



## 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 – August 18 2020

Next Meeting: August 15, 2020 (Third Tuesday of each month)

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#### **Present:**

Sandy Collins, Dave Lincoln, Flint Webb, Kim Schauer, Philip Latasa

Guests from Northern Virginia Trout Unlimited:

Tony Hill, Daniel Lazenby, Carl Jordan

#### **Upcoming events**

- Long Branch Stream Valley Trail Paving meeting September 10, 2020
- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park September 12, 2020
- International Coastal Cleanup September & October, 2020
- Americana Drive Cleanup November 11, 2020

#### • Represent FACC:

- Walk the Walk - August 26/27, 2020

It's not our usual watershed issue, but Philip pointed out the Walk the Walk march for justice will pass through the Accotink Creek watershed on [August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>](#) en route to join the [March on Washington](#). On the 26<sup>th</sup> the march will move east on Braddock Road, entering our watershed at the Guinea Road intersection and terminating in Wakefield Park at Audrey Moore RECenter. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the march will resume at the RECenter, cross 495 on the footbridge, go north on Americana Drive, and east on Little River Turnpike to leave the watershed at the Ravensworth Road intersection.

Philip plans to march with them both days and on the 28<sup>th</sup> into Washington. He suggested the Braddock Road bridge over Accotink Creek might be a likely place to meet them if anyone wish to do so.

- VCU Invitation - Fall, 2020

Philip explained we have an invitation to make a brief presentation to a VCU class. The instructor is Dr Joe Wood of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, whom we have long known. Joe's request is that we talk briefly (15-30 minutes) to the class- live or recorded. Joe suggested we could talk about the TMDL, our perspectives, or just why we do what we do. Kim suggested seeing the course prospectus would be helpful. Sandy & Dave will follow up with Joe.

#### • I-66 Outside the Beltway:

Philip didn't have much new to report on the I-66 project, but wanted to share one observation from July 26<sup>th</sup> when the air temperature was 94<sup>o</sup> while water in the Mosby Woods tributary where it enters the Chain Bridge Road cloverleaf was 60<sup>o</sup> and clear as gin. This is the stream that is being buried in lightless tunnels by this project.



Reading - 60<sup>o</sup> in Mosby Woods tributary

- [Long Branch central Project:](#)

Sandy will be our contact with Stormwater Planning during this project.

- [Long Branch Stream Valley Trail Paving:](#) Philip (5 min)

The Braddock Supervisor acknowledged [our message](#) endorsing the letter sent by Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley. The Supervisor has asked the Park Authority to schedule a community meeting before any work begins on this project. The meeting is scheduled for September 10, at 7 pm.

- [Braddock Road Project:](#)

A small ray of sunshine broke through the clouds at the August 3<sup>rd</sup> Braddock Road Project meeting when it was announced the realignment of Danbury Forest Drive through the Long Branch central floodplain had been abandoned. There is a caveat because the new intersection design is unique and uniquely confusing. It may be revised again before more public meetings in spring. Sandy observed that the motivation for the change was financial, not environmental.



Philip noted the Braddock Supervisor responded to [our comments](#) and advised they will review VDOT's plans for stormwater controls.

- [Fairfax County Parkway Project:](#)

The [Fairfax County Parkway Study](#) will develop plans affecting the Accotink Creek watershed. Philip explained it is too early in planning for any specifics, but not too early to take the [online survey](#) and express the need for environmental concerns to be baked in as goals, not afterthoughts.

- [George Snyder Trail:](#)

The August 20<sup>th</sup> virtual meeting regarding the George Snyder Trail is an opportunity to speak in defense of riparian buffer protection. Philip put the link on our [calendar](#) .

- [Proposed Developments:](#)

- [Inova Springfield](#)

Inova has announced plans to build a new hospital next to their existing facilities in Springfield near the Metro station. Philip suggested we should contact some of the Inova folks we engaged with regarding the Exxon/Mobil site and get information on exactly where and what is planned and advocate for best practices and preservation. Sandy will contact Inova.

- [Liberty View](#)

An adjacent 13.4 area was approved by the Board of Supervisors back in January for mixed uses. This area was a single family neighborhood which the developer acquired in 2014, but has left as a vacant [ghost town](#) ever since, as the [markets shifted](#) out from under their original office space plans.

