Lake Accotink Park Master Plan 2015 – Positions of Friends of Accotink Creek

Upgrade of facilities

While we are largely neutral on facilities, we ask that planning be guided by the principles of no net increase in impervious surfaces and no increase in runoff. Further, any renovations or construction that may be undertaken would offer opportunities to incorporate advanced environmental and watershed-friendly features.



Study moving or modifying parking at dam

The parking lot at the dam has been damaged more than once in recent years by tropical storm flooding. Relocating all or part of the parking lot out of the floodplain could avoid future damage and allow revegetation of the riparian corridor. One possibility for relocation is exchanging the locations of this parking lot and the upper field near the Heming Ave entrance.

• <u>Invasives removal/prevention</u>

Invasive alien plant species are pervasive within Lake Accotink Park (as in many other parks), diminishing both environmental and recreational value of natural areas. While the Park Authority's Invasive Management Area volunteer program addresses a few small areas, park-wide invasive prevention and control should be integrated into all maintenance and planning.

• Defend natural resources over recreation

The demand for active recreational and sports use of parks is infinite, but our remaining natural areas are finite. Destruction of irreplaceable habitat to satisfy demands for active recreation is an unwise course. Likewise, encouraging types of recreation in natural areas that degrade those areas is also destined to be regretted.

• Study dam removal

The lake is a treasured recreational resource and the wetlands at its upstream end have habitat value. The lake also provides the benefit of keeping sediment from downstream waters. However, the dam is expensive to maintain and blocks natural migration of aquatic wildlife. Sediment dredging is also a continuing expense. The master plan should explore alternatives.

• Stream restoration or protection projects

Fairfax County is undertaking, at great expense to taxpayers, a series of remediation plans to restore the health of all streams in the county. As steward of so many of our streams and natural areas, the Park Authority has a key role to play in the success of this endeavor. Park Authority actions cannot be conceived in isolation from this larger goal or work at cross purposes. The master plan should incorporate elements of the county's Accotink Creek Watershed Plan affecting the park and integrate the goal of watershed protection.

The park as a watershed-friendly demonstration area

County facilities in general, and parks in particular, are in the public eye and should serve as showcases for watershed-friendly practices, providing inspiring examples for property owners to follow, thus serving as a multiplier for county watershed restoration expenditures.

Pavement

Pavement is the primary cause of impairment of stream health in our county, by causing streambed erosion through excessive runoff. The Park Authority could set the example of reversing this trend by avoidance of creation of impervious surfaces, by replanting, by depaving, by replacing conventional pavement with pervious pavement, and by mitigation of new construction.

- The balance needed between preservation vs. increased demands for park revenue
 Ever growing requirements for parks to produce revenue are inconsistent with the concept of parks as a public benefit. Pursuing revenue producing activities will render our public parks indistinguishable from shopping centers or private amusement parks.
- Cost avoidance value of preserving natural areas
 Rather than asking our parks to produce revenue, let us consider the cost avoidance value to our community of maintaining and enhancing natural areas for flood control and water quality.