



Our meeting notes serve as bulletins of our activities, interests, and discussions, supplemented by your submissions.

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – May 17, 2022

Next Meeting: June 21, 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: Julie Chang, Avril Garland, Gary Bangs, Beverley Rivera, Kim Schauer, Philip Latasa, all via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions.+++++

Opportunities to represent FACC:

Quill Camp, June 30, 2022: We will be assisting Lands and Waters to manage a group of incoming GMU students to do invasives removal at Daniels Run Elementary in Fairfax City. We could use additional leaders to manage smaller groups of students.

Lake Accotink Park 60th Anniversary Celebration, August 27, 2022: Gary and Philip attended the FLAP quarterly planning meeting. Gary noted that FLAP already has a committee in place. They will be asking for volunteers later, so that might be an opportunity to insert ourselves.

Virginia Lakes and Watersheds Association interview: Philip advised that one of our more generous donors, the Virginia Lakes and Watersheds Association, requested an interview with the stated purpose “We want to know more about how the Association interacts with you. Most importantly, we want to chart a path forward to better serve our stakeholders.” Philip will sign up for the interview. There followed a wide ranging discussion of how best to take advantage of the interview, with suggestions such as:

- Mentions of FACC in the VLWA newsletter
- Support for the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway issue
- Guidance on FACC organization and development
- Support for placement of rain barrels in educational locations

Annandale Greenway Alliance Earth Day Event, April 23, 2022: Philip reported we had a table at the [Annandale Greenway](#) event. They had an all-star guest list, with three supervisors, McKay, Gross, and Walkinshaw, Representative Beyer, Delegate Watts, District Attorney Descano, and Park Authority Director Jai Cole. Philip made some limited progress promoting the idea of extending the concept across the Beltway to repair the eroding connection between the Cross County Trail and Little River Turnpike westbound. We have a new [video documenting the conditions there.](#)

Mt Vernon Environmental Expo, April 23, 2022: Dave and Sandy tabled representing FACC, but were not with us tonight, but Avril relayed their report that we had a good number of visitors to our table.

Avril let us know her “Ban the Blowers” table at the Expo included native seed giveaways and education on how invertebrates depend on leaf litter. She also noted an Eagle Scout exhibit on ways to recycle tennis balls.

FACC Subjects of Interest Discussion:

Cinder Bed Road Bikeway: Philip previously reported that Virginia Native Plant Society is leading a series of nature walks to view the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway project; The last one is June 19, 1:30 pm at the basketball court on Crestleigh Drive.

FACC is among the interested that sent a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers asking that the project be required to seek an individual permit, rather than a categorical exclusion permit. The difference is a higher level of documentation of environmental impacts, but not necessarily a different outcome. Thus far, the project has not yet applied for its permit.

Lake Accotink Dredging: On May 16th & 21st WJLA TV carried a news report regarding the Lake Accotink dredging dilemma. Philip contributed via a phone interview. The group suggested we contact the reporter to emphasize points such as the source of the sediment and the acres of forest that might be lost. Philip will get in touch. [Text and video link of WJLA report](#)

Accotink Gorge: On April 30 we had a group of eight volunteers who put in three hours clearing re-sprouting wisteria. We did not have herbicide support from the Park Authority because the season is not optimal. Neither did we see any clear results of the herbicide applied last fall in the same area. We need to set a fall work date, probably on a teacher workday. Avril will check dates.

Potomac Watershed Cleanup: We finished our last Saturday of the cleanup season on April 23rd with participation by a company group from CareFirst and the Jack and Jill Northern Virginia Chapter. We had a bit of wildlife drama when a Turtle Leech mistook a volunteer’s boot for a turtle’s back and hitched a ride. For the entire season we had a total of 236 volunteers who removed 209 bags of trash, 16 tires, and junk ranging from computers to a gasoline can to a skateboard. Philip noted changes to the Alice Ferguson foundation volunteer website made it more difficult for volunteers to find cleanup events.

