

Friends of Shades Creek, Inc.

**Walks by James Lowery in Griffin's Brook (Shades Creek Tributary)
(Also known as "Griffin Creek")**

Preliminary Report – Section 2 has not yet been walked.

As of February 17, 2007

- Section 1:** August 3, 2006 (From source under 21st Avenue South east of the Elton B. Stephens Expressway in the City of Birmingham to 18th Street in Rosedale)
- Section 2:** Not Yet Walked (18th Street in Rosedale to Homewood Park) NOTE: A large portion of this section is heavily covered with kudzu and may be too dangerous to walk until kudzu dies back.
- Section 3:** September 6, 2006 (Long section from Homewood Park to convergence with Shades Creek at Lakeshore Drive near Green Springs Highway)

Notes:

Section 1: Griffin's Brook begins underground underneath 21st Avenue South in the City of Birmingham to the east of the Elton B. Stephens Expressway at its intersection with 21st Avenue. It emerges from underground at the edge of the expressway then flows west toward the Rosedale section of Homewood for half a mile parallel to 21st Avenue South and immediately behind the houses on the south side of 21st Avenue South.

Most of the houses along the creek in this section have a walking bridge from their backyards across the creek to the south bank. Most of those bridges terminate in small cleared areas with benches or other outdoor garden features added by the homeowners.

During the course of Section 1, water in the creek completely disappeared underground 3 times and re-emerged each time with reduced flow.

I have been accused of finding everything but the kitchen sink in my walks in the local urban creeks, but now I have found the kitchen sink!! See section below entitled "Observed, But Not Collected from the Creek."

Interestingly, NO sporting goods equipment was found in this section of the creek.

Behind the houses with addresses 1949 and 2001, there were two sanitary sewer manholes in the midst of the creek. The cover of one of those active sewer manholes was off and was lying on the bank. In addition, starting at those manholes there was a fire hose stretched out in the creek for quite a distance downstream. At least 6 fire hoses were seen—some connected together in

the creek and one rolled up on the bank. (Both the open manhole and the presence of the fire hoses were reported by the Cahaba River Society to the Sewer Department with a request for corrective action.)

A large self storage facility is being planned for the vacant area to the south of the Walgreen on 18th Street, and, as part of those plans, Griffin's Brook would be put underground underneath that facility or its parking lot.

Section 2: Water in the creek completely disappeared underground 3 times as viewed from the banks.

Section 3: Perhaps the theme for this section should be "Home Furnishings" since more of those types of items were found than were sporting goods equipment. Very little sporting goods equipment was found in this section even though it flows almost exclusively through a residential area with houses backing up to the creek on both sides.

Almost the entire length of this section (especially toward the beginning) there were high vertical, man-made walls lining the creek on both sides. Most of these were 6 feet high or higher. This was the highest and most of such vertically walled creek banks that I have seen in any of the creeks I have walked in the Birmingham area.

There was a huge 25 inch diameter sewer pipe in the creek connecting a major manhole to another one a half block downstream.

Water in the creek completely disappeared underneath a long, flat stretch of concrete that constituted the stream bottom under, and on either side of, one of the road bridges.

Bottom of creek almost the entire way was composed of shale rock at sloped angle.

Last portion from Salter Road to Shades Creek was heavily silted and had large lateral and point gravel bars.

More water seemed to be contributed to Shades Creek by Griffin's Brook than was already flowing in Shades Creek prior to the confluence of Griffin's Brook.

Five tributaries were observed entering the creek – one from "river left" and four from "river right." The largest one was prior to Salter Road and probably was the tributary that originates in the Palisades area.

Aquatic Plants Observed:

Section 1: None

Section 2: Non-aquatic kudzu entering the creek from both sides in most of this section

Section 3: None. Algae and “scum” covered most of the rocks and substrate throughout this section.

Wildlife Observed:

Section 1: No fish nor minnows were seen in this section. Lots of algae was present upstream and downstream of the two sanitary sewer manholes in the creek.

