

2/13/17 meeting of Trash Action Work Force (TAWF)

Attendees: Cathy Ledec (Friends of Huntley Meadows), Kris Unger, Liz and Dave Lincoln, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang, Mimi and Will Friedman (Friends of Accotink Creek), Meghan Walker (Friends of Lake Accotink Park), Norbert Pink (Sierra Club, Great Falls group), Ned Stone (Friends of Dyke Marsh), Wendy Cohen (Clean Fairfax), Monica Billger (Audubon Naturalist Society), Betsy Martin, Eleanor Quigley (Friends of Little Hunting Creek).

PLANNED ACTIONS

1. We plan to attempt to meet with the International Bottle Water Association in advance of our protest¹. Our “ask” is not fully developed. Note from Betsy: at minimum, we should ask IBWA to
 - a. Drop their opposition to a National Park Service ban on the sale of disposable bottled water in national parks, and their opposition to bottle deposit laws.
 - b. Go beyond their proposed solution of curbside recycling. It hasn’t solved the litter problem in our area; all our jurisdictions have curbside recycling yet our streams and the Potomac River are overwhelmed by bottle litter.
 - c. We should find out how much \$\$ they’re contributing, to whom, for outreach and education, their other solution.

Action item: we’ll need to do research to prepare for this meeting. You may want to explore their questionable environmental claims at <http://www.bottledwater.org/education/environment> . Here’s a link to their statement about “bottled water packaging” and proposed solution to bottled water litter <http://www.bottledwater.org/newsroom/policy-statement/packaging> . (The word “litter” doesn’t appear on their website.) Tentatively, the meeting (and research group) includes Betsy, Kris, Eleanor—do others wish to join?

2. Trash Action Day protest at the headquarters of the International Bottled Water Association, 1700 Diagonal Rd.—

Time: 7 a.m.-10 a.m. Monday morning May 8. (This timing will mean fewer protesters, but the IBWA staff will be arriving at their offices.)

Vehicles: We plan to claim 2 parking places on Daingerfield Rd that are right outside (and visible from) the IBWA office, in which to park a pickup truck (Ed Raduazo has agreed to supply) filled with clear plastic bags of water bottles, with signage (e.g., “International Bottled Water Association: YOU DROPPED SOMETHING!” “These are some of the water bottles picked up in one day from Little Hunting

¹ Background: The International Bottled Water Association opposes bottle deposits. A couple years ago, the IBWA successfully lobbied Congress to prevent National Park Service from banning sale of disposable bottled water in national parks. Betsy wrote a “Local opinions” piece in the Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/thirsting-for-help-with-controlling-litter/2015/07/24/8f2b2a42-2fe5-11e5-97ae-30a30cca95d7_story.html?utm_term=.733c6fff576f). I also wrote a letter to the IBWA inviting them to participate in last year’s Friends of Little Hunting Creek cleanup. They never responded, nor did they show up at the cleanup.

Creek and Accotink Creek” or whatever better we come up with), and a smart car with signs etc., supplied by Dave Lincoln. (These are 3 hour paid spots, 8 am to 9pm.) Philip says there are many other available parking places in the area. Parking spaces can be used only for vehicles, not for people. We may need to park vehicles in the places the night before.

Protesters: We will march around 1700 Diagonal Rd on the sidewalks, probably in single file in some places, and hand out leaflets/flyers on the sidewalks and at Metro. We should have sign-in sheets to capture protesters’ names, email addresses for future actions. According to Eleanor’s and Paul’s information, we don’t need permits if we follow these restrictions:

- On public sidewalks, must keep 4’ free for foot traffic.
- On public sidewalks, we must keep moving.
- No furniture (chairs, tables) on sidewalk. No bullhorns.
- Distribution of leaflets is allowed.
- In Metro, we can hand out leaflets, but we must not be in the station or covered areas, and cannot obstruct passenger access or egress, or parking areas or roadways.

Sponsors/organizational participants: Friends of Accotink Creek, Friends of Lake Accotink Park, Friends of Little Hunting Creek, Friends of Huntley Meadows, Sierra Club (Great Falls group).

