



## 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 18, 2020

Next Meeting: March 17, 2020 (Third Tuesday of each month)  
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

---

**SUPPORT/DONATE**  
*It's easy & free!*

#### **Present:**

Sandy Collins, Dave Lincoln, Gene Schuman, Julie Chang (via conference call from her bus), Philip Latasa, Kim Schauer, Kathleen Gaffney  
Dan Carey – Welcome, Dan!

#### **Upcoming events**

- Winter Wisteria Walk Feb. 22, 2020
- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park March 14, 2020
- Taste of Ravensworth March 19, 2020
- Conservation Café March 26, 2020
- Americana Drive Cleanup April 4, 2020
- Potomac Watershed Cleanup April 4 – May 9, 2020
- Wakefield Park Planting week of April 18, 2020
- Mantua Earth Day April 20, 2020
- Earth Day Invasives Project April 22, 2020

#### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

##### • Watch the Green Grow:

Kim recapped the mission of [Watch the Green Grow](#), an outreach effort by the Park Authority to increase natural habitat corridors by encouraging green behaviors. It utilizes a crowdsourcing map with a menu of a dozen actions as a visualization and data collection tool. Seedlings are available for plantings. Watch the Green Grow is for individuals and civic associations. Dave suggested expansion to include houses of worship and other properties.

The program is limited to the watersheds of Accotink Creek, Sugarland Run, and Cub Run until July, when it will be opened county-wide.

One feature is free [MWEE](#) [mee-wee](Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience) for elementary schools in the three watersheds. Dave questioned whether parochial/private schools are eligible and Kim will pass on the suggestion.

Funding is provided by a grant from the Board of Supervisor's Environmental Improvement Fund through 2020, but may be extended.

• Represent FACC:

- *Lee District Open House Jan. 25, 2020*  
Sandy and Dave attended. They reported making useful contacts with the environmental staff and finding the staff in general to be “green friendly”. They discussed the Frontier Drive extension with Supervisor Lusk and he indicated the project is not funded.
- *Chairman’s New Year Reception Jan. 30, 2020*  
Philip let us know Save Blake Lane Park had about 20 members there in their T-shirts.
- *ESRI Mapping Conference Feb. 11 – 12, 2020*  
Julie went last year, too, and noted that this year was much bigger with more sustainability focus. [StoryMaps](#) are a feature that allow users to put data in a narrative form. Julie cited an example presented at the conference of a StoryMap combining world forest coverage vs population as a model that could be used to educate on the needs of Accotink Creek. She also mentioned [MapBox](#) as an alternate mapping application. Julie met an attendee at the conference who had done StoryMaps of Lake Accotink and may be interested in working with us. Kim noted the current student StoryMap contest and offered to use her school ArcGIS account to make StoryMaps.

Philip reported Kris organized a mapping meeting attended by representatives of Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, Four Mile Run Conservancy, and FACC. The first meeting just discussed possible collaboration between groups. One interesting idea at the meeting was Four Mile Run’s Metro-style map. Dave quipped this gave new meaning to the phrase “water taxi”.



- *Braddock District Open House Feb. 13, 2020*  
Philip attended. He noted Supervisor Walkinshaw and staff and Supervisor McKay were present. The Supervisor is interested in our proposed pipeline walk and the Americana Drive cleanup. Captain Lee of West Springfield Police Station will try to arrange Public Safety Cadets for the Americana Drive cleanup and will look into trail cameras for dumping enforcement. The Lamb Center coordinator was there and indicated the [City Jobs](#) program will restart March 1 and will try to get together for a cleanup/invasives workday with Supervisor Walkinshaw, FACC, and NBC4 News.

- *Winter Wisteria Walk Feb. 22, 2020*  
Philip and Anastasios will be walking in the Accotink Gorge next Saturday to look at the extent of the Chinese wisteria infestation. Everyone is welcome.

Philip delivered a rendition of the anthem for the walk:

