



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 – March 17, 2020

Next Meeting: April 21, 2020 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Sandy Collins, Dave Lincoln, Julie Chang, Flint Webb, Kris Unger, Philip Latasa
All via conference call, due to covid19 closures and precautions







Unwelcome visitor

Upcoming events

- Conservation Café March 26, 2020
- Americana Drive Cleanup April 4, 2020
- Wakefield Park Planting week of April 18, 2020
- Earth Day Invasives Project April 22, 2020

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Represent FACC:

- *Taste of Ravensworth March 19, 2020*
The Taste of Ravensworth has been postponed until further notice. 
- *Conservation Café March 26, 2020*
The Conservation Café will now be an online webinar. Philip described a conflict with the FLAP General Meeting the same date and time, presuming no cancellation. Sandy may be able to attend the webinar. 
- [NVCC Annual Green Festival April 15, 2020](#)
The Green Festival is cancelled. The festival theme was to have been “Waste and its Impact on Habitats” 
- *50th Earth Day Partnership April 22, 2020*
Earth Day Network is postponing its 50th anniversary Earth Day events. Instead, April 22 will be Digital Earth Day, details to follow. 

- *City of Fairfax Earth Day April 26, 2020*

We are now planning to join the Fairfax City Earth Day at Daniels Run Elementary on Sunday April 26th, 2:30 – 5:00 pm, with a table display and volunteer invasives removal along the stream. A few days prior, it looks like there will also be an invasives workday at the same site, with the Lamb Center City Jobs program.

The City Environmental Sustainability Committee is planning a tree planting in the second half of October as the official 2020 Arbor Day. We may be able to incorporate this into the work at Daniels Run.

- *Mantua Earth Day April 30, 2020*

Mantua Earth Day has been cancelled.



- *Potomac Watershed Cleanup:*

The Alice Ferguson Foundation has cancelled the Potomac Watershed Cleanup for this year and will not distribute supplies. They propose to do a summer cleanup instead.



Philip indicated he planned to press ahead with our cleanup schedule. Since they are outdoors, social distancing should be easy and we'll have sanitizer, vinyl gloves, masks, and a hand washing station. After discussion of liability and possible inability of the Park Authority to provide pickup, the consensus was in favor of skipping cleanups altogether until fall.



Instead, we will encourage independent work, asking everyone to “Pick a spot” to clean and then share what they have done on the [Watch the Green Grow](#) webpage.

The Americana Drive cleanup on April 4th is in a separate category, being sponsored by VDOT, with DPWES support already arranged.. We will proceed as long as the cosponsor, Fairfax County Restoration Project, is willing.

- *Wakefield Park Planting:*

We still expect the planting to take place with the seedlings left over after the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District seedling sale. We are still awaiting date and details.

- *495 Express Lanes Walk: Philip (5 min)*

In previous years, we have done a walk along I-495 with Senator Marsden’s office and VDOT to lament the aftermath of the Express Lanes project. Philip inquired if we want to do this again this year or call it quits. He indicated there is only one significant issue left, which is the natural spring that was devastated and left in poor condition, contributing to channel erosion.

Kris suggested a virtual walk, with photos and descriptions of the remaining problems. Kris and Philip will pursue the idea.

Flint mentioned McLean is up in arms over plans for 495 Express Lanes extension north to the Potomac. Kris advised public meetings on the proposal have been postponed. Philip expressed the hope the issue might prompt creation of a Friends of Scotts Run group. Flint will contact the McLean Citizens Association about interest in support from FACC.

- [George Snyder Trail:](#)

The 30% completion plan for this trail has now been completed and released. There is little in it that we did not anticipate and it is all bad. Philip shared a draft of comments for the City Council and planners. It was approved with some edits.

Dave observed we need to “*Put pain in front of the wrong approach*”. Julie recommended kicking in the shins.

There is also a proposal for a small group walk along the proposed path of the trail to observe impacts and alternatives. A larger group with neighbors and City staff may need to wait for the covid19 situation to pass. Philip will arrange a date for the small walk.

Philip described how [greenway streets](#) in Columbus, Ohio, illustrate the approach of using existing paved surfaces in lieu of paving forests.

- [Northfax West Development:](#)

Fairfax City seems unsatisfied with mowing down the forest alongside Accotink Creek. Further upstream on the North Fork, we learn about the Northfax West project, just east of Chain Bridge Road at Fairfax Boulevard. The project proposes to simply bury 900+ feet of the stream in a culvert. This is the North Fork of Accotink Creek, a perennial stream, bounded by Resource Protection Area defined by Fairfax City and filled with fish. Apparently, the [permits \(Appendix B\)](#) are already in place. Philip asked for ideas.

Sandy described this as a solution from the “old days” versus the present day trend toward daylighting streams. She also accessed the online documentation and confirmed the permits have been issued.

