

Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area Project, # SD-000031-235



Comments of the Friends of Accotink Creek following the April 11, 2022, public meeting

Public Outreach and Education needs to be a major component of the project. Citizens should not be mere observers of the projects, but need to be aware and engaged on how they can make their own properties and practices a part of the solution to improved watershed health. The stream should not bear the entire burden of restoration – all of us can contribute. Some ways to advance this aspect of the project might include:

- Semiannual reminder postcard mailings to all addresses in the watershed
- Educational signboards at trails near each worksite describing both the work and at home opportunities
- Regular update articles (or ads) submitted to newsletters of every civic association, church, swim club, school, etc. in the watershed
- Plant rescues to relocate native plants that might otherwise be doomed by construction are also an ongoing way of engaging neighbors.

It should be a goal to make sure that no property owner or manager in the watershed is unaware of the financial incentives of the [Conservation Assistance](#) program, stormwater [C-PACE](#) , or other financial incentives.

Long Branch presents a unique opportunity to engage students, having five schools located mere yards from the stream. Let's make sure every student and teacher is aware of what is happening around them and why. School grounds themselves are opportunities for detaining stormwater at the source.

Some earlier restoration projects have employed step pools separated by large scale stone blocks that are a challenge to the movement of fish. We are grateful to understand from the April 11th presentation that this approach will be avoided. Although their prevalence may be somewhat ahistorical, the sparkling bubbling riffles that also provide vital spawning areas for fish provide a great deal of the charm of a visit to Long Branch.

Stream restorations should be beaver-friendly. That is to say if beavers decide to move in, their presence and free watershed engineering services should not be regarded as a threat to the restoration but rather an enhancement.

Trilliums are an uncommon wildflower in the Accotink Creek watershed, but a few [Toadshade trilliums \(trillium sessile\)](#) have been seen just upstream from Woodland Way. Their destruction should be avoided by inclusion in tree protection areas or relocation.

Response to questions on meeting slide 53:

“Big Picture” questions:

- Are you comfortable with the identified project locations and extents? – Yes
- Are stream reaches or outfalls of concern missing? - We would only ask for greatest:
 - Attention to the upstream headwater tributaries where the largest benefit lies.
 - Focus on outfalls draining commercial areas or other large impervious surfaces or better, at the source. Kings Park shopping center in particular seems to be the largest impervious area in the watershed and also among the best opportunities.
- Are stream reaches proposed for restoration that you do not think warrant restoration? – No
- Are the profiles and maps readable and understandable? – Yes

Project specific questions:

- Do you agree with the proposed project extent? – Yes to all
- Are there valuable resources within the project area not noted in the description? – We are aware of none.
- Does the preliminary restoration approach cause concern? – We appreciate the Biohabitats staff emphasis on avoiding clearing and employing nature-mimicking methods. There remains some level of misgiving about the cost vs. benefit of stream restoration in general.
- Is there any additional information you can provide about the project extent that should be considered when evaluating project viability? – Our apologies for not having the resources to do more than a cursory examination of the streams involved. We would suggest consideration of reforestation or individual tree plantings on the open area of Calvary Memorial Park and Fairfax Memorial Park, possibly as “memorial groves” consistent with the mission of these cemeteries.

Friends of Accotink Creek

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