♪ *Alarm bells ring, are we listening?* ♪

♪ *In the gorge, vines are twisting* ♪

♪ *They creep and they crawl* ♪

♪ *They cover it all* ♪

♪ *Walking in Wisteria Wonderland* ♪

- [BeaverCON](#) *Mar. 3 – 5, 2020*  
Philip described this conference for professionals seeking to incorporate beavers into watershed management and restoration. It is just north of Baltimore and is the first time on the East Coast. Just in case anyone is interested or would like to pass it on to others who might professionally benefit.
- [Game for Mason Basketball](#) *Mar. 4, 2020*  
We received an invitation to participate in the Mason Basketball Green Game. The function of volunteers would basically be to direct fans to deposit recycling in the correct containers.
- *Taste of Ravensworth March 19, 2020*  
We received an invitation to give a 5 to 10 minute talk at the annual Taste of Ravensworth, the neighborhood just north of Lake Accotink Park. Philip urged that we should participate. The group volunteered Kris, *in absentia*.
- *Conservation Café March 26, 2020*  
This event is in our watershed. Its theme is “Meet NOVA eco-advocates and tell them what they can do for you”. Speakers are representing EcoAction Arlington, Audubon Naturalist Society, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, Virginia Conservation League of Voters, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, and Coalition for Smarter Growth. Providence Community Center, 7 – 8:30
- *Mantua Earth Day April 20, 2020*  
Philip conveyed Sue’s emailed update, letting us know plans include a climate quiz, presentations by the Tree Commission, Clean Fairfax, and maybe a County speaker on the new task force on climate change. Watch the Green Grow may participate. There will be an FACC table and native plant table. Gene mentioned Sue will be coordinating distribution of native tree seedlings. Philip asked if anyone wishes to staff a table.
- [50<sup>th</sup> Earth Day Partnership](#) *April 22, 2020*  
We are partnering with EarthDay.org by scheduling an [event on Earth Day](#), which will be an invasives removal beside the Lake Accotink Park marina. We are still waiting for Fairfax City to determine the date and location of their Earth Day event, but we have heard second-hand it will be April 26<sup>th</sup>, a Sunday. We may be able to have a table and possibly an activity, when we know more. Dave and Kathleen are interested.

- *Virginia Rail Expansion:*

Sandy and Dave brought up the topic with Supervisor Lusk at the Lee District Open House and confirmed rail improvements are planned from Washington to Richmond. They expressed our general concerns to the supervisor and asked to be kept informed. A discussion followed of what the effects might be if work is confined to the existing right of way, as expected.

- *Potomac Watershed Cleanup:*

Philip presented the proposed schedule for the [Potomac Watershed Cleanup](#). There are several third-party cleanups in our watershed with which we want to avoid conflict, so some of our cleanups are in the afternoon of those days.

Another [Americana Drive cleanup](#) is taking shape during our cleanup season, so it is included on the schedule. There is interest from the Braddock Supervisor, West Springfield Police Station, and The Lamb Center.

DPWES has now renewed the contract with [The Lamb Center](#) for a permanent litter removal program. The scope of work has also been expanded to include landscaping and other undefined special projects.

Philip asked if we want to endorse The Lamb Center coordinator's letter to Supervisors – and send to all Accotink supervisors. The group endorsed the idea without objection. Dave suggested we coordinate our schedule with The Lamb Center to avoid redundant cleanups.

- *Wakefield Park Planting:*

NVSWCD expects have a possible 100 to 150 unclaimed seedlings after their seedling sale and were thinking to plant them at Wakefield Park along the recent stream restoration area where DPWES has done a lot of clearing of invasives. It would be during the week after the seedling distribution on April 18<sup>th</sup>. The species are shrubs or small trees, such as Redbud, Silky Dogwood, Buttonbush, Sumac, and Beautyberry. Philip will advise when we have details.

- *Fairfax City Tree Board:*

Fairfax City is seeking nominees to a new Tree Advisory Board. Philip indicated any suggestions are welcome. Dave recounted how he had applied for the Springfield District position on the Fairfax County Tree Commission, but had lost out to a candidate from Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions.

- *Fairfax City Park Board:*

Kathleen let us know she will liaison with Fairfax City Parks & Recreation advisory board as a stream advocate. This is at the suggestion of the Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Committee. Meetings are on the second Thursdays of each month.

- **Park Authority Appointments:**

- ***Natural Resource Branch Manager***

The Natural Resource Branch Manager position for the Park Authority recently went to John Burke, previously a freshwater ecologist in Stormwater Planning, previously working with Rod Simmons in Alexandria Parks. Philip suggested we should get in touch, make positive connections, and discuss the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan and the Accotink Gorge. Dave will follow up.

- ***Lake Accotink Park Manager***

The game of musical managers at Lake Accotink Park seems to have ended and Dan Grulke is now in the position. He was formerly at Lake Fairfax Park, but Philip hoped that does not portend a water park for the future of Lake Accotink. Dan will be stopping by Beverley and Elaine's new marina invasive management area this Saturday at 9, in case others would like to be there.

- **Long Branch Project:**

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, we joined a stream walk organized by Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley for Supervisor Walkinshaw and staff. We examined how the project might embrace a broad vision for enhancing stream health with alternatives to streambed engineering and improved community communications.

Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley sent letters to DPWES and the Supervisor stating clearly their intention to be closely involved in the project and to realize the expectation of achieving something greater than we have seen so far. Philip mentioned he sent a similar letter to DPWES, but much less forthright.

DPWES is finalizing a consultant contract now to develop a plan to conduct a field assessment, followed by the overall restoration plan.

