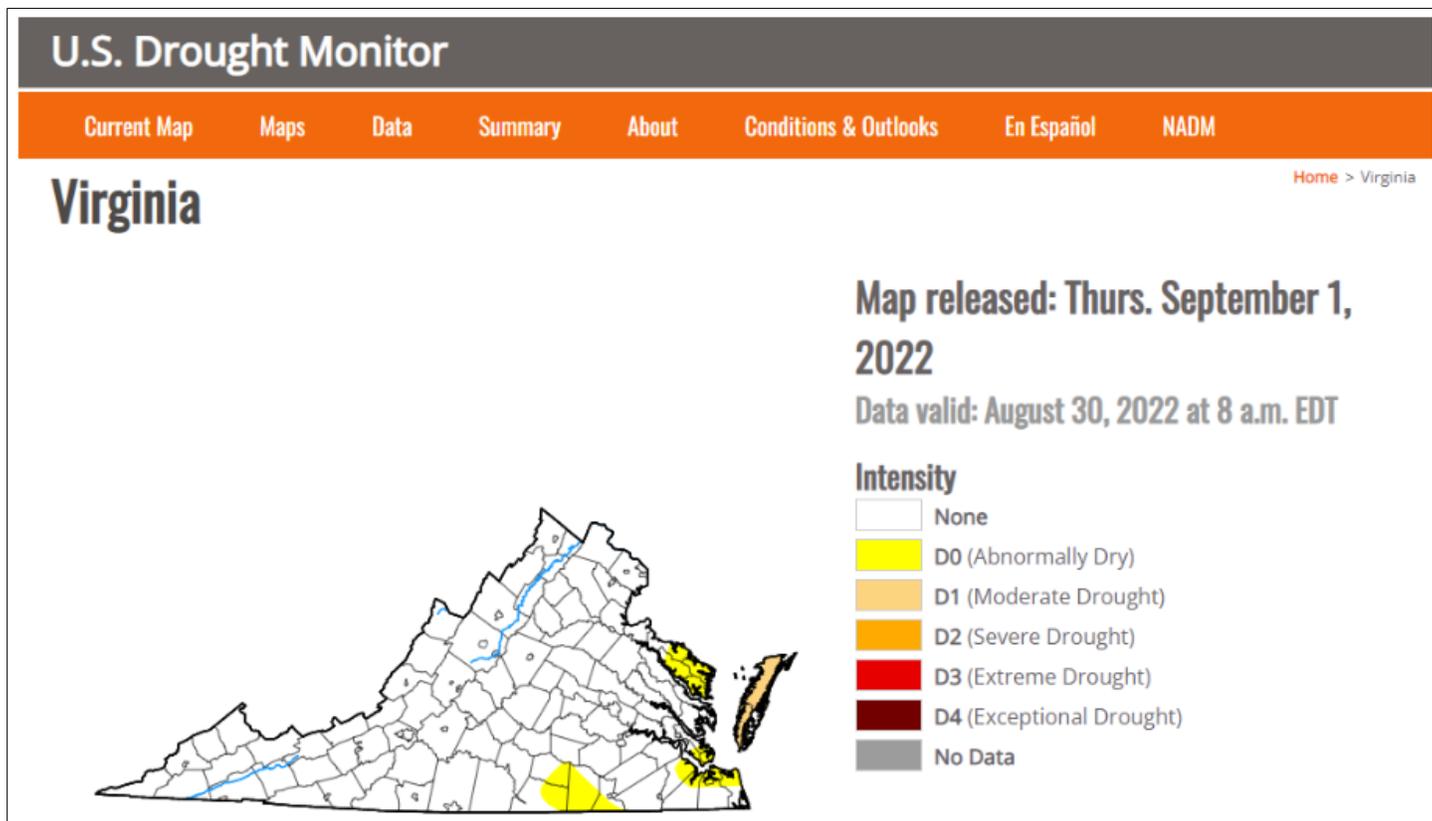
Looking the nearest County rain gauge data (Fairview Lake in Merrifield) that shows 2.36 inches, and comparing that to the average rainfall for August (3.2 inches), we see that we are about 25% below the monthly average.

It also appears that most of the rain in August fell pretty early in that 30-day record and there has been very little/no rain recently:



So this precipitation data may partially (or wholly) explain the low/no flow conditions of this stream.

However, we are not yet in any kind of defined drought situation – looking at the US Drought monitor. And it rained about 0.16 inch the night before our visit.



So that is the extent of our knowledge. We did not see anywhere that water was being removed from the stream.

Perhaps we should keep an eye on this through the fall when we get more precipitation. If the dry channel conditions persist then, it will warrant further evaluation.

For now, we're going to tentatively chalk it up to late summer climatic conditions...

Thank you for your continued vigilance and stewardship!

Watershed Assessment Branch
Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division
Department of Public Works & Environmental Services
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/>