



**Subject: From Friends of Accotink Creek re invasive plants and the new Pesticide Law**

**July 22, 2024**

Dear Supervisor Walkinshaw,

Friends of Accotink Creek thanks you for your initiative in calling a meeting to address the growing threat of invasive plants to our natural areas.

You may not be aware of [the new amendment, Part F, to the Va Pesticide Law](#), introduced by Delegate Bulova and signed by Gov Youngkin March 2024, that would allow regular volunteers without pesticide licenses to use consumer-grade herbicides on invasive plants on public lands - provided 1) they have permission from the landowner (in this case mostly FCPA), 2) are instructed on correct use and safety protocol by a holder of current commercial pesticide license, and 3) work under the direction of that professional though that person does not have to be on-site.

An application especially useful in combating tree-killing vines would be using "stump killer" on freshly-cut vines. This method uses a minimal amount of herbicide.

Currently, FCPA volunteers are only permitted to cut vines or try to dig up the roots. Such methods generally promote vigorous regrowth that has to be cut and recut for years before the vine eventually dies - an inefficient use of volunteer time when best practices are "painting" freshly cut stumps with herbicide in the late summer or fall at which time plants are pulling nutrients down to their roots. Failing to take advantage of the recent amendment to the Pesticide Law shows poor stewardship of our public lands.

As a cost-saving measure, volunteers could purchase (and share) their own sponge bottles ([\\$10](#) to [\\$20](#)), herbicide, and indicator dye.

As regards safety, applying consumer-grade herbicide with non-spill sponge bottles is far safer than risking back injury from pulling or digging up huge roots. As an extra safety precaution, permission could be limited to IMA site leaders.

Re county staff or contractor time for training and supervising volunteers, no on-site supervision is required:

