



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 – January 21, 2020

Next Meeting: February 18, 2020 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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It's easy & free!

Present:

Sandy Collins, Dave Lincoln, Sue Kovach Schuman, Daniel Wu, Philip Latasa, Beverley Rivera
Suzanne Dorick – Welcome, Suzanne!

Upcoming events

- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park March 14, 2020
- Conservation Café March 26, 2020
- Mantua Earth Day April 20, 2020

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Represent FACC:

- *Freshwater Salinization Workshop Jan. 14, 2020*
Virginia Tech Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory organized this session and drew over 100 attendees, including local water suppliers D.C. Water, Fairfax Water and Loudon Water. Kris participated as a panel member. Virginia Tech is seeking a substantial grant to fund long term study of freshwater salinization in the Occoquan watershed, which presents the opportunity of a small watershed with both drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities.

Dave noted the phenomenon of saline accumulation in reservoirs such as the Occoquan Reservoir, as the heavier saline water tends to settle to the bottom and not pass over the spillway.

- *Lee District Open House Jan. 25, 2020*
Philip thought this would be a good opportunity to introduce FACC to the new supervisor at his first open house. Sandy and Dave will try to be there. Elaine will be there with Springfield Art Group, and may have the chance to mention FACC as well.
- *Virginia Conservation Lobby Day Jan. 28, 2020*
Philip enquired if anyone plans to attend. There were no takers yet.

- *Chairman's New Year Reception Jan. 30, 2020*
The reception is 5-7 p.m. in the forum of the Government Center. Save Blake Lane Park is appealing for everyone to attend in support. At the strategizing session yesterday there was a consensus for attending in support of FACC as well. Philip displayed combined FACC and Save Blake Lane badges attendees can print at home. Sue will attend and proposed the possibility of involving Chairman McKay in FACC cleanups or meetings.

At yesterday's strategizing session Kris had proposed a watershed walk beforehand, but no action was possible with Kris not present due to work requirements.

- *Chesapeake Bay Day on Capitol Hill Mar. 4, 2020*
Choose Clean Water Coalition Chesapeake Bay Day on Capitol Hill will be on March 4th. Philip enquired if anyone plans to attend? No takers yet.
- *Conservation Café March 26, 2020*
Audubon Naturalist Society will have one of their Conservation Café events to meet new NOVA environmental advocates and discuss issues. The location is in our watershed, at Providence Community Center, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Presenters include:
 - Audubon Naturalist Society
 - Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling
 - Northern Virginia Organizer Virginia Conservation League of Voters
 - Coalition for Smarter Growth

- *[50th Earth Day Partnership](#) April 22, 2020*
Philip described plans for an invasives workday at Lake Accotink Park marina 9 – 11 AM. There are also plans still in progress for a workday at Daniels Run Elementary, but we need to hear back from Fairfax City if their Earth Day event will be there again. If so, we will want to have a table focused on Daniels Run invasives.



- *Mantua Earth Day April 20, 2020*
Sue is putting together an Earth Day program for the Mantua neighborhood, a few days early, due to space availability. Time is 7:00 – 8:30. FACC will have a table.

Areas of focus may include:

- Compost & recycling
- Tree health and maintenance to discourage homeowner cutting
- The new purple glass recycling bins – lack of awareness and inadequate capacity

• *Mantua Dumping:*

Sue let us know there has been an issue of chronic dumping at the intersection of Barkley Drive and Karen Drive. At the request of Sue and other neighbors, the Park Authority will install a "No Dumping" sign This is despite misgivings by some in the Park Authority that such signs are a magnet for dumping.

- *Barkley Drive Tree Blockage:*

Sue's request to the Park Authority to remove a fallen tree threatening the Barkley Drive bridge was declined on grounds that the situation is natural and will not harm the structure. The fallen tree's position just upstream and overhanging the bridge might indicate they are wrong. Dave recalled the Park Authority once removed a similar fallen tree in his neighborhood that was causing erosion of the Cross County Trail.