Gary reported the Long Branch cleanup on April 30th was attended by Supervisor Walkinshaw and featured a presentation from DPWES on the Long Branch central project. Gary noted Bryan is working on moving the project toward more emphasis on the sources of stormwater runoff.



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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



Volunteers of [Jack and Jill Northern Virginia Chapter](#) rally before the cleanup at Old Lee Hwy



The crew of Troop 702 drive their harpoons into Moby Tire



Turtle Leech [Facebook video](#)

[Park Authority Budget:](#) On May 10th, the Board of Supervisors voted to approve the FY2023 budget with the full requested amount for natural resources. This area, though, remains a neglected stepchild of the Park Authority.

[Long Branch Central Project:](#) Following up on our April meeting, Philip submitted [comments](#) on the project plans.

[Fort Belvoir North Area:](#) Completely unbeknownst to us, there was a planning process for the Fort Belvoir North Area conducted through the National Capital Planning Commission. The Planning Commission gained some reductions in plans to clear new areas of forest west of Accotink Creek, but we can expect about 78 acres to be lost. Philip submitted [comments](#) on the first of the proposed buildings.

8033 Chain Bridge Road: In another surprise to us, the AT&T property on Chain Bridge Road in Oakton has been sold and is being redeveloped. We have little information, but there is a section of the Mosby Woods tributary on the property whose future we need to verify. Otherwise it is largely paved already.

Mosquito Dunks: Avril requested authorization to spent \$89 on 100 mosquito dunks to be given away at tabling events and online. Educational handouts would accompany the dunks. The expenditure was approved.

Kim suggested a more sophisticated approach to tracking the effectiveness of the mosquito message using QR codes to direct people to online information, possibly including [Watch the Green Grow](#). Kim, Avril, and Philip will work on that.

New Invasive: Gary shared his observations during [salt monitoring](#) of a new invasive species, [Incised Fumewort \(Cordyalis incisa\)](#), in the vicinity of Old Keene Mill Road. He said INaturalist messaged him back because this is an emerging invasive species in the capital region. Philip mentioned it is also present in the Accotink Gorge and other spots along Accotink Creek.



Incised fumewort

Northfax West: The end for Northfax West is here; Tree clearing is underway . It is not certain how soon the stream burial will begin. We never did get enough people interested in a mock funeral, so Philip will do a memorial posting online.

While it seems there are no further opportunities for (safe and authorized) plant rescue here, Avril raised the possibility of plant rescues before the [stream restoration in Southside Park](#) next winter. Avril will contact Vienna Parks to get that operation started.