We can expect to be asked for a list of stakeholders to participate in planning and meetings, so any suggestions in the vicinity of Long Branch are needed.

- **New Planning Commission Members:**

One new at-large member is [Andres Jimenez](#). Philip explained he is connected to our watershed by having been an unsuccessful primary candidate against Delegate Kaye Kory last year. We can expect him to be an ally on the Commission, given his day job as Director of Government Affairs for Citizens' Climate Lobby, former Associate Director of Government Relations at Ocean Conservancy, member of the GreenLatinos, and on the board for Rock Creek Conservancy, Ecotropics, and the Green Leadership Trust. Philip proposed we might get in touch with him to share our general ideas on nature preservation.

There are also two other new members, at large Candice Bennett and Lee District Dan Lagana.

Kris, in a recent email produced the useful phrase – “think of Land Use issues as *Nature Use* issues” which Philip advocated for its incorporation into future communications with the Commission and other leaders.

Philip shared a proposed draft letter and the consensus was to take the opportunity to write to all the members.

- [Public Safety Redevelopment on Woodburn Road:](#)

The Public Safety center at 3911 Woodburn Road is to be redeveloped. There does not appear to be any net loss of green space proposed. This facility and adjacent Winterset Park occupy a single land parcel, owned by the Board of Supervisors. It's another example of land that is managed as parks, but not owned by the Park Authority, subject to conversion at any time. And it is another example of proposed developments where we were oblivious.



Public Safety Center and Winterset Park, now and future

- [Wakefield Park Stream Restoration:](#)

A community meeting was expected to be held during the first quarter of 2020, although it seems that timeframe might be slipping. This project would affect the main channel of Accotink Creek. If anyone is interested in participating in planning, now is the time.

- [Fairfax Water Grants:](#)

Applications for Fairfax Water's [Stakeholder Outreach Grants](#) are due by May 15<sup>th</sup>. We have used such grants in the past for Follow the Water, if anyone is able to follow up.

- [Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:](#)

Save Lake Accotink and Supervisor Walkinshaw are onboard for a pipeline walk any weekend in March. The group formed a consensus on March 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM, following stream monitoring. Philip urged everyone to develop a list of other invitees. He suggested we begin with the three other districts whose supervisors participated in the Lake Accotink plan meetings, Lee, Springfield, and Mason. Dave will contact Springfield District.



Somewhat after the fact, an independent filmmaker has released a [Save Lake Accotink movie](#) online.

General Master Plan recommendations are still needed before public meetings resume. Philip had a few new ideas since last time:

- ✓ Change all outdoor lighting to [Dark Sky](#) standards to preserve the view of the heavens.
- ✓ Retrofit drinking fountains to refill water bottles to discourage disposable water bottle litter.
- ✓ Locate recycle containers conveniently around areas of frequent public use, adjacent to all trash containers. Their design should be attractive, educational, and inspirational.
- ✓ Explore the possibility of installing a vernal pool by the new Invasive Management Area beside the carousel, since the area was originally converted from wetland.

Kim added the suggestion of an [Anacostia River-style trash trap](#).

- [Donations:](#)

The Network for Good sent \$270.00 for Save Blake Lane Park via a Facebook fundraiser. The matching donation of \$250 from Sandy's employer arrived.

Philip made the annual payments of \$13.96 for the accotink.org domain renewal, \$119.40 for website hosting, and \$25.00 for corporate registration. He has been reimbursed in past years, but just called it a donation this year.

- [Whither FACC:](#)

Dave recapped our January 20<sup>th</sup> Strategizing Session, remarking on the good turnout representing several related friends groups. The session's focus was on spreading the load. Two action teams resulted, OAT and EAT (Outreach Action Team & Events Action Team).

Dave shared the notes of the January 12<sup>th</sup> [Events Action Team](#) meeting. As a result of that meeting, Dave and Gene will be leading several of the cleanup sites and Dave will join the stream monitoring team. A discussion of the logistics of stream cleanups and equipment handoffs followed. Kim mentioned the [Litterati](#) app for documenting trash.

Philip recalled we talked about interns at the Strategizing Session. The Teen Job Fair flyer specifies internship and volunteer opportunities, if anyone wants to pursue that more formally.

Woodson High School March 7, 10 - 12

West Springfield High School March 28, 10 - 12

Also on the topic of interns, Philip noticed [Green Spring Gardens](#) is seeking college students for summer internships in seven areas of specialization, including Virginia native plants and invasive plant management. Just a thought about something we might consider learning from and emulating. Sandy will make this an OAT item.

Philip advised Ilona of Save Blake Lane Park is signing us up for her employer's list of approved paid volunteer opportunities. She suggests this could be a prototype to be used with other companies.