



## 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 – February 19, 2019

Next Meeting: March 19, 2019 (Third Tuesday of each month)  
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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#### **Present:**

Dave Lincoln, Anastasios Galatis, Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang, Kris Unger, Suzy Foster, Tony Vellucci

James Walkinshaw, guest & candidate for Braddock District supervisor

#### **Upcoming events**

- Plant NOVA Natives Partnership February 26, 2019
- Dyke March Vernal Pool Program, March 3, 2019
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, March 9, 2019
- Fairhill Elementary 3R Planting, April 30, 2019

#### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

##### • Represent FACC:

- *Drawdown Workshop - Faith Alliance for Climate Jan. 27, 2019*

Kris and Suzy attended. Suzy reported about 50 persons in attendance, in a “fired up” condition. She pointed out FACS is active before the Board of Supervisors and other local venues. Dave mentioned Supervisor Storck’s recent climate change initiative and his frustration in trying to get Supervisor Herrity interested.

- *Mount Vernon Town Meeting Feb. 2, 2019*

Dave reported a good tabling experience and productive contacts with the Mt. Vernon school board member.

- *Plant NOVA Natives Partnership Feb. 26, 2019*

Kris attended and reported a focus on social media outreach.

- *Fairfax County Strategic Plan Feb. 26, 2019*

Philip observed the Fairfax County Strategic Plan is being revised, with citizen input sought through an online [survey](#) and several [public meetings](#). One meeting is in our watershed, on February 26, at Little River Glen Senior Center.

- *Vernal Pool Program Mar. 3, 2019*

Sandy and Anastasios are on track to staff a table at this event. Kris remarked that vernal pool expert Mike Hayslett will be in our area in April, and some sort of activity may be possible. Dave recalled our exploration of [Lake Accotink Park vernal pools](#) in 2018.

- *Chesapeake Bay Day Mar. 6, 2019*  
Kris is going to this event on Capitol Hill. He observed it's a good way to connect with environmental advocates and meet legislators.
- *Teen Job Fairs Mar. 9 & 23, 2019*  
Philip noted several teen job fairs are being sponsored by supervisors, and two are in or adjacent to our watershed, if anyone would care to attend.

Saturday, March 9th Woodson High School

Saturday, March 23rd West Springfield High School

Dave mentioned discussions with Mt. Vernon District staff indicated resume-building unpaid internship opportunities are welcome. Philip recalled our aspiration for a work/study program in the Accotink Gorge. Kris cautioned that considerable resources would be required.

- *EcoAction Arlington Mar. 13, 2019*  
Philip relayed an invitation from EcoAction Arlington to exhibit at their annual meeting March 13, although it is rather far from our watershed. Kris shared Philip's recent quip that we might rather make EcoAction Arlington a target of protest, since they were m.i.a. during our [Trash Day of Action](#) in their territory.
- *Student Environmental Action Showcase Apr. 23, 2019*  
Philip relayed another invitation from NoVA Outside to exhibit at the [Student Environmental Action Showcase](#) on April 23. Kris described previous showcases as a big room full of excited kids with student displays and competitions.

- *ESRI Conference:*

Julie represented FACC at the [Esri Federal GIS Conference](#). She mentioned storymaps as a tool that could help the public understand watershed issues. Kris and Julie will cooperate on marking our watershed on Google Maps. Dave noted the mapping of our watershed being done for the TMDL. Sandy offered the [USGS National Map](#) as a useful tool.

- *Plastic Bag Bills:*

Philip lamented that none of the several plastic bag bills got out of committees this session. One related bill, to fine retailers for abandoned shopping carts, did pass the Senate, but died in committee in the House of Delegates.

- *TMDL:*

Kris is on the outreach committee, where he has pushed for a pilot chloride outreach program this year in the Long Branch (central) watershed. Dave stressed the need to emphasize effects on drinking water. Kris has talked to other watershed groups about proceeding without waiting for DEQ.

There was discussion of VDOT vs. other sources of chloride. Dave advised VDOT is ahead of other applicators, largely because of its use of brine instead of solid salt. Dave suggested mapping of ownership of treated surfaces would be useful. There was an exchange of anecdotes on who had spotted the most egregious piles of spilled salt.

Dave described state level New Hampshire legislation providing tort protection for property owners using salt application best management practices.

• Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:

We requested an update on the Lake Accotink studies and received back the latest WSSI study, Philip advised. To our surprise, it recommends the forebay option north of Braddock Road. It also recommends spoils disposal in the same area, with spoils transport by pipeline. Philip inquired how we should share with Save Lake Accotink and FLAP. He also pointed out we need to respond to the suggestion of DPWES to meet and examine other studies that are not final, combined with a conference call with VDGIF to discuss fish passage. Sandy pondered whether the sediment had been tested for contamination. Tony suggested neighboring civic associations should know.

There was consensus to proceed with advising FLAP and SLA and arranging the meeting, which Philip will do. Tony, Sandy, Anastasios, and Julie all expressed interest in participating.

• Conservation Leadership Project:

Julie related the success of Katie's first workday February 16<sup>th</sup> at Daniels Run Elementary School. About 10 persons, several from FACC and the Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Council, cooperated to remove Japanese honeysuckle, Multiflora rose, English ivy, and Porcelainberry from around the campus vernal pool. The Fairfax City media office was on hand to document the day and interview participants. Katie plans to do it again in one month, hoping to include nearby churches and neighbors. At some point, a walk-through for students is in the works.

• Americana Drive Cleanup:

The Americana Drive cleanup took place yesterday, Philip let us know. Eighty volunteers collected an estimated 352 bags of trash, filled one dumpster to overflowing, and piled up enough loose debris to fill at least one more. Americana Drive had the appearance of an orange and black caterpillar from all the piles of orange and black bags piled along its length.