Questions and Action Items:

- Does Alice Ferguson Foundation want to conduct an educational component (after or during) our protest in King Street Gardens Park? (At the triangle formed by King Street and Daingerfield Rd.) Hannah Seligmann (AFF) agreed to explore this possibility with AFF, and to coordinate with Eleanor re Alexandria permitting requirements.
- Comment from Betsy: An alternative to parking our water-bottle-piled and signed vehicles would be to drive them around the local streets during the 3 hours of our protest. They’d be more visible, actually part of our protest, and we wouldn’t have the headache of finding parking.
- Liz Lincoln proposes that we arrange to show the movie Bag-It! at the protest. Others thought this was a distraction from the main purpose and action, and logistically unmanageable. Liz wants to contact Hilton re showing the movie inside the Hilton.
- Betsy proposes that we ask spring cleanup volunteers to separate water bottles from all other trash, for display in the pickup and to use in constructing costumery. She will bring clear plastic bags to be used for that purpose to distribute our next meeting (March 13).
- Chants: Everybody (and especially Julie) should come up with a proposed protest chant for the next meeting, for the group to practice and comment on. (It will be rowdy in the library.)

Signs

We’ll need to create signs for protesters to carry, and for the sides of the vehicles. We’ve agreed that home-made signs rather than manufactured signs are more persuasive and effective. We’ll hold a sign (and costume) making work party at Betsy Martin and Paul Siegel’s house on a Sunday following the April 8th cleanup.

- Philip displayed his (very cute) water bottle puppet and various graphic designs that might lend themselves to signage; he's posted the graphics at <http://www.accotink.org/2017/DayofActiongraphics.pdf> .
- Kris notes we need a budget for sign making; Dave and Liz will bring 20 pcs of posterboard to the work party; we'll also need strings and sticks if we want to make puppets.
- Dave notes we'll need to make signs for protesters who don't bring their own.
- Monica notes that to be effective, signage should be local, should show pictures reflecting conditions in our own streams.
- It was suggested that our signage/costumes could be expanded to include other forms of plastic (e.g. plastic bags).

Leaflets

1. Philip's leaflet has been revised and will be sent to all on the email list, it will address cyber action.
2. Betsy argued that Philip's leaflet is too abstract—doesn't mention our own local streams or their condition, why we are protesting against IBWA, or what we're asking from them. It doesn't mention IBWA, except as the location of the protest. She proposed to design an alternative flyer to distribute before the next meeting. Kris noted that we can have multiple flyers. (We might want different flyers to hand out in advance, versus at the actual event.)

Outreach and protester recruiting

1. Kid Action—Kris and Monica may do.
 - a. Litter photo contest for kids, with the prize being the winner getting their picture published on our Facebook page, or possibly in the Connection newspaper.
 - b. Schools with environmental clubs are most productive to target—Elaine Tholen of Get to Green can provide contact info for FCPS schools. (Wendy)
 - c. Girl Scouts address the topic of water during 2nd or 3rd grades—target this group? (Monica)
 - d. Students can get community service hours for participating in May 8 action.
2. Outreach to political representatives—Betsy will be in contact with Sen. Scott Surovell, Delegate Paul Krizek. Eleanor will contact Sen. Adam Ebbin, Delegate Levine.
3. Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions—Norbert will reach out to them.
4. Friends of Friends groups—Save the date is the communication that is needed at this point. Cathy has a list and will send to me (or better yet, send a save the date message herself?)
5. Green Breakfast—Eleanor and Dave will reach out.
6. NOVA Community College—Kris.
7. Springfest April 29, at Sully Historic district—Wendy says we could get a free exhibitor table. Clean Fairfax to take this on?—Wendy needs to check.
8. Unitarians
9. Fellow litter pickers: Betsy sent a message to 2016 AFF cleanup leaders in Fairfax, Alexandria, Arlington to invite them to this meeting, and to our May 8 action. No takers to her knowledge.

10. Sierra Club's Great Falls group would like a 200-word article for their upcoming newsletter. Kris will write it.
11. Others: Dean Naujoks of Potomac Riverkeeper, Congressmen Gerry Connolly, Don Beyer. Rob Hartwell.

Social media/electronic communications (subcommittee for social media= Meghan, Liz, Philip, Kris, Monica)

1. Facebook: Meghan has designed a page called "NOVA Trash Action Work Force" (TAWF).
 - a. We should all "like" it.
 - b. She needs content—send to flap.president@gmail.com
2. Instagram—Meghan will create an Instagram page.
3. Googledocs—Meghan has created this and can provide instruction on how to use it, at this link:

NOVA TAWF Day of Action Contacts

4. Philip requests system for messaging IBWA on May 8 by those who do not join the demonstration.

Publicity

1. News media
 - a. Connection newspapers—Philip
 - b. Patch.com
 - c. Washington Post (Antonio Olivo reports on local environmental matters)
 - d. NextDoor
 - e. Mount Vernon Voice—Steve Hunt.
2. Other
 - a. Contact the Scottish Walk and Campagna Center about entering a float in their parade in Dec. (1st Saturday) 2017.

Next meeting: 6:30 pm, Monday, March 13, Sherwood Hall Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria.