



Remarks before the Fairfax County Park Authority's

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Public Input Session

September 10, 2025

The call has gone out for 5% cuts in County FY 2027 appropriations to the Park Authority. How many times in recent years has the Park Authority funding been cut, then cut again? When will we ever hope for a restoration to the levels of funding merited by a County of our size and resources?

As a conservation organization, the Friends of Accotink Creek strongly urge that we not cut Natural Resource Management funding or staff. In particular, the Invasive Management Area staff is woefully inadequate for the monumental challenge of its task. Keeping invasive vines and thorns from devastating the value of natural parks to native flora, fauna, and citizens alike is imperative. The Invasive Management Area program supports and trains the many volunteers who cut invasive vines and remove other invasive growth, but much more needs to be done to make appreciable gains.

We have a large backlog of volunteers waiting for training to become Invasive Management Area site leaders. These volunteers cannot serve to protect our parks without continued and increased staffing to bring them on board.

Again,

- Please do not cut Invasive Management Area funding
- Please do not cut Natural Resources Management funding

And, we might add, please DO cut any activities that will further reduce the dwindling area of natural habitat remaining in our parks.

Also, Hidden Oaks Nature Center being in our watershed, we wish to endorse funding that maintains this treasured amenity at its full function.

Friends of Accotink Creek

><(((°>`~...~><(((°> "Find just one other person who cares." ><(((°>`~...~><(((°>`~...~><(((°>

Sent: 9/11/25

Subject: Thank you for your testimony on the Park Authority budget

Thank you for coming in person to testify before the Park Authority Board last night. Taking the time to attend and share your views directly is a real commitment, and it makes a meaningful difference in how we understand the impact of these difficult decisions on our community. The points you and others raised underscore the real effects these proposals could have on our parks and the residents who depend on them.

As you know, the Park Authority has faced years of chronic underfunding. And after absorbing a \$1 million reduction in FY 2026, we have now been directed to prepare for an additional \$1.8 million in reductions—about 5 percent of our entire general fund allocation—for FY 2027. Staff developed a list of non-recommended reductions to meet this target, but none of these represent choices we want to make. They reflect the very limited options available to sustain our system under the current fiscal constraints.

It is also important to be clear about the process. These proposals come at the direction of the County Executive, who has required all agencies to identify reductions. The Park Authority Board does not recommend these cuts, but we are required to present them. Ultimately, it is the Board of Supervisors who will decide which reductions are adopted when the FY 2027 budget is finalized. The same commitment you showed by testifying before us will be just as important before the Board of Supervisors. I strongly encourage you to share your concerns directly with your Supervisor and to participate in the Board's public budget hearings in the spring—following the County Executive's advertised budget in February.

Thank you again for your testimony and for your commitment to strengthening our park system. Community voices like yours are essential in ensuring the importance of park funding is heard.

Take care
Kiel Stone
Chair, Fairfax County Park Authority Board