Section 2: As observed from the bank, fish (probably bream) and minnows were abundant in a small pool behind the Nilipour Oriental Rug store on 18th Street in the Rosedale area.

Section 3: Thousands of minnows throughout the entire section. About 3 dozen minnows also were observed in water on one of the flat concrete sections – water so shallow that it barely covered the minnows and did not cover them entirely when they swam fast.

Crawfish only in the first half of the section, but lots there

Green Heron

Kingfisher

Recently dead small snake

Summary of Items Collected:

Section 1:

- 1 Garbage can lid (Fits my garbage can at home)
- 1 Red street reflector
- 1 Vehicle highway emergency reflector triangle
- 1 Real estate “SOLD” sign
- 1 Old battery – size is between today’s “C” cell and “D” cell batteries.
- 1 Old-style metal garden watering can (spout missing)
- 1 Electrical wire nut
- 1 “Wad” of steel wire
- 1 Section of paint roller extension rod
- 1 Paint stirring paddle
- 1 Heavy-duty glove for handling chemicals
- 1 Lid from clothes detergent container
- 1 Plastic kitchen bowl
- 1 Salt shaker
- 2 Bathroom tile pieces
- 1 Shoe sole comfort insert
- 1 Strip of blue cloth webbing
- 1 Strip of gift wrapping ribbon (white)
- 2 Strips of plastic “police tape” as follows:
 - 1 Yellow “CAUTION” tape
 - 1 Red “DANGER” tape

Observed, But Not Collected from the Creek:

- Fire hoses (see “Notes” above)
- Double kitchen sink
- Metal automobile bumper (Volkswagon-size front or rear bumper)
- Large ceramic electrical insulator from large power pole

Section 2:

Not yet walked -- to be reported later.

Section 3:

- 1 Cheesecake Factory gift card
- 2 Ballpoint pens – Still work
- 40 feet Police yellow plastic CAUTION tape
- 1 Canvas Army duffle bag
- 1 Wine bottle
- 1 Wine bottle cork
- 1 Smirnoff brand vodka miniature bottle – Still contained a little vodka
- 1 “I Love Hooters” balloon – Not yet inflated
- 1 Plastic tampon applicator

- 1 Large, heavy-duty stainless steel cooking pot with two handles – Excellent condition
- 1 Stainless steel spoon
- 1 Tupperware freezer container – Hand-written label still on it reads “2 Duck Ba. 12/01”
- 1 Door knob from a storm door
- 1 4-inch section of steel I-beam
- 1 Chain link fence post top
- 1 Lawnmower air filter
- 1 Phillips head screwdriver
- 1 Fluorescent screw-type bulb – Base only
- 1 Paint roller holder/handle
- 1 Plastic mop handle – I used this as my walking stick for this section.
- 1 Real estate “For Sale” sign – Wooden stake only

- 2 Compact disks (CDs)
- 1 Circuit board template
- 1 Coax cable connector

- 1 Oyster shell
- 1 Large piece of a large sea shell
- 1 Horseshoe – Very old and very rust encrusted
- 1 Dog chew toy with bell inside

- 1 Child's fold-up scooter – Razor brand – everything works and wheels turn.
- 1 Bicycle cable lock with double pulley attached
- 1 Birmingham Zoo child's plastic sand bucket
- 1 Pony tail hair tie
- 1 Child's soft baseball
- 2 Regular baseballs – Both without the outer covering on them
- 1 Golf ball
- 2 Tennis balls
- 1 Large beach ball
- 1 Small "cheerleader's" megaphone – Rocky Ridge School
- 1 Hispanic language candy dispenser – "Pelon Pelo Rico"

Observed, But Not Collected from the Creek:

- Mountain Bike – Full size, complete, Speed Ridge brand mountain bicycle
- Lawnmower – Gas-powered, Murray brand, fairly new lawnmower.