



TO: Mayor Buckley and City Council
FROM: Annapolis Environmental Commission
DATE: October 8, 2025
RE: R-40-25 Equitable Public Water Access Plan

Dear Mayor Buckley and Members of City Council:

The City Council is currently considering R-40-25 approval of the City of Annapolis: Equitable Public Water Access Plan. The Annapolis Environmental Commission (AEC) reviewed this plan during its development and generally supports approval of the plan.

We want to be sure to bring two comments we received from the public to your attention as you consider approval of the plan. We have included those comments below. One member of the public expressed concern about the cost of projects outlined in the plan. The second commenter is concerned about the water quality at some access points and allowing public access. In addition to that comment, a report they provided is also included below.

Sincerely,

Cathy Welker

Cathy Welker

AEC Chair

Alycia Roberson

Alycia Roberson

AEC Vice Chair

Comment 1:

Annapolis Environmental Commission - Comments Web Form



This form is used to provide public comments to Maritime Advisory Board Annapolis Environmental Commission on meeting agenda items

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Date of Meeting

9/24/2025 7:00 PM

Comments to be
Submitted

I do not support the Public Water Plan, as written. While the high-level goals are laudable, the detailed list of more than 120 projects is not fiscally responsible. My main concern is that the analysis of current conditions was not thorough enough to accurately estimate costs and feasibility for implementing and then maintaining the proposed areas. Rather than take on new projects, the city should focus on maintaining what it already owns, such as making playing fields safe for children and remediating the erosion problems in Truxtun Park that are leading to sedimentation of Spa Creek. Fecal coliform levels in Spa Creek vary by location (see the Spa Creek Conservancy's testing results); proposing paddle sites upstream of the Truxtun Park boat ramp is an example of the plan's problems. Those two locations (Children's Museum and Truxtun Park footbridge) do not make sense from a health standpoint nor the cost of expensive dredging it would take to remove the current mud flats and then maintain these areas. The plan should be rewritten more narrowly and be more creative; for example, in optimizing transportation to water access at nearby Quiet Waters Park where paddle opportunities exist already with cleaner water, and ADA accessible paths are suitable for all age groups.

Comment 2:



I have submitted information from the attached document through the City of Annapolis website for tonight's meeting. The charts and weekly data could not be conveyed in the city's form. The attachment contains data collected from two of the proposed water access sites that consistently exceed safe swimming levels.

The Children's Museum and Truxtun Bridge are good access points, but they consistently exceed safe swimming levels, often by 10 - 100 times. The recommendation from Spa Creek Conservancy is not to allow public access to these sites unless the city is committed to investing in them and budgets the necessary funds to bring the bacteria levels under control.

Please review the report for more information.

Thank you

Donna Jefferson

Board member, Spa Creek Conservancy

[Please see following 2-page report.]



Spa Creek Conservancy endorses increased water access for all citizens with the caveat that swimming and other recreational activities are safe. With safety in mind Spa Creek Conservancy has been testing sites throughout Spa and Back Creek since 2016, and two of the potential public access sites on Spa Creek (Children's Museum and Truxtun Bridge) consistently have bacteria levels that exceed safe swimming levels - in many instances, far exceed. For either of those sites to be considered remediation needs to be done to assure the safety of all accessing the water.

Summary of Enterococcus Levels vs Recreational Safety Standards

The EPA recommends a **threshold of 104 cfu/100 ml** for safe recreational swimming. Any weekly measurement above this limit is considered unsafe.

Children's Museum (SCM) 2016–2025

- SCM consistently shows **very high Enterococcus levels**.
- On average, **~89% of weeks were unsafe** for recreational swimming across the 10-year period.
- Breaking this into two intervals:
 - **2016–2020**: ~90% of weeks unsafe.
 - **2021–2025**: ~88% of weeks unsafe.
- This indicates **no meaningful improvement** over time; conditions remain consistently poor.

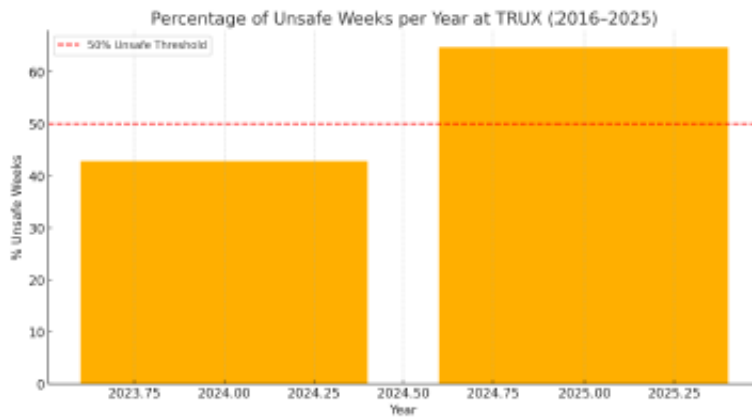
Truxtun Bridge (TRUX) 2024–2025

- TRUX shows **better water quality compared to SCM**, though still problematic.
- On average, **~54% of weeks were unsafe** during 2024–2025. (This site was not tested prior to 2024)
- Interval analysis:

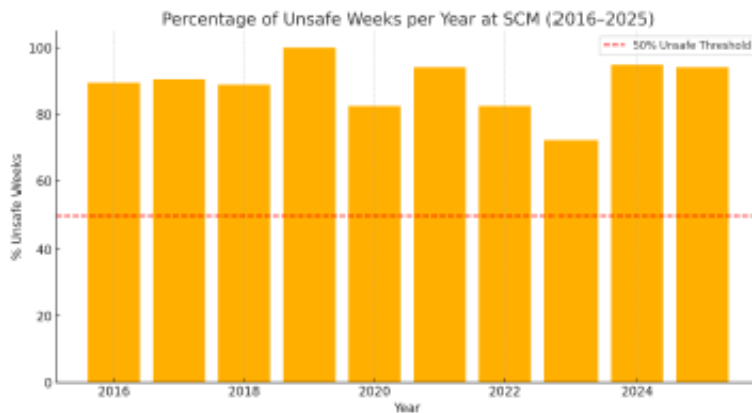


Key Takeaways

- **SCM remains highly unsafe** for recreational swimming almost year-round, with little sign of improvement.
- **TRUX is moderately unsafe**, with conditions falling safety standards more than half of the time.
- Both sites pose **significant public health risks** for recreational water contact, especially during the warmer months when use is highest. We realize that both of these sites are excellent accent points, but any use of these sites would require significant remedial action to ensure that users are safe from bacterial contamination.



Spa Creek Conservancy | [SpaCreek.net](https://spacreek.net) | 17 Southgate Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401



Weekly data is available.

Maps showing weekly testing results for both Spa and Back Creeks 2024 and 2025 are available online at:
<https://spacreek.net/about-us/spa-creek-water-testing/spa-creek-bacteria-levels/>