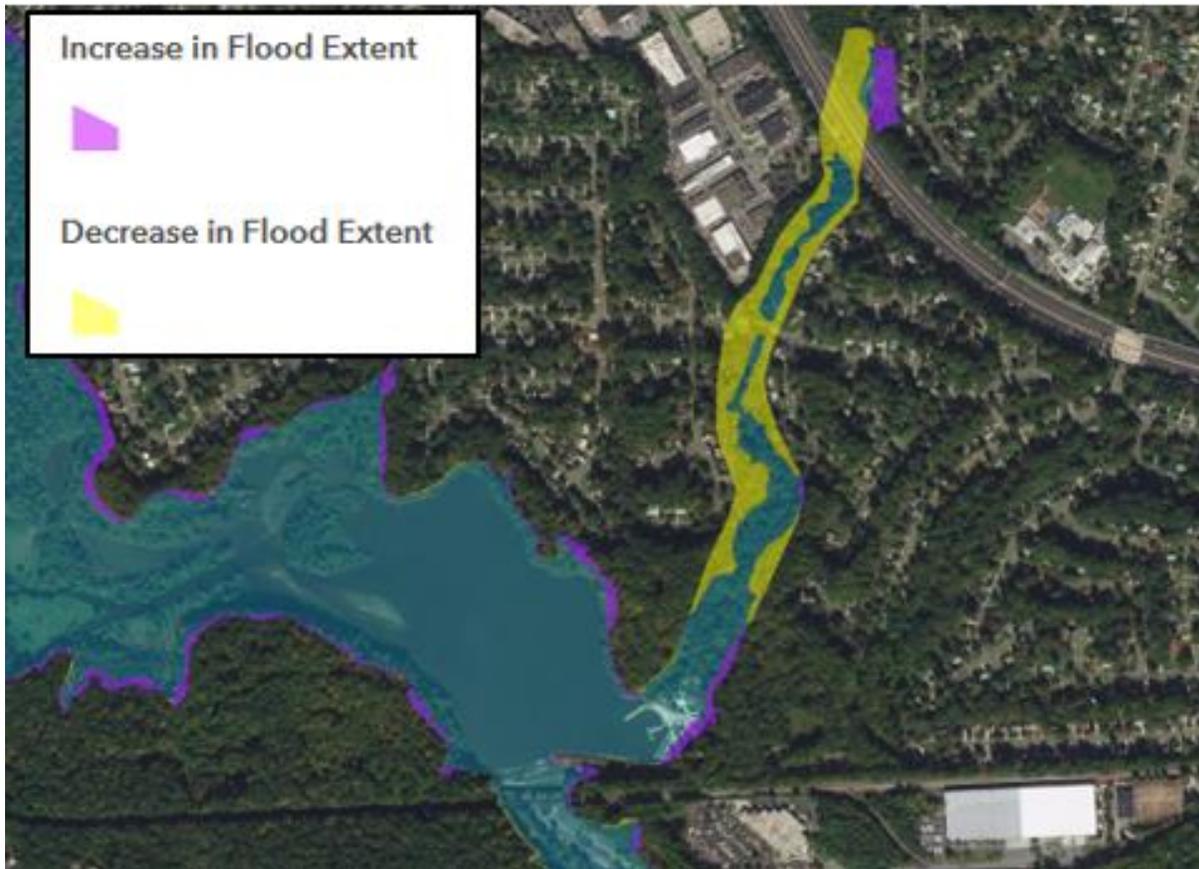
Rt. 50 to Thaiss Park Trail Paving: Avril and Philip met with FCPA staff and were given reassurances of various precautions to protect the trailside vernal pool during trail repaving, including delaying work until the end of summer. Possible railing to separate the trail from pool and possible information signage are still options. Avril noted some FCPA concern about signage attracting unwelcome intrusion into the pool. There was discussion of possible solutions to reduce the hazard posed by signage. Kim shared some [recent photos](#) including tadpoles washed out of the pool by heavy rains.

Vernal Pool Sediment: This situation only seems to get worse and worse. In the rain on May 7th, Beverley observed that the collapsing slope looked *“like a waterfall of sediment”*. Alerted by Beverley’s observations, Philip took video and reported the situation yet again to Land Development Services. Gary and Dave contacted the Lee District Supervisor’s office.

We received responses conveying the landowner’s excuse of supply chain delays, but also promising an “Emergency Action Plan” and possible violation fines. Beverley heard from a Stormwater Planning inspector that a Corrective Action Notice would be issued and the landowner would be asked to remove the sediment from the pond.

Apparently the final plan is to repair the riprap that failed after the first repair and upgrade the outfall pipe. Beverley described the initial (failed) repair as, *“Clearly they did not take into account gravity.”* Another failure seems likely if they don’t do something better on the slope. Beverley will contact the landowner.

FEMA Floodplain Changes: Philip shared information about ongoing changes in FEMA floodplain maps, but doesn’t understand why or how this is being done. It is surprising how many changes are reductions, rather than increases in this time of intensifying flooding events. Stormwater Planning advised this was done with coordination from the County and Commonwealth and that we are in the 90 day appeal period. Julie now works with FEMA and will obtain information for us.



Proposed Changes to Flag Run Floodplain

Donations: Brayan Pozo began a monthly PayPal donation of \$2.00 per month. Brayan is a regular volunteer with Beverley's invasive management site at the Lake Accotink Park Marina. Thank you, Brayan!