



## 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 – January 18, 2022

Next Meeting: February 16, 2022 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice in the [Friends of Accotink calendar](#).)

**SUPPORT/DONATE**  
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**Present:** Gary Bangs, Sophia Chapin, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Beverley Rivera, all via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions.

### Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

**North Springfield Civic Association Meeting, February 2:** Philip plans to address the meeting with a standard PowerPoint of watershed issues, plus dredging and the Master Plan. As North Springfield residents, Katherine and José have offered to help.

**Mt. Vernon Town Meeting, February 12:** Dave and Philip intend to table at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Mount Vernon District Town Meeting. They took actions to come up with handouts emphasizing the Accotink Watershed.

**Mt Vernon Environmental Expo ([here's a link to the 2021 event](#)):** The 2022 Environment Expo will be held on Saturday, April 23 from 10 am - 2 pm at Fort Hunt Park. We discussed the merits of various locations, having found the shelter location too close to live music to enable much conversation. Dave will register FACC for the event (The Supervisor's office has us on the list for a January notification.), asking for a heavily trafficked outdoor location. Dave will provide a large awning in case of rain.

**Lake Accotink Park 60th Anniversary Celebration, August 27, 2022:** Philip noted that FLAP is forming a committee to plan the Lake Accotink Park 60th anniversary celebration August 27, 2022. Supervisors Walkinshaw and Lusk are expected to attend. Gary and Dave will plan on participating in planning. Philip offered to send them information.

**American Park Cleanup Day:** February 21 (Presidents' Day)

**Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:** At the PNN Board meeting, Avril affirmed the need to write to our district supervisors asking them to reject the proposed Cinder Bed Woods Bikeway and preserve the magnolia bog in Franconia-Springfield.

To that end, on January 21<sup>st</sup>, a group of the concerned has a site visit with Rod Simmons, a naturalist familiar with the area.

Our site visit with Supervisor Lusk is scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup>.

In discussion of tactics, Avril noted that discouraging the bike path seems to attract support for it, rather like dangling a piece of candy in front of a kid, and saying "You can't have it." It may be more useful to focus on pride in success stories, like magnolia bog preserved in Barcroft Park, Arlington; or Greenspring Park getting \$86K Grant to preserve a magnolia bog. Also, we've had some discussion about paid advertising and generating journalist interest, but nothing has come of it yet.

"How bicycles kill trees"

#SaveCinderBedWoods



## FACC Subjects Discussed

***Plant NoVA Natives Steering Committee Meeting:*** Avril attended the PNN Steering Committee meeting, January 6. The Zoom was largely about defining PNN's goals from the likes of "Plant more native trees" to "Plant x number of native trees by year y". Dave took an action to contact Margaret Fisher regarding not-for-profit HOA corporations.

Avril gave her 4-min pitch regarding plans to denude forest for the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway project. Renee Grebe (Audubon Naturalist Society) helped. [The slideshow was put together by Betsy Martin of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia.](#) The slides highlight magnolia bog as a key habitat that will be jeopardized by the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway as planned. As examples of investment in magnolia bogs (as opposed to destroying them), the slides mentioned Green Springs Gardens, Alexandria, getting \$86K from Fairfax County to repair stormwater damage to a rare magnolia bog. Also, millions were spent on the magnolia bog in Oxon Hill building a deep tunnel instead of a surface railroad to protect the delicate hydrology of the area. Magnolia bog is a rare habitat and something to be treasured.

During questions, someone mentioned that Fairfax County would have to return \$1.2M for its FCDOT study on the bikeway.

As an educational non-profit, PNN can't take on the Cinder Bed Woods, but individual members are free to share the info and write to their district supervisors, and their individual efforts have been supported by notes in the PNN minutes.

***Legislative Listening Session, January 8, 2022:*** Avril addressed the annual Northern Virginia Delegation annual listening session. Her remarks covered climate change, the necessity of preserving and planting trees, invasives and the negative effects of gas-powered lawn equipment.

***EQAC Annual Meeting, January 12, 2022:*** Avril and Philip both addressed the EQAC Annual Meeting. Their remarks covered invasives, non-motorized transport, and climate change implications of deforestation. The [EQAC Annual Report](#) specifically mentions the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway, trading habitat for impervious surfaces that are unnecessary. Avril spoke on climate change. A speaker on CPAC pointed out the lack of a dateline in the County's goals for reducing greenhouse gases. Avril echoed the necessity of measurable goals with timelines.

***Accotink Gorge:*** Stemming from the topic of the VLWA grant opportunity noted below, and in light of generous donations to FACC, Dave had taken an action item to investigate 'hybrid' labor solutions (mix of professionals, temp students, and volunteers) in case FACC were to gain substantial grant funding for invasive removal. He recounted polling commercial companies with no good results. He contacted Mow Cow, and will submit description of concept for hybrid labor force, like temp college students with professionals who can apply herbicide.

