



+Notes from:

## Friends of Accotink Creek Strategy Session

January 20, 2020

**Introductions:** Attendees introduced themselves and offered these comments about what they hoped to get from the Strategy Session:

- Where and Whether FACC is going forward.
- Hear others' opinions
- It is good to de-stabilize what has been stable, in order to evolve.
- How to make meetings entertaining, not dull.
- Discuss a Newsletter
- Gain insights and suggestions
- Figure out how to share information better
- Develop an open, welcoming environment
- Increase Accessibility
- Share with FLAP, what is going on
- Find new ways to get the FACC name out
- Look for opportunities
- Ideas need somebody to implement them.
- We are too few active participants
- Discuss Outreach
- Discuss benefits and drawbacks of large groups
- Understand challenges
- Learn how we can help

**Discussing SWOT:** These notes were in answer to the question, "What **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats are in the forefront for FACC and our sister organizations?"

- Getting the word out is a challenge (several reiterated this).
- Figure out what we want from people/participants: Events? Organization?
- Climate Change is the key long-term challenge.
- Insurance is the/a primary short-term issue.
- Strength: Numbers of people participating
- Challenge: Getting the message out
- Opportunities: New elected Chairman, Supervisors in the County to influence with a strong, concerted voice
- Volunteers are sustainable (in comparison to funding paid positions)
- We need Implementers
- How do we get more funding?
- We need to target neighbors of our streams
- We need teens in stream monitoring, and other activities: They are interested.
- A strength: We have interested people.
- Weakness: Communications of needs
- Opportunity: Adjust meeting times and places for more participants (ex: restaurant setting)

- Opportunity: Pair people with activities, for ownership and best matches with interests
- People like hands-on activities
- Opportunity: School involvement has been good (Long Branch)
- Climate: How to take advantage of interest in the issue.
- Strength: Core group/s
- Weakness: Lack of outreach and sustainability
- Need diversity of participants (ages, backgrounds, interests)
- Local politics as an opportunity, and a threat as well.
- Weakness: Providing opportunities for participants to have fun.
- Threat: The overuse of natural resources as an overarching issue.
- Opportunity: provide mentorship opportunities for young people.
- Opportunity: provide more involvement by volunteers to take action.
- Weakness: volunteers' time availability

**Actions:** We discussed actions the stream friends need to take to address key points captured above. There are three, and ideas contributed from discussion of each are inserted with each:

- a. Outreach:** Form an Outreach Action Team (OAT) to improve communications with participants, governmental organizations, and funding sources. Volunteers include Sandy, ?????, Notes:
- b. Event Leadership:** Spreading the load of organizing and managing events is needed. Volunteers for an Event Action Team include: Philip Latasa, Gene [??], Dave Lincoln (to coordinate the team) Suzanne, and [Long Branch??]. Ideas discussed include:
  - Target Schools
  - Look at motivational strategies (service awards, recognition, like Presidential Service Awards)
  - CDP Companies need to document employee service involvement.
  - Leadership needed: Ads should include leadership opportunities
  - Look at Scouting's "Shadow" positions for development.
  - Companies' Volunteer Days may be useful (or may be complicated)
  - Look at assigning leadership responsibilities by area of the watershed (Ex: Friends of Sligo Creek)
  - Tap OAT to reach out to new audiences
  - Reach out to Scouting organizations
  - Look at shared multi-group events (Watershed-wide approach)
  - Example of the work: Among the tasks Philip listed for the Accotink Creek stream cleanups (12 per series, twice annually) are:
    - o Schedule: coordinate with Park Authority to avoid conflict with cleanup days
    - o Sign up (Spring series) with Alice Ferguson Fund for Potomac Watershed Cleanup
    - o Sign up (Fall series) with Clean Virginia Waterways for International Coastal Cleanup
    - o Announcement in Volunteer Fairfax
    - o Web announcement and calendar, with maps
    - o Manage each site (three per Saturday)
    - o Send details and answer questions about each cleanup to volunteers who sign up ahead of time.
    - o Carry and set up equipment
    - o Brief participants, get signatures on liability releases
    - o Report results to Alice Ferguson or Clean Virginia Waterways

- c. Fund Raising:** We discussed ideas and needs for improving fundraising. No action team volunteered to coordinate efforts at this juncture. Ideas included:
- Need to focus on awareness, application process, and execution for grant funding.
  - There is too much work involved in managing grants: Implementers needed.
  - Fairfax Water has grant money, for instance.
  - Insurance costs are a need to be addressed:
  - FACC is a 501(c)3 organization.
  - GoodSearch web search engine is a minor source of funding for FACC.
  - Collecting at school events is not allowed, but can we sell t-shirts, etc?
  - Crowdfunding, by various platforms.
  - Tabling at public events: Check whether fundraising is allowed. Community and Supervisors' events were discussed.
  - Amazon Smile has a Friends of the Accotink link.
  - Check on Combined Federal Campaign: Can a small organization get on their list?
  - Are there celebrities who will help?
  - Look at media coverage: newspapers and blogs were discussed

**Parking Lot:** These points came up during discussions of other topics, recorded for further consideration:

- Make events fun.
- Mentorship of young people.
- Web sites need to be clear, easy to navigate
- Target environmental consulting companies' employees.
- Schools participation in stream monitoring
- Inventory interests and skills
- Organize events together.
- Internship opportunities.