



## Did You Know?

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### Fairfax Fuel Farm and the Colonial Pipeline

The epic flooding in Texas resulting from Hurricane “Harvey” impacted Northern Virginia in the form of high gasoline prices resulting from the shut-down of several Houston area refineries and the Colonial Pipeline. This pipeline, which has been called “the Mississippi River of fuels” runs from Houston, Texas (where it serves 30 refineries) to Linden, New Jersey (Port of New York). The fuel farm to the right of the Blue nine’s seventh hole at Fairfax is one of the distribution sites along the pipeline and handles some 40 percent of the gasoline distributed in Northern Virginia.

Construction on the Colonial Pipeline began in February 1962 with the first delivery to the DC Metro Area in June 1964 and full operation in December 1964. Construction of the Fairfax Fuel Tank Farm spanned 1964-1965. The pipeline has two main trunklines crossing Virginia. One carries gasoline while the other carries kerosene, home heating oil and diesel fuel. The Fairfax tank farm is fed by a 22 inch spur line (which does not cross ANCC property) off the gasoline trunkline.

Shortly after the commencement of construction of the fuel farm started in the 1964, ANCC began to experience silting in our two irrigation ponds along Daniel’s Run. The source of the silt was traced to the fuel farm construction related disturbance of the watershed. The result was significant reduction in the pond capacity and a clogging of our irrigation system. Negotiation with the pipeline owners resulted in two settlements: \$14,600 in 1965 and another \$9,000 in 1969. Unfortunately, these settlements did not cover the cost of the eventual corrective actions. Resolution only came when Daniel’s Run was diverted to by-pass the pond in 1982.

The Fairfax Tank Farm gained notoriety in 1980 when 300,000 gallons of gasoline was spilled as the result of a pipeline shipment being diverted to a small rather than a large tank forcing the evacuation of the Comstock sub-division south of the fuel farm (behind Fair City Mall).

In 1990, rainstorms brought to the surface petroleum that had accumulated from an underground leak and small truck overfills. The contaminated groundwater and fumes/oil sheens at the surface caused property values in the nearby Mantua subdivision to nosedive. Star Enterprises (half owned by Texaco) purchased numerous houses in the neighborhood (it owned 120 homes in 1998 and still owned 31 homes in 2007) and offered financial incentives to homeowners and the community. The strategy worked – Mantua has stayed a high-value neighborhood while the groundwater was pumped to the surface and the contaminants removed.



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Bottom Line: The Colonial Pipeline and its Pickett Road Fuel Farm may not be the most desirable neighbor, but given its import to the economy of Northern Virginia, it will be with us for the foreseeable future. (Sources: <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/transportation/oilpipeline.html> and [www.colpipe.com](http://www.colpipe.com))

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