- *Boy Scout Planting:*

Philip recounted a recent contact from a boy Scout with the classic 'solution in search of a problem'. The scout is proposing a tree planting and has covered every detail except finding someone who says this is needed, and finding someplace where someone wants this.

Kris has suggested to the scout that he seek private property for his project. If not, Philip raised the possibility of redirecting him to support the Daniels Run invasives removal instead or to do his tree planting in the Barta Road interchange on the Fairfax County Parkway.

- *Virginia Rail Expansion:*

Philip noted the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation is planning [expanded rail service](#) that will involve new lines through the Accotink Creek watershed. It is not clear if any land outside the right of way will be acquired or if there is more than one project underway. Sandy and Dave will inquire at the Lee District Open House.

- *Long Branch Project:*

Philip advised a walk is scheduled with the Braddock District supervisor January 25th. Public meetings may be expected by spring.

- *Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:*

Philip recalled at our November meeting we discussed a walk along the proposed pipeline route with some of the concerned parties. Philip had expected to see Allan of Save Lake Accotink last month, but did not. He will follow up with Allan.



The ongoing question as public meetings resume and maybe until the Master Plan is complete is whether we have any new thoughts on what we should recommend for the general aspects of the Master Plan, or how we can effectively advocate for conservation interests. Philip shared a list of proposed comments. [[Below*](#)]

Discussion included a brief recap of the pipeline and dewatering area plans. Dave drew analogies to the wetlands created by the San Diego River diversion at Mission Bay and the application of that model to Lake Accotink. Dave also brought up the thought of building an island with dredged sediment, perhaps to support a gazebo. Suzanne recalled Crestwood Swim & Tennis Club transferred property to the park years ago that might be available for new uses.

• Donations:

Philip advised a check should be showing up in two or three weeks from an individual fundraiser held on Facebook to benefit Save Blake Lane Park. It appears it will be \$90, but that could be corrected.

Other donations included \$50 from Matt Bright of Earth Sangha, \$70.00 from Janice Hallmark for a family membership, and \$250.00 from Sandy, which should be matched by her employer later.

A Christmas cash donation came from Philip's visiting 8 year old great nephew in the amount of \$3.45 .

Dave brought up Go Fund Me as a possible donation source. Philip opined that we would have to have a specific project people would donate to support.



A little donation from our littlest supporter

• Whither FACC:

Dave acted as facilitator of our January 20th [Strategizing Session](#) on the future of Friends of Accotink Creek.

Twenty-some persons attended yesterday to brainstorm over food and beverage at Dos Amigos Restaurant in Springfield. Those attending included members of FLAP, Save Blake Lane Park, Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley, and Friends of Nottoway.



Gathering of the tribe at our Strategizing Session

The Strategizing Session resulted in formation of two action teams:

- Outreach Action Team Sandy leading
- Event Action Team Dave leading

The discussion begun in the Strategizing Session continued with Dave mentioning that, due to Juan, we pledged to have more fun meetings.

Sue proposed the idea of making use of interns, noting:

- GMU has 8 or 9 environmental degrees.
- We would need to state what we need/want from an intern in 4 -5 bullet points.
- Service would likely be part-time in summer.
- Payment is optional, but might be \$15/hr or a lump sum stipend.
- Mentioned her positive experience with a GMU intern in the Office of Historic Alexandria.

Discussion included social media pros and cons and the possibility of skill aid with our website.

Sandy thought we could ask an intern to take a look at a particular research area.

Sandy also recalled she had attended county teen job fairs on behalf of FACC, which are aimed primarily at high school students

Dave said an intern could perhaps work on outreach. He also mentioned the [Trash Day of Action graphics](#) created for us by GMU students.

Philip shared a [letter from Dr. Cindy Smith](#), GMU professor, also proposing FACC make use of interns.

Daniel has a GMU Handshake account that can be used to work with GMU and post any request. Sue's husband Gene also has GMU access.