Americana Drive cleanup volunteers

FACC received a \$100 donation from Rotary Club toward food. Philip will get receipts for reimbursement.

To secure the support of VDOT, we agreed to sign an adopt-a-highway agreement. Philip wondered if maybe this was not a good idea, since we are supposed to do two cleanups per year.

- *Fairfax League of Conservation Voters:*

Kris informed us FLCV is still figuring out what to do. Other groups are also interested in joint candidate forums, such as Sierra Club and Coalition for Smarter Growth. FLCV is considering the question of being involved in primary elections, rather than only the general election.

- *Gallows Road Retirement Development:*

Philip reported the Planning Commission voted unanimously on February 13th to indefinitely defer action on the proposed Gallows Road Development.

- *4104 Woodlark Drive:*

Philip indicated the applicant has appealed the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exception Review Committee's denial to the Board of Supervisors. Although we don't yet know when the matter will be heard by the Board, it appears the county attorney will not be able to make a presentation for at least three months. This will not be a public hearing. Neither community members nor members of the Committee will have the opportunity to speak, unless the supervisors ask them questions.

Philip presented draft comments to be sent to the county attorney and to supervisors. After discussion, the comments were approved without objection.

- *Clean Water Rule:*

Philip relayed a communication from Virginia Conservation Network encouraging us to submit individual and group comments on proposed changes to the Clean Water Rule. VCN also indicated their support is available, possibly including funding, for other forms of outreach and public events. Sandy will examine the proposed changes and make recommendations.

- *Fairfax Air Quality and Health Project:*

Kris described this as an initiative of the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions focused on the Lorton incinerator. FACS will be seeking an EPA environmental justice grant, possibly to install air monitoring stations. Kris presented a draft letter of FACC's support. Philip expressed doubts about the relevance to our mission, but after discussion and a minor edit, the letter was approved without objection.

- *Potomac Watershed Cleanup:*

Philip announced it is time for our spring cleanups. He noted there is a gap on April 13<sup>th</sup> so he or others may join the Hallman Street cleanup site in Fairfax City, at the Accotink Creek headwaters. Some other dates are of interest:

- Girl Scout Troop 6932 will handle the Barkley Drive site April 27th
- Two new Park Authority cleanups in our watershed – Pine Ridge Park, Ossian Hall Park April 6th
- Fort Belvoir's cleanup is April 7th
- West End Rugby has offered 50 volunteers for a private cleanup March 31<sup>st</sup>

- Friends of Parks:

Philip advised another Federation of Friends meeting is approaching March 23<sup>rd</sup>. He suggested we might just want to “keep our heads down” in hope of being overlooked.

Tony noted the process is under new management with a more balanced approach. He offered a vision of FACC “pollinating” other friends groups with the example of working with DPWES on water issues in their parks.

Tony described the approach taken by Friends of Royal Lake Park, namely, to not incorporate, acting as an advocacy group outside the park, while working as a Park Volunteer Team within the park, participating in events sponsored by the Park Authority.

- Insurance

Sandy relayed Beverley’s message that she is still awaiting insurance estimates. Philip observed that, even without insurance, we had happily dodged all the nails and other sharp objects during yesterday’s Americana Drive cleanup.

- Wakefield Park Mainstem Stream Restoration:

Philip indicated we attended a meeting January 18<sup>th</sup> regarding the proposed Wakefield Park stream restoration. The project is proceeding, but no schedule is definite. Archeological findings have limited the upstream reach of the project, so it will begin some distance downstream from Wakefield Run.

- Fitzhugh Park

Fitzhugh Park is along Americana Drive. Philip conveyed the information that it has recently had a restoration project that involved clearing invasive vines and replacing them with a meadow planting. Funding was from a VDOT proffer made after the loss of some of Fitzhugh Park to the 495 Express Lanes. Tony observed Fitzhugh Park has issues with illicit juvenile use.



- Donations:

New donations received:

- *In memory of Audrey Moore*  
\$100 from Merrily Pierce
- *Facebook donations*

Philip’s daughter created a Facebook Fundraiser to benefit FACC. The proceeds are \$129.94.

- Fairfax Water Grant:

Philip advised Fairfax Water grant applications are due by May 15. He inquired if we want to apply again. There was discussion of repackaging our previous grant. Kris observed Fairfax Water is interested in salt issues, so perhaps there could be a focus on student salt awareness. Suzy mentioned the stormwater controls at Mantua Elementary School have gauges, which perhaps could measure salt. Kris will apply.

- *Ravensworth Farm Newsletter:*

The Ravensworth Farm Civic Association newsletter is looking for copy if FACC has anything we would like to publish. There was discussion of promoting the Potomac Watershed Cleanup or of creating a “standard” article that could be adapted to different times and newsletters. Dave mentioned he usually puts a link to our cleanups on his homeowners’ association website and Facebook.

- *Website Updates:*

Philip announced he has put up a new FACC webpage for the [2019 Elections](#) and has also updated our [“Maps”](#) page, found under the “Resources” menu item.

- *Friends of Royal Lake:*

Tony expressed concern about the cumulative effects on Rabbit Branch (a Pohick Creek tributary) and Royal Lake of development projects, some of them by state entities unaccountable to the County. He questioned the ability of homeowner associations to maintain in perpetuity some of the high-maintenance stormwater control features being installed.

Kris observed the appointment of the new County Deputy Executive portends much reorganization of County government, with some potential for positive impacts on concerns of this type.

Tony further explained that Royal Lake Park is overdue for a new master plan. He encouraged a mentoring role by FACC and suggested we be at the next Friends of Royal Lake Park meeting. Kris will follow up.

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