



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 – May 18, 2021

Next Meeting: June 15, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice)

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Present: Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa, Avril Garland, Kim Schauer, Beverly Rivera, Julie Chang

Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

• *Represent FACC*

○ [Mount Vernon Environmental Expo: June 26, 2021](#)

Discussion focused on emphasizing the Accotink Gorge at the Environmental Expo. Focusing on Cinder Bed Road seemed to be awkward at Supervisor Stork's event, so it will be a minor feature. Possible giveaways, such as native wildflower seeds and native plant booklets were mentioned. Philip thought rescued native sedges from Northfax West might be a possible giveaway. Details will be worked out by email with Dave, our main coordinator for this event.

○ [Latino Conservation Day at Nottoway Park: July 10, 2021](#)

Philip explained this Park Authority event will take place at Nottoway Park and we should support the Friends of Nottoway, who have always supported FACC.

We have wide leeway as to what sort of display or activity we present, although invasives are largely covered and more about wildlife and trash is welcome. Spanish would be helpful but not required. We can borrow tables and chairs and reserve canopies from the park.

Avril will work with Friends of Nottoway. Beverley volunteered her husband Juan. Rivera to participate.

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• [Potomac Watershed Cleanup:](#)

We had our last cleanup on May 1st. For the season we had a total of 287 volunteers who removed 255 bags of trash. A number of volunteers commented on trash conditions not being as bad as prior years

Groups who joined us since our last meeting included Girl Scout Troop 1330, Girl Scout Troop 1874, and Bishop O'Connell High School Ecology Club.

Philip shared this photo of a taunting bit of rubbish we found.



Ironic Rubbish – Happy Earth Day!

- [Long Branch Project](#):

Sandy described the hierarchy of priorities for projects being developed by ongoing stakeholder meetings. She indicated the limited opportunities for projects in upland areas. The [interactive map](#) is available for public input. Philip indicated the current comments are all trail-related and we should populate the map with environmental information.

Philip described a separate meeting of the Public Outreach Strategy Team as mostly a session of statements of organizing principles. He was encouraged to hear at the meeting that the 'consultant is "iconoclastic" and focused on "ecological function"'. There is some suggestion of finding grant funding for the watershed advocacy groups to do outreach and education. Comments are being accepted through the Summer. We learned at this meeting there is a [Friends of Smokewood Park](#), but mostly focused on trails.

- [Americana Drive](#):

Philip advised our Adopt-A-Highway sign has been installed on Americana Drive. In celebration, thoughtless, irresponsible dumpers have left an enormous pile of illegally dumped junk for us to clean up this fall. Or it may be gone by then, since we've learned that [Operation Stream Shield](#) is working on Americana Drive every three months.

We are planning to do a cleanup on Veterans Day with the [Fairfax County Restoration Project](#). The community service group [Facets](#) may also coordinate with us.

There is also a dumping site at the staging area in the nearby 236/495 cloverleaf. Philip learned Operation Stream Shield will be working there tomorrow morning and plans to join them.



Nice sign!



We congratulate you!

- [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:](#)

Philip recalled we last heard of this trail in 2015 in a somewhat different form. It was abandoned for a while, but now it is steaming ahead. The proposal is for a paved trail along Cinder Bed Road, connecting to an existing trail in Island Creek Park, and then cutting a new trail through forests and wetlands on Amberleigh community property and private lots to Franconia-Springfield Metro. The entire route is in the floodplain of Long Branch south. The wetlands are a rare type called Atlantic Coast Seepage Wetlands, which also include magnolia bogs. This proposal is made even worse by the plan to have dusk-to-dawn lighting the entire length.

Sandy has written an excellent response letter. Audubon Society of Northern Virginia also sent in a good letter and they are linked to our webpage.

Avril and Philip brought this up at the Sierra Club meeting yesterday, but they are distracted by other issues. Philip will submit an article for the Sierra Club June newsletter.

Philip asked whether anyone cares to appeal to the [Island Creek](#) community board meeting on May 20 or contact the Amberleigh Homeowners Association. Sandy will take action.



