

STARKWEATHER CREEK COMMENTS – IDA JAMMEH

Hello, my name is Ida, I live on the far east side of Madison. I am currently an EPA-funded intern with Midwest Environmental Justice Organization (MEJO).

We would like to address your public safety and enhanced community outreach and education initiatives budget recommendations through an environmental justice lens.

I am part of a group conducting surveys at the East Madison Community Centre (Truax) and The Darbo neighbourhood. The survey is about the community's interaction with Starkweather Creek and fishing in the Creek. The majority of the people living in these communities are low income and or people of colour.

There is a lot of disconnect and lack of information about Starkweather Creek and the safety of the water quality. I have surveyed people in this community living close by the creek including adults and children. One consistent question continuously discussed during the surveys is how polluted the creek-- or people just don't know. This results in children not being given the opportunity to explore Starkweather Creek.

I know that Dane County owns the land where the Truax Field Air National Guard is and as well as the Dane County Regional Airport. Both of which are sources for contaminants ending up in Starkweather Creek through stormwater runoff. There is very little information on the type of contaminants that are ending up in the Creek I am here today to ask the Lakes and Watershed Commission to recommend water, sediment and fish testing in the creek. There is a report from the U.S Defense Department reporting that there are at least 126 places that have water contaminated with PFAS by or along military bases in country. One of them is Truax ANG. This contaminant is linked to cancer and developmental effects. Starkweather Creek is right next to a Military base and stormwater runoff ends up in the creek and we don't have much data on water quality or contaminants.

Several of the communities along the creek are low income, so they do not have the means or the income to travel to other sources of water to explore. The Creek is right in their backyard and they do not have the means to move away. Some also fish in the creek. So, I am asking this commission to recommend that the County invest resources in testing the creek for contaminants such as PFAS so the citizens of this community are informed. They always have the most to lose.