



Lake Accotink Park Master Plan – Lake Sustainability Comments

June 23, 2016

Here lies the quandary for those who must ponder the future of Lake Accotink:

- Everyone wants the esthetic, recreational, and sediment-collecting benefits of the lake.
- Everyone wants the benefits of wetlands habitat.
- Everyone wants the aquatic wildlife benefits of a free flowing stream.
- No one wants the responsibility of maintaining the dam.
- No one wants the cost and complications of dredging.

The Friends of Accotink Creek cannot easily resolve this quandary, but we do offer some thoughts:

- Decisions must consider the impact on freshwater mussels below the dam. This sole surviving population in Accotink Creek seems dependent upon the dam, as described in the recent biological survey found here: http://www.accotink.org/2015/AccotinkCreekMusselSurvey_20160316.pdf
- Option A, continued periodic dredging, is an obvious financial and logistical burden, does not reconnect the stream, and begs the question of how long before maintenance of the dam itself becomes unfeasible. Yet, the sediment capture benefit is great.
- Option B, installation of a forebay with annual dredging, would require construction of a permanent truck road through wooded areas, inconsistent with the natural resource stewardship mission of the Park.
- Option C, installation of steel “beaver dams” upstream would offer little lasting benefit while fragmenting the stream habitat and filling the Park’s environment with what will become piles of man-made junk. However we urge any and all measures that would encourage **real** beaver dams built by **real beavers** (or possibly man-made equivalents of natural materials).
- Between options D & E, maintaining a smaller lake, as in E, seems the more imaginative and appealing choice. Even a smaller lake will act as a big lure for those not already focused on nature.
- Option F - Evaluate the Friends of Accotink Creek alternative hybrid proposal combining benefits of a free-flowing stream, wetlands, and flood control outlined here: <http://www.accotink.org/2016/LakeAccotinkProposal2016.pdf>
- The lake is already a focal point for nature observation, where a boardwalk through enhanced wetlands could be an alternative to other destructive forms of recreation. During the Master Plan meeting there were many comparisons by citizens to the Huntley Meadows wetland boardwalk.
- Hydro/wind/solar projects – Assuming the dam is retained, why not consider making it a showcase of small-scale hydro power, using available off-the shelf technology? Abundant breezes across the lake also invite similar wind generation. Solar could fit in, also.
- The true solution to sedimentation is in the value of reducing sediment entering the lake, addressing the problem at its sources – the impervious surfaces in our communities that send stormwater surging through Accotink Creek. No amount of modification to our remaining natural areas can adequately address this unnatural problem.

The Friends of Accotink Creek advocate, as always, for biodiversity and water quality. The question of lake options must connect with the need for a watershed-friendly Master Plan.