



## Bulletin of the Proceedings of the Friends of Accotink Creek

Our meeting notes serve as bulletins of our activities, interests, and discussions, supplemented by your submissions.

### Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – June 20, 2017

Next Meeting: July 18, 2017 (Third Tuesday of each month)  
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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#### **Present:**

Kris Unger  
Philip Latasa  
Julie Chang  
Elaine Sevy  
Flint Webb  
Beverley Rivera  
Suzy Foster  
Hala El Barmil - guest

#### **Upcoming events**

- Braddock Road Meeting June 26, 2017
- TMDL Public Meeting June 28, 2017
- MOM's Organic Market Block Party July 2, 2017
- Accotink/Braddock Friends Meeting July 20, 2017
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, September 9, 2017

#### **Action Items:**

- *Everyone – Brainstorm grant application ideas*
- *Kris & Kim – Develop new community grant application*
- *Suzy – Verify status of VDOT MS4 permit*

#### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

- *Solstice:*

Philip noted that the summer solstice arrives tonight, officially at 12:24 am Eastern Time



- Represent FACC:

- *TMDL Meeting 6/7*

Kris indicated the TMDL process is grinding along with nothing too remarkable contained in the reports, and no controversy expected in the upcoming public hearing phase. DEQ is trying to bring the various parties together for the chloride TMDL. There is no easy fix for the chloride issue and there are liability issues on private paved surfaces.

Philip mentioned he found the reports rather technical, but links to all materials are on [our TMDL page](#). He also described a phone call from Mary Cortina. Finding the TMDL report too technical, Mary called DEQ for translation and learned the report emphasizes upland runoff control and habitat restoration over focus on in-stream projects. Persons and groups who also see it that way should get their comments into the public record at the June 28 meeting and in writing by July 21.

Philip observed the VDOT MS4 permit is up for renewal now, and we should say something. FCRP may be a source of support. Suzy will check on the renewal.

The final public meeting to present and discuss the draft TMDL reports, is June 28, 2017, at 6:30pm at the Kings Park Library

- *Park Federation of Friends Meeting*

Kris advised the Park Authority is stirring up a storm by pushing new agreements for friends groups. The proposed timeline of signed agreements by July is not reasonable. The core issue is liability and FACC might be expected to obtain its own insurance. Beverley observed insurance might run about \$300 per year. Philip commented on how that would shorten the shoestring of our budget, even though the risk is ours, not the Park Authority's.

Philip reported the Park Authority has a website on this topic and it may be indicative to note that one of the photos on the page is a group handing over a giant check. Kris remarked library friends groups have a similar situation. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/friends/>



- *Back to the Bay Day 6/10*

Philip described "Back to the Bay Day" as part of Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week, a new occasion created to raise public awareness of the Bay, rivers, and streams. The event was at Mason Neck with displays, activities, and live entertainment. FACC did not participate, but perhaps we should next year. It is a Virginia Conservation Network activity and we are now paying members. Flint mentioned he had attended and there were many politicians, vendors, and displays. <http://www.vcnva.org/back-to-the-bay/> or <http://www.vcnva.org/chesapeake-bay-awareness-week/>

- *Braddock Road Meeting*  
Philip advised there will be a Braddock Road community meeting on June 26 at 6:30 p.m. at Lake Braddock Secondary School. Studies are near completion and options are all very bad, with much loss of tree cover, and a possible realignment of Danbury Forest Drive right onto the banks of Long Branch. <http://www.accotink.org/2015/BraddockRoad.htm>  
<http://www.accotink.org/2017/BraddockRoadComments2017.pdf>
  
- *MOM's Organic Market Block Party*  
Philip spoke about MOM's Organic Market turning 30. We are invited to table at their block party celebration on Sunday July 2 from 11am-3pm. Kris and Elaine will attend. Elaine will have kids' activity art and journaling supplies. Kris mentioned interest by MOM's in adopting Little Run Elementary school as their service activity.
  
- *Accotink/Braddock Friends Meeting*  
Philip announced Tony Vellucci proposes a joint meeting of Accotink Creek watershed friends groups at 7:00 pm July 20 at Braddock Hall. This would include at least FLAP and FLBSV, but he shall endeavor to have others included. Tony plans to arrange presentations on the friends agreement situation from the Park Authority and on TMDL from DEQ.

