



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 – March 15, 2022

Next Meeting: April 19, 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](#).)

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Present: Gary Bangs, Julie Chang, Bryan Campbell, Doug Craun, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Kim Schauer, all via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions. We missed Flint Webb, who is not feeling well, and wish him a rapid recovery.

Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

Plant NoVA Natives Steering Committee Meeting: Avril noted the meeting on February 17 featured Jim McGlone, speaking about Arbor Day preparation and breakout sessions with participants.

Mt Vernon Environmental Expo The [2022 Environment Expo](#) will be held on Saturday, April 23 from 10 am - 2 pm at Fort Hunt Park. Dave has registered FACC for the event and will provide an awning. All are welcome to help table.

Running Bamboo Ordinance Hearing, February 22: Avril spoke at the Board of Supervisors' public hearing on enacting a [Running Bamboo control ordinance](#) February 22. She has followed up with a letter from FACC supporting the proposed ordinance with some recommended changes, and she recommended amplifying the instructions in the County's [bamboo information sheet](#) with more specific procedures for eradication that are practicable for homeowners.

Lake Accotink Park 60th Anniversary Celebration, August 27, 2022: Gary plans to attend a planning session March 17. Gary and Dave plan to participate in the Anniversary event, representing FACC.

Save the Dandelions, April 8, 9, 10: Philip reported on MOM's Organic Market's annual Save the Dandelions - MOM's Merrifield is inviting us to table on April 8th, 9th, and 10th between the hours of 11AM and 6PM. FACC did this once before, finding space quite limited. There was discussion of sharing the time in the space with other organization/s. Avril indicated interest in participating, will follow up.

Earth Day Egg Hunt, April 30, Frying Pan Park, 11am-1pm: Gabrielle Jordan has been volunteering with our cleanups and bringing groups with her for several years. She must be about age 14 now and is asking for our support with an environmental station for an Earth Day egg hunt for the Fairfax County Family Services Befriend a Child program on April 30th. She asks for help with materials and ideas for fun activities or games to educate the kids under age 11 about watershed cleanups and protecting the environment, along with posters and handouts. Gary Bangs and Kim Schauer offered to help Gabrielle with this project.

Luther Jackson Middle School: Philip noted he had received an inquiry from a teacher at Luther Jackson Middle School in Merrifield for someone to give a watershed presentation to her class. Avril may be able to help, and will follow up regarding date/s.

FACC Subjects Discussed:

Friends of Dyke Marsh forum on plastics pollution: Glenda Booth, President of FODM, requests FACC to co-sponsor an event to be firm up for May 19 at the Mt. Vernon District Government Center, with a guest speaker from Ocean Conservancy; Subject: Plastic pollution. Glenda will provide more info, asking for help with publicity.

Cinder Bed Road Bikeway: Philip reported on the site visit with Supervisor Lusk on February 16th. He expressed disappointment that Supervisor Lusk's letter indicated he is not moving to stop the project. We are planning a series of three tours of the area in April, May, and June aimed at the Amberleigh residents who own most of the area but may not realize what a treasure they have. Virginia Native Plant Society will lead the tours. Avril and Philip posted about 600 door hangers in and around the Amberleigh neighborhood on two occasions. They also distributed handouts to the businesses along Cinder Bed Road whose land will be taken. In response, we know that about a dozen people used our online form to contact Supervisors Lusk and Storck. FACC joined with four sister organizations to submit a [pointed letter](#) about the destructive nature of the project, along with the lack of demand analysis.

Of note, though not directly related to the Cinder Bed Road project, the Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee March 1st meeting included a [slideshow](#) on prioritizing pedestrian and bike projects. It discussed high density "pedestrian trip generator" locations. This is precisely the information we asked for regarding the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway and were told was infeasible to produce. "Construction Feasibility", "Environmental Impacts", and "Magnitude of Cost" are also listed factors the Bikeway seems to have bypassed. A [Safe Streets](#) slideshow from the same meeting is a great list of ways to make streets safe that is needed to take some of the pressure off forests.

Americana Drive Cleanup: We had the Americana Drive cleanup on February 21st. Fifty-some volunteers removed 191 bags of trash, 19 tires, and over 1000 pounds of loose debris. Supervisor Walkinshaw joined the cleanup.

The Fairfax County Restoration Project is in discussions with the police to set up camera traps for dumpers. It seems, however, the station only has two older models that cannot be accessed remotely and claims no budget for upgrades. Would it be a good idea if we considered donating newer model cameras?

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This forest cannot be improved by pavement

SAVE CINDER BED WOODS!

