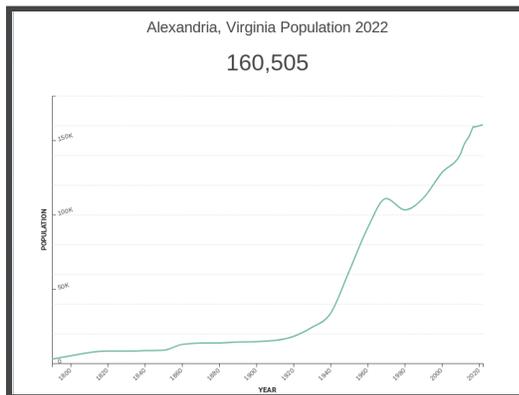


Taylor Run Trailblazers Timely Troubles

INTRODUCTION

Alexandria is located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and it is home to an estimated number of 164,000 people. The population has been rapidly growing due to the proximity to Washington D.C which provides plenty of job opportunities. There are a wide variety of parks, trails, rivers, and streams for Alexandrians to enjoy recreational activities and scenic beauty. As more people flock to the wonderful lifestyle found in Alexandria, there is a need for more housing and infrastructure.



ISSUE

This population increase has, unfortunately, led to the destruction of rivers and runoffs that are unique to Alexandria. A battle occurred over how to restore Taylor Run. This happens as a result of the political divide and involvement and watershed education in the community. There are more people than ever living in Alexandria, and a bigger need for volunteers to help restore Taylor Run. There are organizations that work on preserving nature and wildlife, but if there are not enough volunteers, nature can not be restored. According to the picture of the map of Taylor Run below, the stream is red, meaning that this is not safe for human contact. If the stream is not safe for human contact it will not be safe for wildlife either. The stream runs from Alexandria City High School (ACHS) and Taylor Run park to Cameron Run and into the Potomac. In 2018 Alexandria officials applied for a grant to help the restoration process. When the community became aware of the process the city was going to take to try and restore the stream park in Alexandria, people realized that the path the city was going to take was disruptive to the environment. John Field, a geomorphologist said there are better ways to accomplish the city's goals. He advocates for log dams which are effective at collecting erosion and not disrupting the ecosystem at the same time. We need to eradicate the invasive species and bring back the much-needed local wildlife. However, not everyone can agree on a solution. The city plans to restore the stream would be detrimental to the environment in the park. Residents in Alexandria are split on how to make our park safe.



SOLUTION

Through a conversation with a mediator group from UVA assigned to resolve the restoration war, we realized that citizens and school children are not an active part of the city's watershed.



As we spoke with the mediator we realized that none of us had ever volunteered to improve our watershed other than through Boy Scouts. Other than a few watershed organizations, there is little opportunity for citizens or school groups to volunteer and be a part of their watershed. To solve this problem, we can create volunteer groups within the community to focus on certain aspects of restoration. This means we could have different committees doing community services regarding Taylor Run. One group would be receiving trash from within the stream, another trying to clear the water bed, while some would buy and plant trees. We could spread the news of the restoration on

social media platforms to spread awareness throughout the community and to young adults and teens. For kids, we can get in touch with organizations so they could enter elementary schools by the stream and educate them on it and what was happening. After doing this, we would take them on a field trip to the streams and educate them more on the topics, while getting them hands-on experience.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the project to be successful, we need to involve as much of the community as possible. It is extremely important that everyone gets a say in what happens. We can do multiple things to further our project, such as surveying the community and finding out more about who wants to bulldoze the park and who wants to restore it in a different way. For adults, we can utilize social media to spread our message. We can also create a website to educate people and organize events. For children, we can hire employees from foundations such as the National Parks Conservation Association and Society for Ecological Restoration to come into schools and educate kids on the importance of taking care of the environment and our parks and brainstorm ideas. There can then be organized field trips to Taylor Run where the kids can do things including planting trees and picking up trash. It is crucial that the

entire community gets involved. We can create volunteer groups to handle certain tasks, and together, we can create a more sustainable park and environment. In order for this to happen, we need to create public awareness. We need as much help from the community as possible, as this project is based on getting people more involved. Going to the city council is our main solution, and explaining our situation there. They can help everyone in the community to get



involved. By ourselves, we have little power, which is why getting the city council involved is so important. Restoring Taylor Run is a step towards restoring the environment. If we accomplish this then the community can do much more beyond those parks, working towards a brighter future.

| Proposal Budget | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|------------|--------------------------|
| Vendor | Quantity | Cost per Unit | Subtotal Cost | Shipping | Total Cost | Narrative Details |
| 0 | 0 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | No items being purchased |

CONCLUSION

The watershed is a part of life. It's crucial we treat it with care. Taylor Run is a park in Alexandria that is suffering due to a lack of wildlife, plants, and community concern. People have been debating over what to do for it since 2018. The best course of action is community involvement. It is incredibly important that everyone speaks their ideas. We need to go to the city council and raise awareness surrounding Taylor Run. We can create groups of different volunteers to handle certain tasks in the park, such as planting trees, and we can have people come into schools and educate children about our environment. It is important that we, as the Alexandria community, care for our watershed and environment.

Works Cited

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