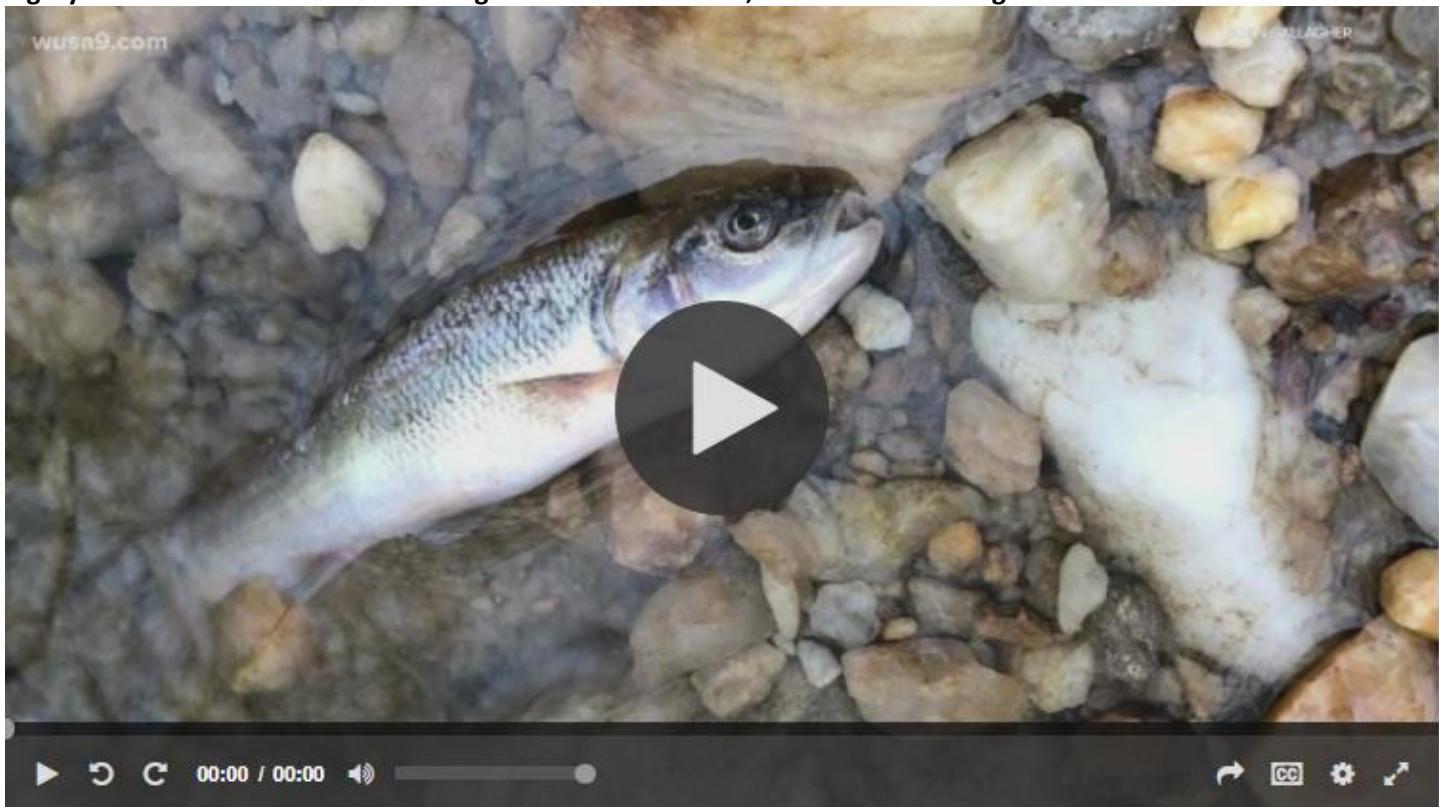


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LOCAL NEWS

Construction site may be cause of dozens of fish found dead in Fairfax

Eighty fish were found dead inside Long Branch Stream. Now, officials are working to find out the cause.



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FAIRFAX, Va. — The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality is investigating after a large amount of fish were found dead in Fairfax. Investigators said nearly 80 dead fish were found in the Long Branch Stream behind Olde Creek Elementary School in Fairfax.

Neighbor John Gallagher was on a nature walk when he discovered the dead and floating fish in the stream on March 23. He started snapping pictures of the fish kill and posting them to Facebook and Next Door.

Soon, the entire neighborhood was wondering what happened.

"It's definitely a mystery it happened," said neighbor Anna Persky. "I'd like to know but I'm not surprised."

Persky said she was not surprised because she spotted something fishy in the stream last month.

"My friend and I were walking and the water was really gross brown," she recalled. "Now looking back, the smart and right thing I should've done was to make a phone call."

In fact, WUSA9 spoke to several residents Wednesday afternoon who told us the health of the stream has been a concern for years, but piles of dead fish - were a first they said.

According to an online pollution incident report, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality is now investigating last week's disturbing discovery. According to the report, staff noticed evidence of erosion and sediment failure at a nearby construction site writing "sediment-laden water may have contributed to the fish kill."

VDEQ later sent this statement to WUSA9:

DEQ was recently informed of a dead fish report and upon inspection noted some potential erosion and sediment control failures near the Holly Park Classic Addition project, located at 4037 Maple Avenue in Fairfax. The Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division was informed of the concern on Friday, March 25, by DEQ's Pollution Response Coordinator after a site visit to the property.

We are confirming next steps on an investigation by Fairfax County and any corrective actions that may be implemented.

While some people pointed to ongoing construction at Frost Middle School, a Fairfax County Public Schools spokesperson told WUSA9 the construction site is up to code and regularly inspected. The school construction is not the cause of the fish kill.

"It's a lovely area, we're blessed to live here and sometimes things aren't as clean as we want them to be," said Persky.



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