Sue will enquire with GMU and NVCC

Philip brought our attention to two upcoming Volunteer Fairfax webinars that seem especially relevant:

“Volunteer Recruitment: Starting Smart”, January 30, 2020 9:00 AM

“Turning Volunteers Into Donors”, February 11, 2020 8:30 Am

The webinars are not free, but it's not clear if the fee would be \$40 or \$60 for our level of membership.

***Possible Comments on General Aspects of the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan**

Primum non nocere. – First do no harm.

A Natural Resources Plan for the park should be prepared and become the guide for all future planning.

Designate Lake Accotink Park as a natural resource park like Huntley Meadows, consistent with the park mission described in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, the FCPA Natural Resource Management Plan, and the General Management Plan for Lake Accotink Park. Nature is not gone from Lake Accotink Park, but needs our dedicated conservatorship to nurture its health.

Planning should be guided by the principles of no net increase in impervious surfaces, no increase in runoff, and no net loss of natural habitat.

Consider realigning the formal boundaries of the park to include a more extensive area downstream from the trestle, as these areas are functionally part of Lake Accotink Park.

Land acquisition – consider the possibility of acquiring land in the industrial park for parking and buildings.

Land acquisition – consider the possibility of acquiring the upstream land along the tributary stream adjacent to the park office.

Land acquisition – consider the possibility of acquiring the forested land between the park entrance road and the industrial park.

Explore the possibility of finding a suitable location for a wetland boardwalk as at Huntley Meadows.

Expand the pollinator garden down the hillside, possibly wrapping around the pavilion

Consider a gazebo in the lake, like at Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna. This could be a rental revenue source.

Preserve/refurbish/update the watershed sign at the boathouse for the enhancement of public awareness of watershed preservation issues.

Make the marina area an aesthetic gem, like Carroll Creek Park in Frederick, Canal Walk in Richmond, and Eisenhower East Park in Alexandria. Even the most mundane fixtures can incorporate an aesthetic element

Incorporate nature-themed public art as in Eisenhower East Park in Alexandria

Incorporate nature-themed playground art as at Van Dyck Park in Fairfax City.

Incorporate an “Accotink-henge” as the sunsets over the lake are so popular. This would be an arrangement of structures so that an alignment phenomenon of some sort would occur on solstices and/or equinoxes. Perhaps a giant sundial?

Corniche – the beleaguered heavily-trodden grass between the parking lot and the marina may be a lost cause. Consider its use as a seating/dining area.

Examine engineering solutions to avoid the chronic accumulation of trash and debris in the marina, either by providing for regular removal or redirecting currents.

Explore the possibility of incorporating Bee hotels/Bat houses/Purple martin houses/Chimney swift towers into structures.

The Brookfield Park pond now features water purifying floating wetlands. Lake Accotink could have them also.

If the dam remains in place, naturalistic and attractive fish/eel passage should be incorporated.

If the dam remains in place, incorporate small scale hydropower generation. In-line hydropower may be possible even without the dam.

Of the three drains at the quasi-wetland area adjacent to Uxbridge Court, one has been plugged for decades, one collapsed into a sinkhole several years ago, and the one functioning drain is in precarious condition. This condition has caused loss of wetlands for amphibian breeding and holds the potential for catastrophic overtopping of the historic railroad bed. The drains in the pond immediately east of this location are also in need of maintenance.

The pond adjacent to the main entrance road (stormwater facility #FM0495), an amphibian breeding habitat, is being filled by sediment eroded from a pipeline failure in the industrial park. The pond itself is also property of the industrial park, although for all practical purposes serves as part of Lake Accotink Park. Failure of this pond will eventually have a negative effect on the habitat and facilities of Lake Accotink Park. The industrial park ownership should be motivated to correct the situation in a habitat-friendly manner.

Facilities should serve as showcases for watershed-friendly practices, providing inspiring examples for property owners to follow, thus serving as a multiplier for county watershed restoration expenditures.

Turn park facilities into environmental "net zero" showpieces, setting an example like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's [Brock Center](#) or the Bronx River Alliance's [River House](#) .

Above all, let us make Lake Accotink Park a gift to the future.