



2/4/15

TO: parkscount@fairfaxcounty.gov (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parkscount/>)

Parks Count! – Positions of Friends of Accotink Creek

- Upgrade of facilities
While we are largely neutral on facilities, we ask that planning be guided by the principles of no net increase in impervious surfaces and no increase in runoff. Further, any renovations or construction that may be undertaken would offer opportunities to incorporate advanced environmental and watershed-friendly features.
- Invasives removal/prevention
Invasive alien plant species are pervasive within our parks, diminishing both environmental and recreational value of natural areas. While the Park Authority's Invasive Management Area volunteer program addresses a few small areas, park-wide invasive prevention and control should be integrated into all maintenance and planning.
- Defend natural resources over recreation
The demand for active recreational and sports use of parks is infinite, but our remaining natural areas are finite. Destruction of irreplaceable habitat to satisfy demands for active recreation is an unwise course. Likewise, encouraging types of recreation in natural areas that degrade those areas is also destined to be regretted.
- Stream restoration or protection projects
Fairfax County is undertaking, at great expense to taxpayers, a series of remediation plans to restore the health of all streams in the county. As steward of so many of our streams and natural areas, the Park Authority has a key role to play in the success of this endeavor. Park Authority actions cannot be conceived in isolation from this larger goal or work at cross purposes. Planning should incorporate elements of the county's Accotink Creek Watershed Plan affecting parks and integrate the goal of watershed protection.
- The park as a watershed-friendly demonstration area
County facilities in general, and parks in particular, are in the public eye and should serve as showcases for watershed-friendly practices, providing inspiring examples for property owners to follow, thus serving as a multiplier for county watershed restoration expenditures.
- Pavement
Pavement is the primary cause of impairment of stream health in our county, by causing streambed erosion through excessive runoff. The Park Authority could set the example of reversing this trend by avoidance of creation of impervious surfaces, by replanting, by depaving, by replacing conventional pavement with pervious pavement, and by mitigation of new construction.
- The balance needed between preservation vs. increased demands for park revenue
Ever growing requirements for parks to produce revenue are inconsistent with the concept of parks as a public benefit. Pursuing revenue producing activities will render our public parks indistinguishable from shopping centers or private amusement parks.
- Cost avoidance value of preserving natural areas
Rather than asking our parks to produce revenue, let us consider the cost avoidance value to our community of maintaining and enhancing natural areas for flood control and water quality.
- Cross County Trail
The Cross County Trail was conceived as connecting green, shaded stream valleys which were off limits to developers. Misplaced incentives are causing acres of asphalt to be laid along the floodplains of these once-protected stream valleys, in the name of improving the CCT. This is inconsistent with a mission of stewardship.

FACC stands ready to meet county partners and discuss how to move these issues forward.

Sincerely yours,

Kris Unger, Primary Conservator, [Friends of Accotink Creek](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/friends-of-accotink-creek/)