



[Plan Amendment 2022-CW-2CP](#)

- Plan Forward comments of the Friends of Accotink Creek -

There are far too many separate planning processes for the layman or average non-profit organization to stay abreast of and provide meaningful input. So it is with Plan Forward. The challenge to the individual citizen or small organization is illustrated by the fact that an online search for "Plan Forward Fairfax County" returns so many results from land use law firms. No doubt, despite efforts at public outreach, such firms and their clients will inevitably have an outsized influence on outcomes.

The Friends of Accotink Creek are not in a position to thoroughly analyze all the elements of Plan Forward. Nonetheless, we can offer some general principles:

- No net habitat loss in any form - We have lost enough habitat in Fairfax County. It is time to adopt the principle of healing Nature.
- No intrusion into Resource Protection Areas - They appear so empty and so tempting to anyone with a bulldozer and an itch to pour concrete. It is so easy to say "Yes" to such intrusions, private or public. But Resource Protection Areas are not empty. They exist to protect all citizens. They exist to protect our future. Nature cannot overlook intrusions simply because they are convenient to our present desires. This [memo](#) is a start.
- Stormwater runoff - Our streams don't cause it; we do. We should bear responsibility to reduce runoff from our paved surfaces by incorporating reductions into all planning decisions. There is little hope of expecting to "restore" our streams without reducing runoff.
- Enhance habitat connectivity at every opportunity - Both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species will diminish or vanish over time when trapped in isolated pockets.
- Actions are cumulative - Decisions must be regarded as part of a larger whole causing effects over time. Habitats large and small can and will die the "death of a thousand cuts".
- Encourage use of native plants, while preventing use of invasives and promoting their removal - Invasive plants have become a scourge of our parks and natural areas. Light, space, and access are often cut off to native plants, animals, and humans alike by dense thickets and walls of invasives.
- No liberal exemptions that make a mockery of plans - Yes, we all see it happening and see it constantly.
- Climate Change is real - Business as usual mitigated by lofty future goals and good intentions will not save us. Hard decisions are needed. Actions are needed, however inconvenient they may be.
- Realistic enforcement of violations - As opposed to the usual "Tsk. Tsk. Please stop doing that" approach we see with environmental harms.
- A few instructive selections from our [Words of Wisdom](#) page:
 - Primum non nocere "First, do no harm."
 - "Every time there is a compromise, the loser is wildlife." - Peter Murrow
 - "Wildlife and its habitat cannot speak, so we must and we will." – Theodore Roosevelt
 - "Dominion over nature is a gift which has been given us yoked to the trust for its preservation." - Accotink motto

Friends of Accotink Creek

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