



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 – April 20, 2021

Next Meeting: May 18, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice)

SUPPORT/DONATE
It's easy & free!

Present: Julie Chang, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Ed Lee, Dave Lincoln, Beverly Rivera, Kim Schauer, Flint Webb

All via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions

Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

- **Tree Campaign Kickoff:** Beverley reported having watched the pre-recorded introduction to the [Plant Nova Natives](#) tree campaign and recommended it as something well worth being associated with - people like Alan Ford, Alonso, Suzy, Renee Grebe - and about forty other people who are associated with the local environmental community either through their work or in a volunteer capacity.
- Audubon Naturalist Society's [Community Action 101 workshop](#) at NoVA Annandale Campus, May 14 (\$20 registration)
- **CARP Community Advisory Group Meeting, May 5, 6:30-8:30pm:** Flint reported that the Fairfax County [Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan \(CARP\)](#) process has begun. The Board of Supervisors Environment Committee seeks volunteers for community advisory groups to participate in the Strategy and Plan Development. From the web site, "Two advisory groups, each with its own areas of focus and interest will play a key role in reviewing deliverables and developing strategies. The Infrastructure Advisory Group consists of relevant county agencies and representatives from regional authorities, state agencies, utilities, telecommunication companies and entities providing other critical services to Fairfax County residents. The Community Advisory Group includes representatives from each of the county's magisterial districts, individuals from boards, authorities and commissions, and representatives from the environmental, religious, non-profit, civil rights, residential and business communities." Flint noted there is stream impact in the Plan, including revision of curves of duration, frequency and intensity of storms.
- **Mount Vernon District Environment Expo:** On Saturday, June 26, 2021, Supervisor Stork will host the annual Expo at Fort Hunt Park. The stated goal of this event is to educate and inform local residents on environmental challenges that we face on a daily basis, including ones that are unique to the Mount Vernon area given our proximity to water and the many industrial facilities nearby. Dave registered for two attendees and plans to set up a display table.

FACC Subjects Discussed –

- **Vernal Pools:** Since his visit in March exploring existing and potential vernal pools ([see March 2021 FACC Bulletin](#)), Mike Hayslett let us know the pea clams we observed at Eakin Park have been identified and seem to represent the state's first record for the region. Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources basically has no records for them, mostly because no one has really studied them. Mike did not update us on when his report might be complete. Nor have we heard from the Virginia Master Naturalist video crew on the progress of their project.

- [Quiet Clean NOVA](#) seeks endorsement from FACC on their gas blower petition. Avril will prepare a letter of concern for FACC to the County Board of Supervisors.
- [Potomac Watershed Cleanup](#): Philip reported we are halfway through the cleanups. So far, we've had 135 volunteers. We anticipate about another 100 this coming Saturday. Groups joining us have included Boy Scout Troop 702, West End Rugby, and Girl Scout Troops 1159 & 1852. Our more unusual finds were five desktop computers dumped together at the Fullerton Road site, a pair of new boxing gloves (which volunteers used for "knock out trash" photos), and the lost tablets of the watershed commandments. There was also the discovery of a new species, the Accotink Tree Crawdad. Julie provided a [video of the critter's intriguing behavior](#).



We also had a bit of "crime busters" excitement at the Old Lee Hwy site, where we found the scattered remains of a purse and its contents, including cellphone, driver's license, and multiple high-end credit cards. Using the address from the driver's license, we returned the items to the owner and learned the purse had been stolen a few days earlier.



In discussion of the cleanup participation, Philip indicated the numbers of volunteers are similar to past years.

- [Accotink Gorge](#): On April 5th, we had 18 volunteers working on cutting Chinese wisteria and other exotic vines in the Accotink Gorge. The suggested herbicide support from the Park Authority was postponed until fall, as they regard that as the optimum time for treating wisteria stumps. Philip led a tour of the area, and there was a bonus feature, in that one of our group was a geologist who enlightened us on the [prehistoric origins](#) of the stones that line the gorge, some 300 million years ago. We discussed setting a fall workday date; Avril will investigate a Teacher Workday in October. We discussed that lack of any plan to put the Accotink gorge work on a more effective footing, for

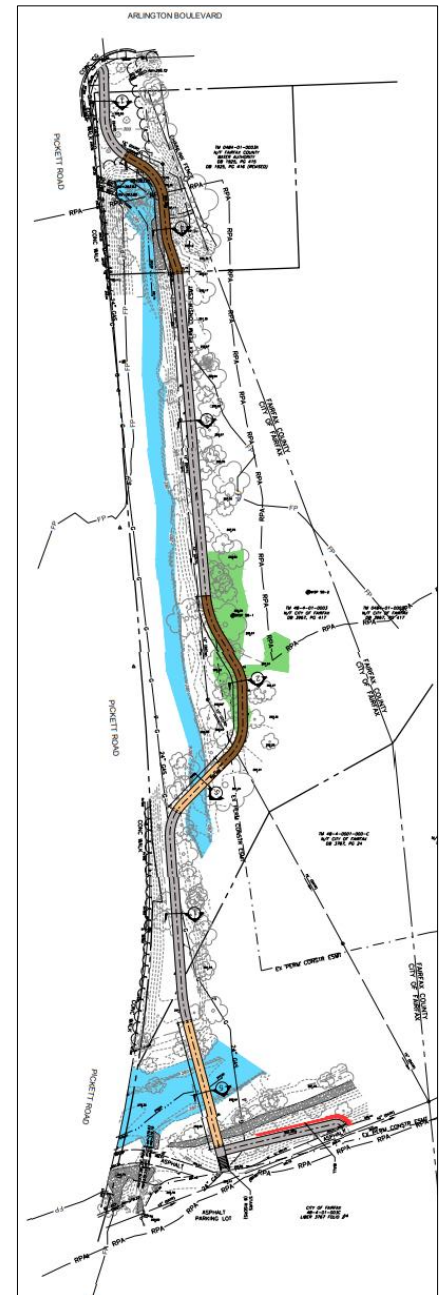
lack of a dedicated volunteer to work with Parks' Invasive Management organization and coordinate volunteer activity.

