



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 – July 16, 2019

Next Meeting: August 20, 2019 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang, Kim Schauer
James Lee – Welcome, James!
Daniel Wu – Welcome, Daniel!

Upcoming events

- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park September 14, 2019
- International Coastal Cleanup September 7 – October 12

FACC Subjects Discussed –

- Community Foundation for Northern Virginia:

By email, Kris advised that the presentation and conversation went well. The Foundation members liked the Follow the Water program and other work we are doing. They are focusing on a larger scale, but will put us on their Donor Advised Funds list.

- Insurance:

Sandy had no news to report, but will double check status.

- INOVA/Fairview Park:

- o Nature Walk

Philip said Kris will be out of town, but it looks like the walk will take place July 30th, including participation by Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and Friends of Holmes Run. Rod Simmons of Alexandria Parks is familiar with the property and will lead the walk.

Across 495, Kris is also planning an eco-survey with the Fairview Park neighbors.

- o Friends of Holmes Run

The new group has had one organizational meeting and seems to be off to a promising start. According to Philip, most of the participants are already civic association leaders. The main focus of interest was the INOVA/Fairview development, but Kris and Philip encouraged thinking broadly about the needs of the watershed in general. Kris mentioned by email that the members are anticipating the results of the Merrifield Task Force votes in August and September.

• Thompson Farm:

Philip indicated this 9.55 acre property on Bear Branch just south of Lee Hwy has been sold and a [single-family residential development](#) is proposed. Some of us have visited this place, also known as Walnut Hill Farm. We had one of our monthly meetings there in [April 2015](#). Since a change of zoning density is requested, the Planning Commission will consider the proposal at their July 31st hearing. Philip made these points:

- Of the 9.55 acres, they are donating precisely the 1.8 acres located in the RPA to the Park Authority, the area they could not use anyway.
- Of course, the trees in the RPA cannot be left in peace – the developer is offering a paved bike trail the length of Bear Branch in the new park area.
- With 28 houses and 117 parking spaces, 112 of those in driveways, “they won't have space to swing a cat in these streets”.

Philip offered draft [comments](#) to be submitted to the Planning Commission, which the group approved without objection.

Philip also mentioned seeing another item on the July 31st Planning Commission agenda for a mosque in the industrial area near Long Branch south. The lot has long been cleared, but they would be converting grass to asphalt. <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ldsdfw/4659287.PDF>

• I-66 Tour:

Philip stated the I-66 project has moved into a higher gear in the past several weeks. Some few areas of trees that seemingly might be spared have now fallen, specifically every single tree in the Nutley Street cloverleaf and the last intact patches of woods in the Chain Bridge Road cloverleaf. Worse, the Mosby Woods tributary east of Chain Bridge Road has been devastated. The pitiful strip of green left on the banks is gone and earthmoving equipment is churning the streambed itself into a muddy morass. The only thing left standing on the banks is the little blue stream protection sign.

Philip has emailed VDOT and Senator Marsden’s office about an inspection tour of I-66. Senator Marsden has suggested the first week in August.



Mosby Woods tributary before construction...



...and now

- Elections:

- o Fairfax League of Conservation Voters

Philip commented that the Fairfax League of Conservation Voters hibernated through the primaries, but now they are putting together questionnaires for the candidates and plan to also conduct interviews.

- Mussel Rescue:

Philip observed that on July 7th the stream gauge on Accotink Creek in Wakefield Park reached nearly 6000 cubic feet per second. 2000 cfs is enough to leave mussels stranded, so a group went out on July 10th and was able to rescue 38 mussels. More interesting than the mussels was the leech Kim found clinging to a mussel, guarding a clutch of eggs on its underside. This species is the Smooth Turtle Leech, apparently designed to ride the backs of turtles, just as it is riding this mussel.



Smooth turtle Leech guards its eggs

- 8211 Little River Turnpike:

This property happens to be uphill from and adjoining 4104 Woodlark Drive. The property owner has undertaken a large scale earthmoving project of up to 26,000 ft², including the installation of large stone retaining walls. This was all done with no permits whatsoever. The results have been unfortunate for another downhill neighbor whose yard is now being flooded with muddy water when it rains. County inspectors are deciding what to do.