• *Choose Clean Water Conference:*

Julie gave a presentation on her attendance at the Choose Clean Water Conference, including a description of her “near decapitation” experience with a drone demonstration. The conference was an opportunity for networking and water quality updates. Highlights:

- Diversity discussions on outreach to groups and individuals not already involved and aware.
- The Grelen Nursery partnership with Charlottesville on trails
- A project to increase visits and awareness of Rivanna river erosion and stormwater issues by building access steps and trails - Rivanna Trails Foundation leases private land for trails and there is statutory liability protection for such free recreational access.
- Riparian buffers for agriculture
- Pennsylvania increase in attention to agriculture issues
- Roles for land trusts
- Drones tend not to be waterproof, but give access to inaccessible areas.
- Policy action focuses for 2025
- Personal networking with Trash Free Maryland

Through the conference, Julie has entered a mentorship with a consultant at [Skeo Solutions](#) on professionally representing oneself.

• *Little Run Elementary:*

Kris advised the grant will extend into fall, but we have wrapped up student activities for the school year, most recently installation of a sponge garden with descriptive sign. Kris thanked Joe Hirz for his contribution of expertise, especially mentioning his impromptu construction of a log weir around the garden to control runoff and mulch loss. Attention may next focus on a neglected area uphill from the garden.

Kris is planning a Scout activity with Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley July 15<sup>th</sup> and is considering door-to-door outreach in surrounding neighborhoods. Hala suggested [NextDoor](#) is an effective way to reach neighbors. Suzy mentioned a plant rescue at Long Branch Falls Park as a possible activity with FLBSV.

There was a discussion of reimbursement and payment for services to various parties. Kris will send a financial report to Beverley.

- *Plein Air:*

Elaine informed us she is in discussions with Lake Accotink Park on brochures, but cannot post anything in the park in competition with county classes. There was discussion of FACC entering a vendor contract for plein air workshops. Elaine is also talking to Hidden Oaks Nature Center about art activities there and mentioned a tour of Accotink Creek once available there.

- *Oakford Stream Restoration:*

Suzy described cooperating with the homeowners association to do three sessions of native plant rescue. Flint pointed out the value of native plant rescues as outreach to civic associations.

- *495 Survey/Spring Restoration:*

Suzy recounted that on May 22, The Friends of Accotink Creek joined State Senator Dave Marsden along with representatives of VDOT, Stormwater Planning Division, the Sierra Club, and others for a one-year-later [follow-up tour of problem sites](#) along 495. Suzy observed they have still not “stitched it all back together”, and mentioned especially the parties have walked away from responsibility to restore a staging area beside Little River Turnpike. Kris scoffed at the pride VDOT had expressed in the inadequate work they had done in the past three weeks. He offered that Amy at Fairfax County Restoration Project is trying to let VDOT feel good and see a way out. Flint mentioned that he had spoken at I-66 hearings to point out VDOT is not meeting county stormwater standards.

Suzy looked on the MS4 permit as an opportunity to pressure VDOT. Flint recommended advocating for VDOT compliance with county standards. Kris pondered the value of using VDOT’s ongoing failure to use native seed mixes as a campaign issue, given that they seed so much land that could be of such value.

Suzy noted that Dominion Energy had [announced pollinator promoting practices](#) and that the Loudoun Conservancy is pressuring VDOT to favor similar practices.

Kris discussed the possibility of arranging a meeting via Senator Marsden between VDOT and the county, possibly including the Virginia Conservation Network and Choose Clean Water Coalition.

Philip mentioned the survey was subsequent to our May 2016 survey of the same issues. He elaborated on one glaring issue – the trashing of a spring – which VDOT has asked NVSWCD to develop a [plan to restore](#).

- *Master Watershed Stewardship:*

Kris talked about interest by locally headquartered donor organizations in more local environmental donations. Community engagement to train persons to implement watershed projects is a possible direction. [The Community Foundation](#) is talking to NVSWCD on training programs.

