Accotink Gorge

Imperiled Biodiversity
Where is the Accotink Gorge located?
Where Accotink Creek crosses the Fall Line, In Springfield
Just west of I-95
Just south of Fairfax County Parkway & Fort Belvoir North
Roughly one mile in length
Closely bounded by commercial/industrial zones
“The Accotink Gorge is truly one of the most biodiverse locations I have ever had the privilege of exploring.”

Anemone quinquefolia, Wood anemone
Aureolaria virginica, Downy false foxglove
Clitoria mariana,
Butterfly pea
Epigaea repens, Mayflower
Monarda fistulosa, Wild bergamot
Protographium Marcellus, Zebra swallowtail, on Asclepias tuberosa, Butterfly weed
Silene caroliniana, Wild pink
Passiflora incarnata, Purple passionflower
In the southern portion of Accotink Gorge exists one of the more diverse examples of oak hickory heath forest in the entire Fairfax County park system.
Dominion Power clearing maintains habitat for meadow species adjacent to forested areas of the Accotink Gorge.
It is not too late to save this oasis, but it will be soon.

Wisteria sinensis (Chinese wisteria) vines are rapidly killing its canopy trees.
Wisteria sinensis girdles young trees.
Wisteria vines spread both upward into trees and snake along the ground.
Parts of the forest are completely obscured by wisteria.
Leaving little sunlight for native plants below.
Wisteria seed production is appallingly fecund, facilitating colonization of new areas.
Citizen naturalists seek solutions to preserve this biological gem.
The high dry rocky oak hickory forest, which is just starting to be invaded, is where the Wisteria removal should begin, as it contains the most uncommon species.
Future action?

Beyond the headland area, the task is formidable.

To get there:

- We will need to muster money and manpower adequate to the job.
- Dominion, Fort Belvoir biologists, and VDOT should be involved.
- Partnership with any and all interested groups is welcome.
- We will need to appeal to neighboring commercial entities.
- Volunteers alone are unlikely to suffice.
- We will need grants to actually hire people and licensed applicators.
- This is an Eternal Commitment. The wisteria will never give up.