- The Cinder Bed Road Bikeway is promoted as a shortcut to Metro, but the path would cut through wooded habitat and wetlands including rare Magnolia Bogs.
- No-trees-harmed alternatives are in place, making this trail redundant and arbitrary.
- We cannot build more forests and streams. The worthy goal of enhanced bicycle transportation need not always follow the path of least resistance through our forests.
- Climate change is upon us now, so why do we persist in business-as-usual by converting carbon-sink trees to heat sink asphalt?
- Our dwindling supply of forests and streams cannot provide a parallel transport system. All our streets should be made safer for bike traffic and pedestrians instead of making our dwindling natural heritage safe for asphalt.

BE HEARD – BE THE VOICE OF THE FOREST

- Tell your Fairfax County Supervisor to provide all our neighborhoods with people-friendly connections, but spare forests from paving.

#SAVECINDERBEDWOODS



Supervisor Walkinshaw joins the Americana Drive cleanup

Potomac Watershed Cleanup: Philip asked what our consensus is on mask policy during cleanups: Is it time to drop the requirement, as is being done so many other places? We agreed to make it voluntary to use mask, while still providing them. Should we also bring back the box of rewards for young volunteers? We have had some group group and individual signups:

- Boy Scout Troop 702, which brought a large group last year, will be at the King Arthur Road site.
- Northern Virginia Jack & Jill will bring about 20 volunteers to Old Lee Hwy.
- The West End Rugby team has asked to participate with 40 or 50, and has limited time slots available. Philip arranged (since the meeting) to meet them at the intersection of Hunter Village Rd and Rockledge, March 27th at 10:30.
- Supervisor Palchik will be at our Barkley drive site.

Accotink Gorge: We are still planning our April 30th workday, focused on eradicating invasive wisteria. Dave will contact Boston Properties about the activity.

Park Authority Budget: Philip proposed a letter endorsing one previously submitted by Friends of Holmes Run talking to the need for restoring budget that has been lost since the 2008 financial crisis, and focusing effort in natural resources as well as equitable access. The consensus was to submit a FACC letter accordingly. The Friends of Friends group is planning some sort of yet to be determined collective action about Park Authority Budget and management we could join. Philip had second hand information from their most recent meeting, in which ideas were tossed around such as meeting with the Park Authority Director and staging a symbolic volunteer work stoppage. There have been indications that the county is also moving toward making most park positions part time, which seems quite misguided. Discussion followed about whether anyone be interested in working with the Friends of Friends on the budget. Julie volunteered to attend their next meeting, March 21.

Rt. 50 to Thais Park Trail Paving: We got late word that the Park Authority planned trail paving from Rt 50 to Thais Park, where there is a productive vernal pool right next to the trail. We were able to alert the Park authority and have been assured damage to the pool will be avoided, even if the project must be postponed until after the breeding season. Kim took the initiative to visit the area and came up with some great photos and videos of [Wood frogs](#), [Spring Peepers](#), and [Spotted salamanders](#) .



Wood frog in vernal pool

Vernal Pool Tour: Philip reported that he has finally received a draft report, nearly one year after Mike Hayslett’s visit and tour of vernal pools along the Accotink. It was at best disappointing, so Philip has suggested some improvements, but hasn’t heard more. Philip offered to reimburse FACC for the fee that resulted in such disappointment, but the consensus is that it was a FACC decision to bring in the vernal pool expert.

Mathy Park: In a bit of good news, Philip noted the Fairfax City Council voted funds to preserve 2.7 acres referred to as Mathy Park. This is an area that has been an informal park area on the banks of Daniels Run, just east of Old Town.

Long Branch Central Project: On February 25th, the Long Branch Design Group met, and were presented with project proposals to review by March 18th. There will be a public meeting April 11th, followed by a public review period until May 11th. The projects seem to be fairly conventional in-stream designs, with little of the upland focus we might have hoped for. We will have to determine if the extensive public outreach is still a part of the project. Sandy attended the public meeting to comment on the loss of trees for the project, and to ask how the loss will be offset. She indicated the most effective approach would be to deal with storm water ponds, then tributaries, before working on the main stem. Bryan concurred and hoped for more use of woody materials in downstream projects, as well as more passive restoration methods on the main channel. He urged that we coordinate effort to hold the County's feet to the fire in making good on the promises of an innovative comprehensive program.

DWR Fish Survey: The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources plans an electrofishing fish survey on Accotink Creek in Wakefield Park, likely in June. This is in response to Philip’s anecdotal accounts of seeing far fewer fish in the creek than previously. Volunteers are welcome to participate, mostly as “gofers.” This survey will take place near the recently completed Wakefield Restoration on Accotink Creek. With its use of what are called Newberry riffles, this restoration looks rather different from what we are accustomed to seeing.

Data Logger Grant Application: Kim asked for help with a grant application for a data logger, with a deadline looming the end of May.

Donations: Philip reported donations of:

\$14.52 from the AmazonSmile Foundation

\$1000 in a retirement fund distribution from Vivian Morgan-Mendez and Fernando Mendez, of the Friends of Nottoway Park.