- [Frontier Drive Extension:](#)

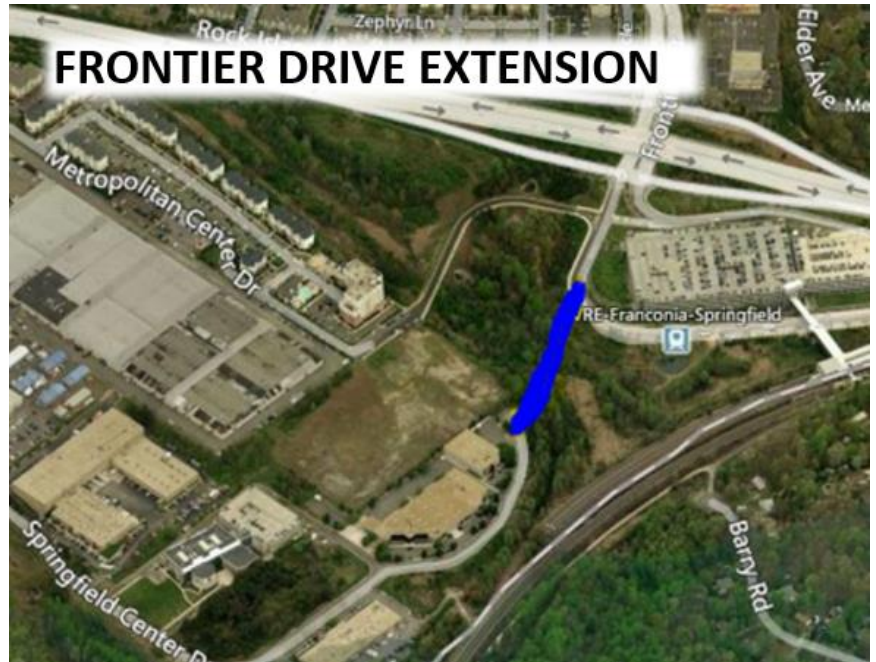
Frontier Drive is back. Just over a year ago, Supervisor Lusk told us the project was not funded. Now money has been found and it is proceeding. The extension would cross Long Branch south with a bridge adjacent to the Franconia-Springfield Metro, and also adjacent to another crossing built just a few years ago. The area is forested and the stream supports populations of fish. This is the northern end of Long Branch, the same stream that is threatened by the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway from the south.

There was a public meeting May 17th. Delegate Vivian Watts, Senator Mark Sickles, and Supervisor Lusk attended. Supervisor Lusk spoke and indicated he was “so excited” about the project. None of the questions from the public except Philip’s addressed environmental issues. Comments on the project are due by May 27th at meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov, referencing “Frontier Drive Extension” in the subject line.

Philip noted the current Federal spending vision recalls the Obama administration spending that devastated forests by extending the Fairfax County Parkway. Philip opined the new infrastructure bill will no doubt rain money on everyone with a truckload of asphalt aimed at Accotink Creek.

- [Accotink Gorge:](#)

Avril suggested that we form a permanent taskforce (say 3 people) to deal with the gorge and get the County to designate the Gorge as a high-priority conservation area with a restoration plan as was done in Arlington with the 25-acre magnolia bog in [Barcroft Park](#). No action was decided.



- *Vienna Woods Invasive Project:*

Avril has been working with people who need community service hours through the justice system, removing invasive plants at the Vienna Woods Swim Club. Native ferns, viburnums, strawberry bush, hazels, wild blueberry, ash, hickory, and oak are struggling to survive over the ever-encroaching multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and Chinese wisteria. As the site is on private property, she may paint stumps with herbicide. Of course the site suffers from deer browse, so Avril had been spraying with deer repellent made from baking powder and egg yolk.

Without objection, FACC adopted the site, to provide Avril with some additional measure of “authority”, should that help her efforts.

- [Town of Vienna Sidewalk Project:](#)

The town of Vienna is planning to construct [3.3 miles](#) of concrete sidewalks with funding provided by a behest from a former mayor. Avril commented that this is a disastrous idea that would cause the loss of trees, and many residents are against it. It is still in the planning stage and Avril suggested FACC writing a letter. She will prepare a draft.

- [Whither FACC:](#)

- *Free Conference Call:*

Philip regretted to inform us he lost the address to send contributions to Free Conference Call. He will work with Beverley to send the \$50 once Free Conference Call responds.

- *Braddock Buzz:*

Philip let us know the [Braddock Buzz](#) referenced FACC in an article about the Lake Accotink dredging pipeline.

- *Outreach Enhancement:*

Julie advised her exploration of Instagram has led to the conclusion we will have to start over in order to link Facebook with Instagram in a useful way. Philip will make Julie an administrator of our Facebook to facilitate the change.