



Bulletin of the Proceedings of the Friends of Accotink Creek

Our meeting notes serve as bulletins of our activities, interests, and discussions, supplemented by your submissions.

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – July 18, 2017

Next Meeting: August 15, 2017 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Kris Unger
Philip Latasa
Julie Chang
Elaine Sevy
Flint Webb
Dave Lincoln
Kim Schauer - guest

Upcoming events

- Accotink/Braddock Friends Meeting July 20, 2017
- 350 Fairfax Plastic Bag meeting August 3, 2017
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, September 9, 2017

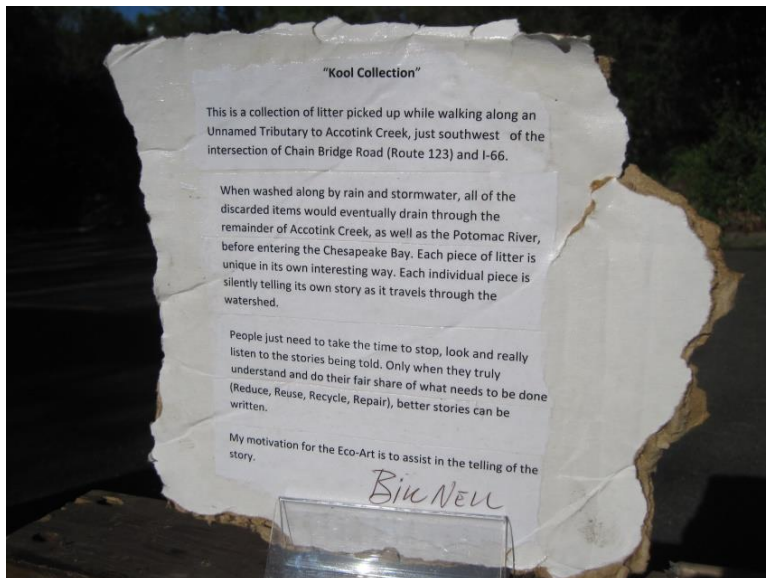
Action Items:

- *Everyone – Brainstorm grant application ideas*
- *Elaine – Arrange Bridge Walk participation*
- *Philip – Coordinate staging area restoration with Sierra Club*

FACC Subjects Discussed –

- Bill Nell – In Memoriam:

Philip shared the news of Bill Nell's recent passing. Bill was reliable presence in our meetings, supplying the technical background most of us lack. His talent at turning trash found along the creek into art was evident in the photos passed around the table. A candle burned through the meeting in Bill's memory.





• Park Encroachment:

Kim Schauer, Naturalist, Fairfax County Park Authority, described a pilot program addressing encroachment on parks focused on three parks which have significant problems and also have supportive friends groups. The approach is education, rather than enforcement. A GIS-supported storybook should be online within a week that will allow users to view boundaries and encroachment situations. There are four principle types of encroachment – Installing structures, Trail blazing, Waste dumping, and Yard expansion. The program is grant funded for one year.

Kim plans outreach to civic associations and schools. She is seeking ideas on who to contact and how to reach them to raise awareness. The group offered a number of suggestions.

Dave brought up the issue of tire dumping in the Accotink Gorge and also the issue of invasive plant species as a form of encroachment.

• Represent FACC:

○ Braddock Road Meeting 6/26

A new insult to the environment is proposed by moving Danbury Forest Drive to align with Wakefield Chapel Road, then razing the forested wetland area between the old and new roadbeds for a stormwater pond. This would all be directly in the Resource Protection Area on the banks of Long Branch central.

Proposals for widening Braddock Road have been scaled back to "improvements" without adding lanes (except the near-continuous new turn lanes). The wooded areas along both shoulders are to be cleared to provide for bike paths. Proposed stormwater ponds seem to be positioned for maximum loss of tree cover.