Other Activities and Issues of Interest:

- **Long Branch Project:** Sandy related a meeting of stakeholders regarding a project of stream restoration by Stormwater on Long Branch central. The emphases of the project include preserving the nature of the floodplain plant community, along with stream restoration. Meetings are monthly, with two or three more to come.
- **Citizens of the Month:** Beverly reported that Friends of Accotink Creek was named April 'Citizens of The Month' by the Braddock District Supervisor's office. Beverly had nominated FACC; and she pointed out that her motivation is the theory that, with more recognition can come more leverage when we have something to ask from officials.
- **Blake Lane Park:** The Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution on April 13th to transfer Blake Lane Park ownership to the Park Authority. A tree planting party occurred recently, with about 16 people planting about 10 trees from Fairfax Releaf.
- **ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan:** Fairfax County is seeking citizen input on non-motorized transport. We should all individually complete the online survey to discourage trees-to-asphalt conversions for trails. There are also [public meetings](#).
- **Pickett Road Connector Trail:** Philip noted the sad story of plans to put a paved trail in Fairfax City running from Thaiss Park to Route 50, entirely in the Resource Protection Area of the Hatmark Branch tributary. The financing is from a grant, so it is like money from Heaven for the City. Construction is scheduled for summer of 2022. Philip will write a letter to the City pointing out the folly of trees-to-asphalt conversions instead of making the nearby street safe for people.
- **Trout Film:** A young filmmaker and fisherman contacted us and the Friends of Holmes Run regarding a brief documentary he made about the stocking of trout in Accotink Creek and Holmes Run. The film is entirely centered on fishing as sport, not the environment. He is also proposing to post his own trout fishing regulation signage along both streams. Philip asked whether anyone wishes to work with the filmmaker to see what benefit or mutual interest there might be. Dave offered to investigate.

Watershed Disasters:

- **Vernal pool destroyed by industrial runoff:** Work has begun on the devastated vernal pool near the Lake Accotink trestle (out the entrance street on the left on commercial property). Naturally, the first step was to clear three times as many trees as required. On the positive side, about 1/3 of the pool retains water and is full of tadpoles.
- **Herbicide spray adjoining vernal pools in parkland:** Avril reviewed her concern with herbicide spraying at the vernal pool near Nutley & Route 50, an area infested with *ficaria verna* (fig buttercup or lesser celandine). She wants to get Parks to cease hiring contractors for invasive management who pollute sensitive locations. Kim noted that US Forestry has published a list of products that can be used near aquatic plants. Avril will investigate whether that protects aquatic fauna., and how contractual requirements are stipulated.



Whither FACC? (Business and Outreach):

- **Donations:** Philip reported FACC received a \$500 donation in a retirement fund distribution from Vivian Morgan-Mendez and Fernando Mendez, of the Friends of Nottoway Park.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Beverly reported that FACC accounts include: \$6,702.16 in Savings and \$2,136 in checking. The \$1700 payment for liability insurance will come due in July.
- **Bank Signatures:** Beverly reports the bank has her listed already, and she has no problem writing checks. Discussion followed about removing Kris from the list and adding another officer. The Board resolved to include in the bank list of officers: Beverly Rivera, Philip Latasa, Sandra Collins and David Lincoln.
- **Outreach Enhancement:** Julie and Ed related the establishment of a FACC page on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofaccotinkcreek/>. Photos are attached to the page. We discussed possibilities for linking news and photos from FACC's Facebook page, and how to login to post information on the Instagram site. At this juncture, the only login is in Ed's name. Ed and Julie will look into establishing an account for FACC and making periodic posts of recent pictures and news.
- **Virtual Meetings:** Free Conference Call is asking for donations of about \$7 per month. Philip found out that the organization can make a one-time donation; the Board agreed to send them \$50 from the bank account.

Posters Gallery: From the [poster gallery](#) Philip put together of watershed messages, this month's selection:





FCPS Urban Wildlife Habitat Program

It is all about the Kids

FCPS students are planning, constructing, utilizing, and maintaining wildlife habitat on their school grounds. Besides giving students the opportunity to engage in authentic, problem based learning efforts these kinds of activities allow students to see that their everyday actions make a difference in the health of the environment—the real basis of environmental stewardship FCPS is promoting with its Get2Green efforts and its partnership with the National Wildlife Federation Eco Schools USA program. These real, at-home, activities and messages allow our students to make a difference through environmental education, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) and Service Learning projects all in one.



It is all about the Potomac Watershed

By setting an example on our properties across the county of sustainable landscaping techniques and educating our students and communities surrounding our schools about the importance of providing wildlife habitat and the beauty of native plants and animals, we can make a difference in the health of the Potomac River watershed.



Metrics

FCPS is piloting biodiversity data collection methods to measure schoolyard plant and animal biodiversity as a measure of the success of our wildlife habitat development efforts.



We can use your help—

- Habitat Expertise
- Biodiversity studies support
- Landscaping design
- Landscaping materials
- Native Plants

Contact

Elaine Tholen
Elaine.tholen@fcps.edu