Regarding a Spring work date, the consensus is that May will be the best month to schedule it. The Park Authority has declined to provide herbicide support because it is less effective at that season.

Beverley, Kim, and Avril had been corresponding about how to make volunteer invasive workdays more engaging and educational. After over an hour, interest can start to flag. One idea was to explore the arthropods (mostly insects) in the area: Do a sample count from a "beat sheet" under a branch, after hitting that branch with a stick. Then identify some of the arthropods caught and log these finds onto apps such as Caterpillars Count! Thus volunteers would participate in a little citizen science! The supplies for this activity (clipboards, insect viewers, and materials for homemade "beet sheets") are low-cost.

Another idea was, a few days before a workday, to send volunteers 2 to 4 short videos about invasive plants and how they impoverish ecosystems and create food deserts for birds. (Doug Tallamy has various 3 to 10-minute videos on YouTube.) That way volunteers would better understand the value of the work they were doing and be more motivated. (Avril is already trying this with her volunteers and finds that they work more enthusiastically and she has far less explaining to do. She gives volunteers "extra credit" time if they can recall in reasonable detail the content of these Tallamy videos.)

Another way volunteers could earn extra credit time could be by correctly naming all invasive species they were working on and any native look-a-likes. It was suggested that small prizes such as invasive plant ID cards, plant guides, and native seeds be given to volunteers.

Avril noted a potential point of contact for publicity: Susan Laume of the Springfield Connection expressed interest in native plantings and wrote an article describing an HOA that replaced lawn with natives.

**Americana Drive Cleanup:** Philip noted that Senator Marsden made a personal inspection of Americana Drive and was appalled by the litter and parking violations. Off the cuff he suggested the idea of banning parking on one side. He indicated he was already planning to introduce legislation to hold companies responsible for materials dumped by their businesses. My concern – parking may degenerate into a fruitless finger-pointing equity argument. Amy Gould has suggested the alternative of changing to diagonal parking on one side of the street only.

**Annandale Greenway:** Philip noted that the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Trails, Sidewalks, and Bikeways Committee also brought up the tantalizing possibility that the Annandale Greenway project will be extended across 495 to connect with the Cross County Trail. This would be an opportunity to fix a [badly eroding trail](#) that has been a problem since the 495 Express lanes were built years ago. Philip will try to obtain more information.

**Quiet Clean NOVA:** Avril spoke about a recent dilemma. Delegate Kaye Kory was all set to introduce a bill empowering local governments in Virginia to ban gas-powered leaf blowers. However, last week, Delegate Kory was prevailed upon by Dick Saslaw to change the wording of the bill to omit any mention of "ban", "prohibit," or "restrict", and was asked to replace these words with "regulate", without the bill defining this term. (In the Code of Virginia, the power to ban or prohibit is not included in the power to "regulate".) Quiet Clean NOVA held an emergency Zoom to discuss whether or not to support this weakened bill. The consensus was that despite the disappointment over the new language, Quiet Clean NOVA will support the bill because it is a good opportunity to get the message across to state legislators and familiarize them with the issue. Also, the bill still includes the authority to impose a fee which escalates when the citation is repeated, and, over the coming year, Quiet Clean NOVA will be looking into kinds of regulations that could curtail the use of gas leaf blowers. If the bill gets a hearing, Quiet Clean NOVA members will testify in-person in Richmond in favor of the bill. Avril notes the measure remains unlikely to pass because of Republican control of the House and the opposition of Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw.

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dumped by their businesses. Philip expressed concern that parking may degenerate into a fruitless finger-pointing equity argument. Amy Gould has suggested the alternative of changing to diagonal parking on one side of the street only. The next cleanup at Americana Drive will be on Presidents Day, February 21, 2022.

**Lake Accotink Dredging:** Philip recounted news that Stormwater Planning is reconsidering a dredge spoils site in the industrial park adjacent to Lake Accotink Park. If it comes to pass, this would be the best (least bad) alternative for the habitat, but less felicitous for the neighbors who would have added truck traffic on that side of the park.

**Winter Salt Watch:** Gary reported on the program that started with Isaac Walton League, a watch team with measurement: Examples of recent measurements by Picket Road, with very high salt readings after storms.: Feb 21 289 ppm; Dec 12 42 ppm; Jan 6 2022 355 ppm; Jan 9, over 600 ppm. Jan 11 435 ppm. Gary presented a cooperative agreement with Isaac Walton, and the core approved it for Gary to sign. Dave expressed interest in helping and will look at signing up.

**Meeting with Maddy White, Fairfax Outreach Rep for Congressman Connolly:** Flint, Sue, Philip and Avril attended the on-line meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> with Maddy White, Fairfax Outreach Representative for Congressman Connolly. Topics discussed included:

- o Possible beneficial availability of Infrastructure Bill funds
- o Possible negative effects of Infrastructure Bill funds, principally deforestation
- o The need to update federal storm intensity-duration (IDF) curves for future infrastructure projects
- o Reviving the Citizens Climate Lobby Carbon Fee legislation
- o A possible federal role in the future of Lake Accotink, such as easing negotiations with CSX or funding fish passage.
- o The possibility of federal legislation to limit Styrofoam and plastic bags
- o The possibility of federal legislation to label invasive plant at point of sale.