Residents spent most of the meeting speaking against a transit center at the Kings Park Shopping Center. A park-and-ride is a possible alternative.

The discussion became philosophical as Kris offered the germane quote –
“The straight line leads to the downfall of humanity.” - Friedensreich Hundertwasser
And Dave added another –
“If we keep living like there’s no tomorrow, there won’t be one.” - Kurt Vonnegut

Philip shared draft [comments](#) to be submitted on behalf of FACC, which were approved by consensus.

○ MOM’s Organic Market Block Party 7/2

Kris and Elaine staffed a table at this event, including coloring and nature journaling and feeding lettuce to bins of worms.

Kris advised MOM’s staff is interested in regular volunteer activity with FACC, perhaps monthly, perhaps on weekdays. Philip suggested the [Accotink Gorge](#). Dave suggested Accotink Bay cleanup. Kris responded with the idea of easing them in gradually with photo-friendly activities.

The conversation took a rather surreal detour onto the topic of Mary Poppins.



○ Fairfax County Restoration Project Meeting 7/12

Kris informed us the FCRP meeting focused on the recent VDOT [495 walk](#). In the meeting Kris pushed for VDOT to move to a native grass mix and continue discussions with DPWES. The VDOT representative stated natives are now the VDOT policy in Northern Virginia. Flint observed VDOT is being somewhat more responsive on [plans for I-66](#).

○ Long Branch Stream Valley Walk 7/15

Kris noted several scouts plus parents participated in a stream walk, discussion of watershed issues, and pulling invasives near the new Little Run Elementary School watershed garden. Dave shared a laugh over disciplinary issues during a past outing. Kris will be meeting faculty soon regarding fall activities.

- *Informal Friends Meeting 7/15*

Julie and Flint attended this meeting to discuss the draft memorandum of agreement for park friends groups. According to Julie, all groups were on the same page against the draft. Discussion at the meeting made mention of a lack of accounting by the Park Authority of the disposition of funds donated by friends groups. Flint mentioned the MOA is connected to the Park Authority's pursuit of national accreditation. Kris noted the matter relates back to issues with one library friends group's funds.

Flint related how Historic Huntley in the past had hired an attorney and succeeded in changing plans for a power line near their park. The friends meeting discussed the feasibility of similar legal representation over the MOA issue. Julie brought up the mention of need for waivers of conflict of interest at the meeting. Flint mentioned the possibility of moving liability to an MOA rider for individualization among groups.

Kris repeated our offer of providing an umbrella for other friends groups in the watershed.

Flint laid out the idea of all groups getting together to jointly obtain insurance. Flint also opined that having insurance may be a liability in itself, as we could become the focus of claims, rather than some larger sponsoring organization, for example, the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Julie described the Volunteer Team concept as passing liability on to the Park Authority. Flint mused on doing specific projects, such as the [Accotink Gorge](#), as a Volunteer Team.

Philip shared draft [comments](#) on the MOA, including the five common points agreed at the friends meeting. The group approved the comments without dissent.

- *Accotink/Braddock Friends Meeting 7/20*

Philip provided a reminder that the joint meeting of Accotink Creek watershed friends groups will be this Thursday, July 20 at Kings Park Library. He reviewed the agenda, including presentations on the TMDL, the Park Authority MOA proposal, county-wide master plan, Lake Accotink Park master plan, and Accotink Creek mussel rescues. Philip expressed the need to also discuss the [Braddock Road](#) project.

- *Environmental Showcase 7/22*

Kris and Sue will attend. Dave will try to be there.

- *Bridge Walk 8/29*

Philip recalled we had participated in the annual Lee District Bridge Walk in Springfield last year and inquired if there was interest this year, noting the inducement of free barbecue dinner and ice cream. Elaine can staff a table and will make arrangements with Lee District. Dave can also attend and Kris will try to be there.

