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Continued Pollution of Thompson Creek, Densmore Creek, and Slater Creek
with Undisinfected Sewage*

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#33(W)

THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

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CONTINUED POLLUTION OF THOMPSON CREEK, DENSMORE CREEK, AND SLATER CREEK
WITH UNDISINFECTED SEWAGE

I. Location of Tests.

During the past year this committee has demonstrated that Slater Creek was massively polluted with undisinfected sewage from Greece's Latta Road Plant, and that Thompson and Densmore Creeks were similarly polluted with undisinfected sewage from the City of Rochester. Our disclosures brought some action: we are pleased to advise our members that the Norton Street Chlorination Station is apparently working properly at last, and that Densmore Creek now has low bacterial counts downstream from Norton Street. There is, however, no improvement to be seen at other trouble spots, which include the southern part of Densmore Creek, upstream from Norton Street. This report presents data obtained between 25 May and 24 July, 1967; the locations at which samples were taken are given in Table 1, and the total coliform counts are given in Table 2.

Table 1. Location of Sampling Sites

Number of Location	Description of location where samples were taken
1	Densmore Creek, downstream from the Norton Street chlorinator, at Densmore Rd.
2	Densmore Cr., immediately downstream from the chlorinator
3	Densmore Cr., upstream from the chlorinator, but downstream from a small sewer outfall described under 4.
4	A small sewer outfall into Densmore Cr. approximately 50 yds. south of Norton St., and behind 2441, 2454, and 2457 Norton St. We do not yet know to whom this outfall belongs.
5	Densmore Cr. just upstream from 4
6	Densmore Cr. at mouth of large concrete culvert at Master St. and Culver Rd.
7	Sewage effluent from the Latta Road Sewage Treatment Plant of the Town of Greece, on Slater Creek

Table 1. Location of Sampling Sites (cont'd)

Number of Location	Description of location where samples were taken
8	Slater Creek at Ling and Kirkwood Rds., downstream from 7
9	Mouth of Slater Creek at Little Pond, near Russell Station
10	Thompson Creek, at culvert under Sea Breeze Expwy., just south of Tryon Park

II. The Results.

Counts of total coliform organisms per 100 ml of water were made by the Millipore filter method. The streams and the vicinity of the Latta Road Plant outfall were examined for the presence of sewage solids and sludge. The results were as follows.

The effluent from the Latta Road plant was laden with grey sediment, condoms, toilet paper, etc., which covered the pieces of fencing and the two sets of bedsprings (!) placed in the channel from the plant to the creek in a futile effort to prevent massive quantities of foam from getting into the creek. A large bank of detergent foam, roughly 50 ft. in length, as much as 15 to 20 ft. wide, and 2 to 4 ft. high, was present in the channel from the plant to the creek. Slater Creek downstream from the Latta Rd. plant was found to be a grey stinking mess, choked with sludge banks and bubbling with fermenting sewage solids.

Densmore Creek upstream from the Norton Street Chlorination Station was examined in some detail in an attempt to account for rather high coliform counts which were observed earlier and mentioned in our previous reports. The sources of these high counts have now been located; Densmore Creek flows out of a large culvert at Master St. and Culver Rd.; our inquiry to the City of Rochester as to the ownership of this culvert has not been answered, but people living in the area inform us that this culvert is another of the City's combined storm-sanitary sewer overflows. It discharges even in dry weather, indicating that the weirs and floodgates are routinely letting sanitary sewage into the creek even when there is no storm water. The creek bed from Culver Rd. to Norton St. was plastered with toilet paper, condoms, and feces; and the smell in the vicinity of the creek is bad. In addition to this major discharge, the creek also receives a small but potent discharge from an outfall immediately behind houses at 2441, 2454, and 2457 Norton Street; we have informed the County Health Dept. of this outfall, and understand that their dye tests, which were being carried out when their reply was written, have already established that sewage from one home is being discharged through this pipe into the creek.

Thompson Creek, which receives effluent from another combined storm-sanitary sewage overflow from the City of Rochester, was found to be laden with grey sediment, paper, condoms, and feces. Evidently the City has not yet succeeded in abating the pollution of the creek with sewage during dry weather.

The following total coliform counts were obtained.

Table 2. Coliform Counts

Location (see Table 1)	Date	Coliforms/100 ml
1 Densmore, at Densmore Rd.	25 May	340,000
2 Densmore, downstream from chlorinator	25 May	710,000
	16 June	1.8 million
	16 June	1.7 million
	1 July	0
	1 July	0
	19 July	0
3 Densmore, upstream from chlorinator	1 July	1.7 million
	19 July	220,000
4 Small sewer to Densmore	16 June	20 million
	1 July	10 million
5 Densmore, just upstream from small sewer	1 July	470,00
6 Densmore, at Culver Rd. and Master St.	19 July	480,00
	19 July	420,00
	24 July	2 million
	24 July	2.2 million
7 Effluent from Latta Rd. STP	19 July	260,000
	24 July	1.1 million
8 Slater Cr. at Ling and Kirkwood Rds.	25 May	0
	19 July	40,000
9 Mouth of Slater Cr.	19 July	170,000
10 Thompson Cr. at Sea Breeze Expwy. and Tryon Pk.	1 July	400,000
	1 July	810,000
	24 July	approx. 5 million
	24 July	approx. 5 million

III. Comments.

1. Misinformation in the Town of Greece. Greece town leaders and the Chamber of Commerce claimed recently, that the town abated its pollution of Slater Creek. We find no truth in these claims. Straining sewage through bedsprings is hardly an improved method of sanitary treatment. If anything, the pollution is worse in July than it was in May, since we found no effective chlorination of sewage flowing into Slater Creek in July.

2. Misinformation in the City of Rochester. Contrary to repeated official claims, the pollution of creeks by the City of Rochester is not due to rainstorms and can not be blamed merely on the fact that the City has a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. Having sewage come out of overflow culverts in dry weather is like having the kitchen exhaust fan blow smoke into the dining room. The system was not designed to do this.

The RCSI interviewed the sanitary engineers working for the City of Rochester. We gather that the city engineers knew what the troubles were and were capable of fixing them.

IV. Conclusions.

1. Three local streams constitute a public health hazard and are not suitable for free access and play by children. These are: Thompson Creek; Slater Creek downstream from the sewage disposal plant of the Town of Greece on Latta Road; and Densmore Creek between Culver Road and Norton Street in Rochester.

2. The polluter of Slater Creek is the Town of Greece. The outflow of Greece's Latta Road plant changes the creek into an open sewer foul with floating fecal matter and foaming with detergents.

3. The polluters of Thompson Creek is the City of Rochester, which discharges raw sewage into that creek. In dry weather, the sewage should be made to flow in the opposite direction, toward the City's sewage disposal plant.

4. The polluters of Densmore Creek are (a) the City of Rochester, which appears to have there another sewer conduit running in reverse; and (b) a private house owner, or owners, who simply use a public creek as a sewer.

5. The polluters break health laws and water quality standards and deprive local residents of the safe use and enjoyment of public waters.

6. The Norton Street Chlorination Station of the City of Rochester seems now to be operating effectively.

V. Acknowledgment.

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Water Pollution Subcommittee

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