• Trash Action Work Force:

Flint summarized the recent Trash Action Workforce gathering as coalescing around the idea of a Halloween-themed next action, and mentioned costumes he had seen at Back to the Bay Day. Kris mused about trash monsters and the apocalypse. There is no clear next target yet. Philip mentioned the next meeting is July 10, 6:30PM, in the Sherwood Hall Library.

• Stream Monitoring/Creek Critters:

Kris recounted the June 4 stream monitoring in Long Branch central at Little Run Elementary using the Audubon Naturalist Society's [Creek Critters](#) smartphone app. Philip also told about monitoring Accotink Creek with Creek Critters on June 10<sup>th</sup>. As usual, the creek health index remained a dismal 4 on a 0 – 12 scale. We need a permanent team here to continue monitoring into the future.

Philip shared a poem written by a Girl Scout who joined us for stream monitoring last December:

*Accotink Creek Creatures  
By: Sophia Robertory*

When you go to the creek,  
And get messy feet,  
You're probably there,  
Because you care,  
About the creatures,  
With many features,  
You throw out the net,  
To get numbers met,  
To count the species,  
Of the creek life that we see,  
Numbers dropping,  
Because we're shopping,  
People don't care,  
And that's not fair,  
We have it all,  
While their numbers fall.  
May 21, 2017

• Sustainability Volunteers:

Flint put out a call for [recycling station volunteers](#) at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, starting June 29<sup>th</sup>. He also asked anyone interested in volunteering with the Air & Waste Management Association at the Boy Scout Jamboree in Beckley, West Virginia, to get in touch.

Flint described his lobbying efforts with the Citizens Climate Lobby Conference for a fee & dividend bill on climate change. Endorsed even by the oil industry, this would put a fee on carbon, refunded by a dividend to all citizens.

Flint will be sending out the Federation of Civic Associations survey to determine legislative priorities. It is important to respond.

• I-66 Update:

Philip recapped the June 14<sup>th</sup> [I-66 Express Lanes](#) project meeting. The I-66 Express Mobility Partners, a Spanish-French consortium, has won the 50-year concession to build and operate the project. The construction contractor will be FAM Construction, a Spanish-U.S. consortium, partly owned by the Spanish partner in the operating consortium.

Design display boards at the meeting indicated little change in project design in the Accotink Creek watershed since last year. An exception is routing of bike/pedestrian paths through cloverleaves, where some paths have been routed away from roadsides, improving ease of biking passage, but nibbling away a bit more wooded habitat.

Philip offered comments at the meeting on behalf of FACC stating:

- Our objection to tree loss without mitigation
- Our objection to outdated stormwater control standards
- Our objection to transit as an afterthought, rather than a leading element in any transportation project

And pointing out we expect to face the same situation with the I-66 Express Lanes as we are still facing with I-495.

Additional public meetings are expected in fall 2017. Construction activity is expected to begin in late 2017.

• Best of Braddock:

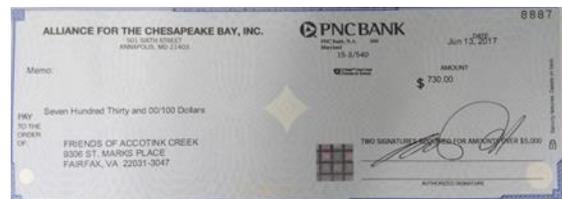
Philip announced some friends of the Accotink Creek watershed received recent recognition:

- FLAP has been named the 2017 recipient of the Best of Braddock award.
- FLAP President Meghan Walker has been named the 2017 Braddock District Citizen of the Year.
- Park Authority Board Member-at-Large Mary Cortina has been named 2017 Lady Fairfax for Braddock District.

• Donations:

Philip let us know PayPal Giving Fund sent us \$3.38 USD, and reminded all to visit our [support page](#) to find painless and free ways to support FACC through Goodshop, Amazon Smile, and more.

Suzy brought in the \$730 stipend check from Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, based on the number of our volunteers during the spring Potomac Watershed Cleanup.



• Delegate Kory:

Philip noted Delegate Kaye Kory (Dist. 38) recently joined our email listserv.

• *Facebook:*

We have passed the Facebook milestone of 600 friends. Our total Page Likes are now 601.

