

Accotink Gorge Biodiversity Preservation Project – Friends of Accotink Creek

<https://www.accotink.org/2015/AccotinkGorge2015.htm>

What is the Accotink Gorge:

The Accotink Gorge is one of the most biodiverse locations in our area, especially given its small size and proximity to development. However, if urgent action to remove *Wisteria sinensis* (Chinese wisteria) vines which are rapidly killing its canopy trees is not taken soon, all of this will be irrevocably lost. It is not too late to save this oasis, but it will be soon.

Where is the Accotink Gorge:

Where Accotink Creek crosses the Fall Line, in Springfield, Virginia, just west of I-95, just south of the Fairfax County Parkway, centered on coordinates 38.737436, -77.196948



Scenery of the Accotink Gorge

A Proposal:

Volunteers alone are unlikely to suffice. A sustained funded trained crew effort will be needed to make a difference.

A summer student employment project could combine invasives control labor with learning by cataloging all species encountered, writing reports, promoting the project on web and social media, and making presentations to surrounding schools, businesses, local government, etc. Nearby Lewis High School would be a likely recruitment point.

A crew of 10 paid \$20 per hour for 10 weeks (40 hours/week) = \$80,000 per summer.

Incidental expenses might include tools and possible herbicide certification, for an additional few \$100's per summer.

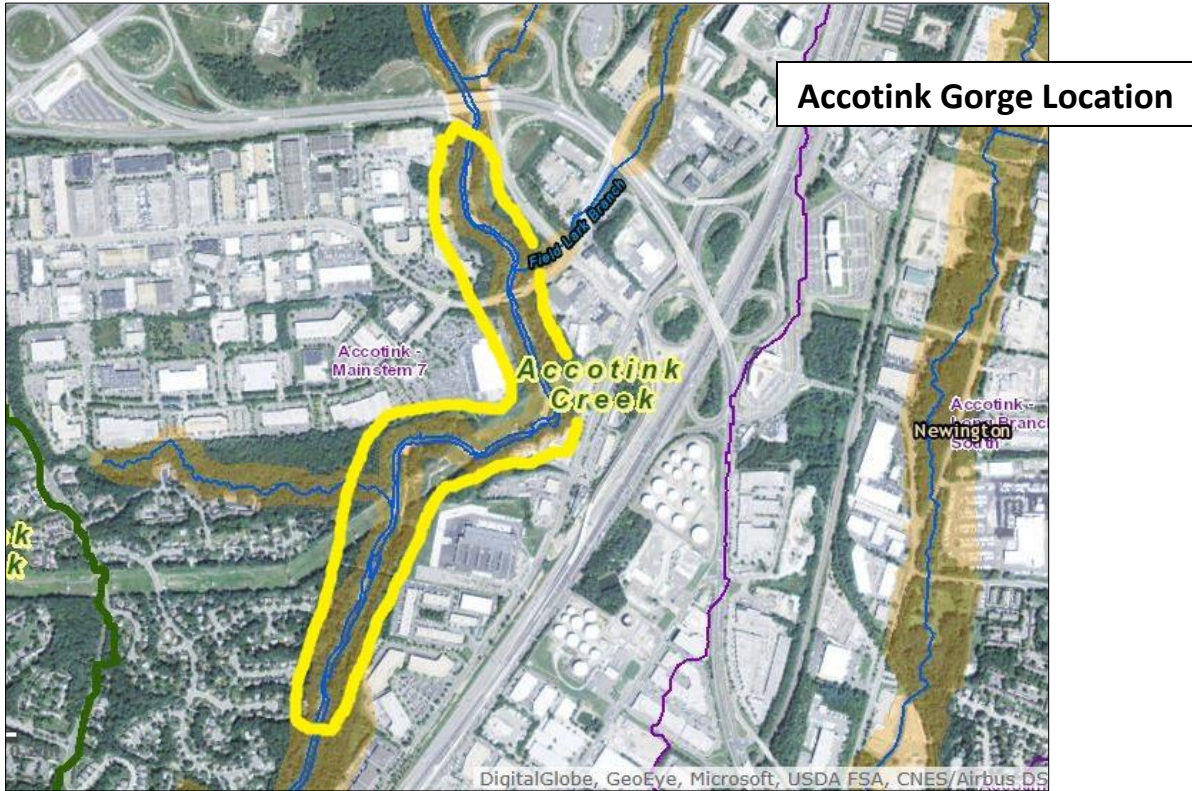
Work would begin near the center point of the Gorge, then proceed upstream and downstream on both banks.

Timescale – One decade? Two? Perpetual maintenance - the wisteria will never give up.

Partner with:

- FCPA (Fairfax County Park Authority) – largest landowner in the Gorge (~38 acres); has trained invasives personnel; some funding
- BOS (Board of Supervisors) – owns ~.5 acre in the Gorge; most of the Gorge is in the Mt. Vernon district, some in the Franconia district; supervisors can arrange connections with other parties.
- VDOT (Virginia Depart. Of Transportation) – owns ~7 acres; possible funding

- Fort Belvoir – Fort Belvoir owns ~11 acres in the Gorge, and considerably more where the wisteria infestation continues upstream; has qualified biologists and trained invasives personnel; might institute wisteria control on its property; possible funding
- Private landowners – collectively own ~27 acres in the Gorge; permission to access these properties is needed; possible funding & volunteers
- Nearby businesses – access to the Gorge; possible funding & volunteers
- Dominion Power – manages an easement of ~ 13 acres in the Gorge; currently managing for wisteria control
- Schools – possible source of compensated crews and volunteers
- Civic associations – possible volunteers



Metric	Estimate	Measurement
Trees supported (#)	9600 mature trees	Trees protected/conserved on site @ 100 per acre
Species supported (#)	170 species documented 50 more to come?	Total number of native or adaptive plant species so far documented in the Gorge
People educated (#)	Annually: Crew – 10 Volunteers – 40 Presentations - 200	Count of people who participated in project - educational activity.
Jobs supported (#)	Annually: 80 parttime	Count of staff members engaged
Volunteer events (#)	Annually: 3	Count of volunteer events hosted
Community volunteers (#)	Annually: 40	Count of community members who volunteer at project events
Area improved (m ²)	96 acres	Total acres within the Accotink Gorge