(DEQ River Assessment- continued)

In October, 2018 the VA DEQ (Dept. of Environmental Quality) comprehensively assessed a section of the Middle River near mile marker 39—taking a health checkup of one section of Middle River.  This was part of their yearly analysis of river health throughout the state of Virginia. They inventoried insect and fish populations along with performing chemical analyses, which when added together reflect the health of the river. What did they find?

Of the 15 orders of insects represented in this stretch, the insects that reflect good water quality (mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies) were all present. In addition, they found damselflies and dragonflies, true flies, and beetle larvae plus worms, snails, mussels and isopods.

Of the 17 species of fish found at the site, the top 5 species measured by quantity were:

·       Sculpin

·       Common shiner

·       Bluntnosed shiner

·       Rosefin shiner

·       Fantail darter

Some of the analysis done included tests for oxygen, pH, temperature, turbidity, nitrogen, phosphorous, toxic metals, and *E. coli.*

In summary, here is a quote from Ted Turner, Regional Biologist, VA Dept. of Environmental Quality:

"The long (and good) short story is that the bugs, fish species and numbers are indicative of a healthy stream, and the chemical results are lower than State Water Quality Criteria thresholds for impaired waters.” The bottom line is that this stretch of Middle River appears to be in excellent health!