- *Americana Park Northside Project:*

Kris recalled recent discussion of a possible grant from Dominion Power for restoration of the staging area in the northwest quadrant of the 495/236 cloverleaf. Philip added the idea is for the Sierra Club to obtain the grant and work with VDOT on the restoration, and we are welcome to participate. There was discussion of including the adjacent eroding path in the project. Philip will contact the Sierra Club.

- *Ft. Belvoir Outreach:*

Dave lamented he has no good prospects for an Accotink Bay cleanup. Ducks Unlimited and another duck hunting group are interested, but no one wants to take on the task. Kris suggested flyers at the boat rental. Dave will check into that option.

- *Trash Action Work Force:*

Kris confirmed the recent TAWF meeting had moved in the direction of an October apocalypse-themed event, likely again at the International Bottled Water Association, possibly timed for the evening rush hour. There may be a social component of retiring to a local watering hole after the action. Kris has been speaking to Corporate Responsibility International and getting a positive response.

It was pointed out that 350 Fairfax has announced it will discuss action against plastic bags at its next meeting, August 3rd, making them a possible ally of TAWF. Dave and Flint will attend.

- *Americana Drive Cleanup:*

Philip described how, on July 12, in 22 student volunteers of Asian American LEAD braved the heat to remove 34 bags of trash and a large pile of synthetic lumber along Americana Drive. FCRP has identified negligent management at Avant apartments as a source of the dumping issue, and is looking to get Code Enforcement to take action. Philip shared a photo of Avant taken from Yelp, where he noted there are hair-raising negative reviews.



- *TMDL Comments:*

Philip advised the final draft of the [TMDL](#) covering sediment and chlorine was presented at the June 28 public meeting. The draft still must be approved by the Virginia Water Control Board and the EPA. Implementation will be required as each jurisdiction's MS-4 discharge permit is renewed.

Philip shared a draft of FACC [comments](#), noting the TMDL was rather too technical, so the comments focused on implementation methods. The group approved the comments without objection, but asked that a concrete example be included.

- *Nottoway Park Stream Restoration:*

Philip passed along the news that work should begin this week on Phase 1 of the Nottoway Park stream restoration, on two streams entering the park across Courthouse Road. Phase 2 may begin construction next winter.

- *St. Bernadette Zoning:*

Elaine remarked that the signs for a public hearing July 19th had prompted her to check into this. Philip elaborated that the proposed building additions themselves are trivial, and in areas already paved or in lawn. The zoning hearing is apparently required because the buildings already intrude into the RPA. Alarming, rather than seek an RPA waiver, the church proposes to move the RPA boundary, based on a new survey by a compliant contractor. There was some startled discussion questioning how this is possible and bemoaning our unpreparedness to influence the decision.

Philip also noted another worrying provision of the county staff report is that the church will cede a 21' right of way along Old Keene Mill Road for a future bike path that seems to be in the county transportation plan, at the expense of the wooded habitat currently in place. It seems unlikely this path will ever be built, though, since so much of the rest of the right of way would need to come from private homeowners. [Application overview](#) & [Staff report](#)

- *International Coastal Cleanup:*

Philip proposed a fall cleanup schedule to begin the Saturday after our Sept 9 stream monitoring, then continue through Oct 7. Philip needs to verify Oct 14 is the date for the Lake Accotink Park cleanup. We will likely also have a Sunday cleanup date with Temple Adat Reyim.

- *Watershed Stewards:*

Kris described meeting with the Land Foundation and Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District on the topic of a watershed stewards program and finding them receptive. The next step is to meet with other relevant groups such as department of Public Works and Environmental Services. The concept is to train individuals to promote and guide watershed-friendly projects in neighborhoods.

- *DPWES:*

Kris remarked that he had met Danielle Wynne and learned she has added two new community outreach staff in Stormwater Planning Division.

- *Art in the Park:*

Elaine presented her latest poster design and advised she has received a permit for Nature Journaling on 2nd & 4th Mondays through the end of 2017.