- [McWhorter Place](#)

43 townhouses on 3.4 acres are proposed along McWhorter Place in Annandale at the eastern edge of our watershed. The area is currently single family homes and unoccupied lots. Two of the lots will become a public park. Philip mentioned there are issues of tree preservation and maintaining bicycle access, but this was approved by the Board of Supervisors on July 28<sup>th</sup>, so there would seem to be little to be done.

- [Western Annandale CBC \(Community Business Center\)](#)

This is a proposal to extend westward the boundary of this special district to allow advantages in redeveloping 10 acres on the north side of Little River Turnpike just east of 495, for mixed use. The site is currently occupied by two office buildings and single-family homes.

Philip commented that this is part of the larger [South County Site-Specific Plan Amendment Process](#), something beyond his grasp. Flint indicated the [Inova development](#) issues in Merrifield are part of the North County Process. The Mason District Task Force will meet September 2<sup>nd</sup> to consider. Sandy will check for more information.

- [TSA Headquarters](#)

Philip lamented that we were oblivious, but the TSA has built their new headquarters on 9.5 acres adjacent to a wooded tributary of Long Branch south opposite the Springfield Metro. This lot was cleared decades ago, but never built upon. Philip wondered what the implications are for the once-planned extension of Frontier Drive, since the new building seems to either block the way or increase the imagined need for the extension. Sandy recalled learning at the last Lee District Open House that there is no funding. She will check again with the Lee District supervisor's office.



McWhorter Place plans

- [International Coastal Cleanup:](#)

Philip sent out the proposed International Coastal Cleanup schedule with the meeting reminder. Not having heard of any problems, we will go ahead on that basis. Philip solicited ideas on how to make signing in more virus safe. Tony indicated Trout Unlimited now collects information for potential contact tracing. Philip speculated on ways the pandemic might affect volunteer numbers, either up or down.



- Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:

Philip advised we have learned that the dredging project has moved to the point of contracting with a design consultant, which should be announced soon. He suggested we should explore what options we may have for input at this stage. Sandy will contact the Braddock Supervisor's office for information.

- Virginia Conservation Network:

Dave reported the \$100 VCN membership was paid in May. Flint participated in VCN's special session legislative forum last week. It was mainly focused on budget cuts due to the changing economic conditions. Some of the cuts to environmental programs look to be serious.

- Plastic Bag Tax:

Sandy has not yet taken this up with Supervisor Storck, but will reach out soon. Flint mentioned he had been on a conference call with Supervisor Storck yesterday, but this topic did not come up. Flint also questioned if the economic situation would mean this is not the year, although the board of Supervisors is taking many positive environmental steps in general. He suggested the [Joint Environmental Task Force](#) could be an effective forum to pursue this issue with supervisors.

- Virginia Lakes and Watershed Association Grant:

Kim announced she has received a \$1000 Fairfax Water grant (of \$5000 sought) to support purchase of data loggers for stream monitoring. This would mean a joint pool of \$3000 on hand when Kim is available to utilize the funds. In the meantime, Kim has had interviews at Fairfax High School and Canterbury Woods Elementary. Philip reminded us that Canterbury Woods Elementary had been an intended location to use the grant for the Follow the Water program, in association with the Long Branch central project.

Flint mentioned a similar grant in place for ambient air quality monitoring at schools.

- Donations:

Philip relayed the news we received PayPal donations of \$20.00 from [Joe Galindo](#) and \$70.00 from Nicholas Pappas. Dave told us he had been in touch with Nicholas and invited him to join a meeting.

- Whither FACC:

Philip related that Ted Welch, well known long time active FACC member, has left us to settle in Charlottesville. Ted took his leave from us in a [farewell letter](#). Our best fond wishes to Ted!



Philip indicated he plans to revise the FACC Core email list by moving the less active names over to the general email list.

Sandy will be getting in touch with Choose Clean Water as our representative.

In general discussion of the future of FACC, Philip solicited insights from the NVATU attendees. Tony indicated NVATU has ten membership meetings per year and board meetings monthly, now all online. Carl mentioned the benefit of the welcome letters NVATU sends out to new people to inform them of available activities. Tony related the value of having a Strategic Planning Committee. Dave pointed out FACC attempts to emulate the example of [Friends of Sligo Creek](#), after whom we are modeled.

There was a discussion of the pros and cons of various online meeting formats. Sandy mentioned she has a Free Conference Call account. Dave suggested a test prior to our next meeting. Philip will check some options.