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Human waste dirtying Dinky Dock

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Consultants find other water contaminants

WINTER PARK — Water-quality consultants have found that human waste is contaminating the public swimming and boating area at Dinky Dock on Lake Virginia.

Although their study is not complete, representatives of Briley, Wild and Associates said early results show high levels of bacteria from human

and non-human sources.

High bacteria counts forced the closing of Dinky Dock more than a year ago. But until the city hired Briley, Wild, it was unclear what type of bacteria was polluting the water.

The firm is trying to determine the source of the human waste, said project manager Bo Brownfield. The study should be completed by mid-

February.

The contamination was detected near two storm-drain pipes that empty directly into the Dinky Dock area. Dinky Dock is one of the few places where the public has access to the Winter Park Chain of Lakes.

"Generally speaking, what we're finding is that we have very significant concentrations of contamination —

much of which is human contamination," Brownfield said.

The problems are concentrated near the shore, and "contamination is not great in the body of Lake Virginia," he said.

The human pollution at Dinky Dock may be caused by a sewer line that is broken and leaking into a nearby storm pipe, which empties into Lake Virginia, Brownfield said. Or a sewer line may be connected to the storm-

drainage system, rather than properly routed through sewer pipes to the city's wastewater treatment centers, he said.

Water tests also found bacteria produced by animal waste, debris and decaying vegetation.

When it rains, the water that runs off streets and

rooftops washes pollutants — such as animal waste, leaves and trash — into the storm drains.

To reduce this source of water pollution, the city is sweeping the streets more frequently and has installed traps at the end of storm drain pipes to catch undissolved contaminants.

Brownfield also recommended that Winter Park clean out the storm drain system because rotting vegetation and debris in the pipes is producing bacteria that contributes to water pollution. Muck in the water near Dinky Dock also may be providing a

breeding ground for bacteria.

One solution to Dinky Dock's pollution problems would be creating grass-lined ponds at the end of the storm-drain system. The ponds would let stormwater filter through the ground instead of flowing directly into the lake.

The bacteria would be killed during the filtration process, said project engineer Judy Grim.

The consultants will recommend specific action when the project is completed.

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