- Blake Lane Park:

Save Blake Lane Park is unincorporated and asked for our help to receive donations. Without objection, the group agreed to help.

Save Blake Lane Park and Northern Virginia Conservation Trust have invited us to join their meeting with Supervisor Jeff McKay on 7/19 10:30am at his Alexandria office as "moral" support. Mainly the topic will be the One Fairfax Equity Policy. Philip will attend.

- Difficult Run Assisted Living:

In our neighboring watershed of Difficult Run, the Planning Commission is considering rezoning to accommodate a proposal for an 86-person assisted living facility. The facility would be on a septic system. The RPA was reexamined and miraculously found to be outside the area needed for the drain field. A group of neighbors is [organized in opposition](#). Philip expressed the hope they can be encouraged to consider becoming a Friends of Difficult Run.

Philip offered a draft of [comments](#) to the Planning Commission which were approved without objection.

- Outreach Grants:

Kim explained she and Kris have been in discussions about applying for an EcoTech grant for rather sophisticated electronic [Mayfly Data Logger](#) stations that would bring students into a wider network of water quality reporting. This could be done in connection with Follow the Water or with SaMS. Kim has also been in touch with USGS and found interest in comparing the data with their own by collocating a logging station. There are a dozen such stations in the Delaware River Basin, but none in Virginia. The loggers are solar charged, designed to be install in a fixed location, auto uploading data to [Monitor My Watershed](#). Anyway, we have missed the deadline this time, but may try again in fall. Cost is about \$1500 per station. Kim does have one station on hand that could be deployed now.

Kim also already has a grant in hand to distribute paper yard waste bags along with informational materials to encourage homeowners to keep plastics and other unwanted materials out of yard waste collections. About 1200 remain to be distributed. James expressed interest in distributing bags as a Boy Scout project. Kim and James will coordinate. Sandy suggested bags could also be deposited at central points, such as homeowners association offices or libraries. Kim mentioned the possibility of nature centers.

Kim will keep an eye out for other grants.

Philip mentioned [Erika Yalowitz](#) shared with us an \$8,000 to \$16,000 grant opportunity from [Green Latinos](#) to support local organizations working in communities impacted by climate-related flooding. It may not fit us that well, since its purpose is to protect people from flooding streams, whereas our purpose is to protect streams from people. Anyone in FACC is welcome to take advantage of the opportunity.

- James Lee:

James described his interest in environmental issues and contributing to FACC. He posed the query, "Looking forward, what could my role be?" Julie recalled her own experience attending Lake Braddock High School and starting the Green Committee in the National Honor Society. She advised to start by watching, explaining that the role depends on what you react to the most and what skills you want to develop. General discussion explored various approaches and opportunities.

- GIS Mapping:

Julie mentioned her frustration with the free version of GIS mapping. Kim noted that schools get free accounts. Kim has county access to GIS and will work with Julie on preparing FACC maps.

- Daniels Run Invasives:

Daniel recounted meeting Katie at the Fairfax City Earth Day and discussing of his interest in removing invasives along Daniels Run behind the school. He shared photos of areas there dominated by Porcelainberry. He has experience identifying and removing invasives with Earth Sangha. His hope is to do multiple invasives removal workdays in mid/late fall..

There was general discussion of permissions needed and how to proceed. Philip observed that the stream area is school property, but that the school would likely be unconcerned about work done there outside their fence. He also made the case for first completing the invasives removal on the school campus, which would be much appreciated .

The Plan:

- Daniel will contact Lands & Waters for assistance reaching out to the school
- Next, those of us interested should get together with Fairfax City Parks for their support.

- International Coastal Cleanup:

Philip advised it is time to schedule our fall stream cleanups. He submitted this proposed schedule and will await comments before posting online.

September 7

Fullerton Road
Franconia-Springfield Parkway
Telegraph Road

September 21

Pickett Road
Barkley Drive
Woodburn Road

September 28

Fairfax Blvd
Chain Bridge Road
Old Lee Hwy

October 5

King Arthur Road
Little River Turnpike
Braddock Road

October 12

Join Lake Accotink Park cleanup

- Whither FACC:

Discussion deferred until next meeting.