Julie questioned how this development could happen in a floodplain. Kris suggested meeting with the developer for a “straight conversation”. He also suggested bringing in Audubon. Flint suggested consulting with Delegate Bulova’s office, since he represents the area.


Philip will contact Delegate Bulova’s office and will see about adding this area to the proposed George Snyder Trail walk.

- [American Drive Replanting:](#)

VDOT has a plan for Americana Drive, basically trying to return the wooded area to within 2 feet of the curb, to allow for opening car doors, while discouraging dumping. They will enlist ReLeaf Fairfax for this effort.

- [Vernal Pools:](#)

Dave recounted his discussion with the Lake Accotink Park manager about repairing the standpipe at a pond along the south side of the lake to return it to a viable amphibian breeding area. Dave indicated the repair would be simple enough to do ourselves.

Philip suggested bringing Mike Hayslett into town for vernal pool planning at the Lake Accotink marina and perhaps a tour of vernal pools. Mike’s last message, though, indicated he would rather avoid our nest of infection for the time being. It may still be possible for him to visit later in the year to plan a vernal pool installation for fall. Kris noted Mike’s extensive work with the Park Authority and suggested he may be able to do much planning remotely. 



Let a thousand sharrow flowers bloom in Fairfax!

- [Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:](#)

On March 14th we had a walk along the proposed dredge spoils pipeline route in Lake Accotink Park. Participants included the Braddock District Supervisor and staff, the new Park Manager, Park Authority staff, Stormwater Planning, lake neighbors, and folks representing Friends of Lake Accotink Park and Save Lake Accotink. Philip counted 29 people present. Sandy and Dave commented on the value of this event in letting people see the issues firsthand.

Nothing dramatic developed, but everyone who was there is now aware of the impacts and the need to think about them. The turnout demonstrated to the county side that there is at least some level of citizen concern. We'll have to think of ways to keep the topic fresh in people's minds. Dave recalled the discussion of pending commonwealth funding for the project might give an opportunity for leverage.



Participants of the pipeline route walk

The March 31 general Master Plan meeting was cancelled almost as soon as it was scheduled. Philip shared a few more suggested comments to add to our list, which the group accepted:



Regardless of designation, Lake Accotink Park remains blessed with an abundance of natural heritage. This abundance should be matched with an abundance of educational signage informing visitors of what they see all around them.

Implement a recommended "Zero Waste" policy for organized permitted events taking place in the park. Although enforcement would be impractical, education and endorsement of this approach should be a part of issuing permits and reservations.

Long-time park users lament the loss of the beaver ponds when the area adjacent to Uxbridge Court was filled with dredge spoils in 1986. Partial mitigation can be accomplished by managing this and similar areas as wetlands benefiting wildlife, including amphibians.

Bring back the live webcam with its view over the lake that was previously on the park website.

Examine methods to reduce the production of methane gas in anoxic lake sediments, possibly via aeration. Aeration could incorporate a decorative water jet feature.

This quote from the 1992 Lake Accotink Park General Management Plan equally describes the current situation and requires remedy - "The number of staff currently assigned to Lake Accotink is not adequate to maintain the park and provide reasonable levels of visitor service." (p. 10)

• Natural Landscaping at County Facilities:

The public hearings for Natural Landscaping at County Facilities have been scheduled. The public hearing for the Planning Commission is April 29th and the Board of Supervisors is June 9th.

Philip asked would anyone like to speak or take on drafting comments for FACC? He suggested we could just check what Friends of Huntley Meadows has to say. Sandy will draft comments.

• Meetup Renewal:

Philip renewed the Meetup subscription for 6 months for \$69.26. He asked do we think this is worth doing? Discussion arrived at the conclusion to reassess at the end of the 6 months. Meanwhile, Philip will send a message to our Meetup members to assess the level of interest.

• Donations:

We received a \$17.39 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of shopping activity between October 1 and December 31, 2019.

PayPal Giving Fund sent us \$1.00 or maybe two dollars, since they sent two emails, one saying “donation” and one saying “grant”. Sandy indicated this was from her. A head-scratching discussion was unable to fathom the mysteries of PayPal Giving Fund.

The signboard kiosk cover at the Mockingbird and Woodlark entrance to Wakefield Park was vandalized. Philip replaced the plexiglass for \$30, which we can consider a donation.



Vandalized kiosk in Wakefield Park

- [Whither FACC:](#)

Philip recommended the May 14th Audubon Naturalist Society's [Community Action 101 workshop](#) at Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus. Cost is \$20. He himself hesitates to attend because the description mentions role playing. .

Philip mentioned Kim had shared a masters thesis on the topic of the launching of the [Cub Run Park Volunteer Team](#) It's 100 pages and rather academic, but it is worth a look, at least the executive summary. Philip suggested we may wish to consider seeking advice from the author and founder of the group.