**Fairfax Water Grant:** We discussed a need for funding for a data logger and how to approach school selection. More discussion to follow next meeting.

**Invasives Control Enhancements:** Avril related designing arthropod catchment devices, to be counted by citizen scientist groups. She recounted success at the invasive site she manages, on Dec 31 with kids

**VLWA Donation Projects:** Regarding how to make use of a \$1000 donation opportunity; no ideas with willing volunteers have been generated yet.

**Long Branch north Restoration:** Philip noted A stream restoration is planned on Long Branch North at Arlington Blvd. Actual work is likely a couple years off. This location is an absolute wilderness of invasive vines, which the project should do a lot to cut back.



**Braddock Road Project:** Philip also recounted a January 13<sup>th</sup> VDOT public meeting outlined possible project modifications at three intersections. Two appear to be neutral from a watershed perspective. However, for the third, a concept we had thought was buried is attempting to rise from its grave. That is the idea of realigning Danbury Forest Drive right through the forested floodplain of Long Branch central. It doesn't seem to be the preferred option by VDOT, but might be something neighbors would reflexively favor because it would give a more familiar intersection configuration. See Braddock Road VDOT Surveys at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Braddock1> The core approved the [comments](#) sent out with the meeting reminder to submit.

NOTE: There is an online survey everyone should complete to support the "Base Option" and stay out of Long Branch.

Anyone can also comment by email [Meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:Meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov) (with "Braddock Road Multimodal Improvements" in the subject line). Comments are due by February 24<sup>th</sup>.

The remaining schedule:

- Second Public Meeting - Fall 2022
- Design Public Hearing - Winter 2022/23
- Design Approval - Spring 2023

**PanAm Shopping Center Redevelopment:** Philip described the project at PanAm Shopping Center, at the corner of Route 29 and Nutley Street near Vienna Metro. The Board of Supervisors

[requested a study](#) of zoning changes to accommodate mixed use redevelopment. The entire parcel is paved, so stormwater controls can only improve.

**METRO West Buildings:** The five planned MetroWest buildings long-stalled on the south side of Vienna Metro have been [approved by the Planning Commission](#). The developer anticipates breaking ground in mid-2022. This area was once forested, but was cleared some years ago in anticipation of this project. Philip asked whether anyone would care to work with the Providence Supervisor's office or the developers to seek improvements. There were no takers.

**Park Authority Natural Resources Manager:** Philip noted that Laura Grape, whom some of us know as the executive director of the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District, will be moving shortly to the Park Authority as [Manager of the Resource Management Division](#).

**Letter to Governor:** Philip shared a draft letter to Governor Youngkin earlier. The Core approved the letter, to include the part about nomination of Environmental Secretary.

**Donations:**

We received:

\$20.00 from Mimi Friedman, a regular collaborator

\$25.00 from Edward Lee

\$40.00 from Donna Stauffer

\$50.00 from Gary Bangs

\$200.00 from Barbara Seaman

\$280 from my daughter Gwen, whom some of you have met. This is the matching half of a Facebook fundraiser, so we should see another \$280 from Facebook at some point.

\$500 from the Kropat Trust Fund.

Also, Philip paid Hostek \$14.99 for our domain renewal and \$131.40 for webhosting renewal. These are regarded as donations also.

**Whither FACC:**

**Website Modification:**

Sophia described progress she has made in her investigation of migrating FACC web data to Wordpress and its more friendly development environment.

- *WordPress* is a content management app that can be used with the Hostek web host
- Sophia is working on process for transitioning legacy html files to Wordpress format, then cleanup of functionality to publish with Wordpress versions.

Philip has made a few small modifications such as:

- ✓ A new more accurate and less commercial weather widget on our home page
- ✓ Changing our site search from Google to DuckDuckGo
- ✓ Changing one map from Google to OpenStreetMap , more to follow

Avril noted the legacy FACC home page is good for being able to navigate to all topics from the one page, even with smart phone.

**Facebook Donate button:** Philip investigated a Facebook "Donate Here" button. He noted that, in order to institute such a button, Facebook would require detailed information about the organization, including:

- Business verification documents such as a utility or phone bill, business license, tax file, or certification of formation.
- Bank statement
- Information about your CEO: The name, date of birth and address of the highest-ranking executive officer in your organization.
- Information about your CFO and COO: The name and date of birth of the highest-ranking financial and operational officers in your organization.

Presumably this information on officer must be updated periodically.

The consensus was not to add officers' info just to get a donate button. We can continue to use the "Learn more" button to link to our web site.