



## 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 – June 15, 2021

Next Meeting: July 20, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice)

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**Present:** Julie Chang, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Katie Lau, Kim Schauer  
All via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions

### Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

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 and Sandy will attend. Avril will share table time between FACC and Quiet Clean NOVA. Dave will display our Accotink Gorge PowerPoint on his laptop. Philip has a flat of 72 Eastern Star Sedges rescued from [Northfax West](#), ready for giveaways along with the Accotink Gorge informational tri-folds. He will also bring some invasives in pots for display. Avril has native seeds for giveaways. In addition, Beverly has a new native pollinators poster we will display. Beverley also has 50 decks of invasives playing cards and 20 Plant NOVA Natives booklets to give away. We discussed how some sort of game with the cards could be an attention-getter--If anyone has ideas for a game, please share. Kim reminded us of the need for sanitizer on hand.

The Country Club Hills neighborhood in Fairfax City is planning a community native plants event at the same time and Philip will also provide them some sedges to give away. Philip asked whether anyone would like to represent FACC.

### Latino Conservation Day at Nottoway Park July 10, 2021

Philip noted Friends of Accotink Creek has been listed for three activities for the event:

- Native plant activity table—Avril
- Accotink Gorge—Avril
- How bicycles kill trees and ferns—Philip (Will choose a title with a more neutral tone)

There was a consensus not to translate our materials into Spanish. Philip suggested we can use our existing generic tri-fold and quad-fold and the new Accotink Gorge tri-fold. Avril will again split her time with Quiet Clean NOVA.

Local press is expected, including Patch editions, Connection editions, Inside Nova/Sun Gazette, and Fairfax Times.

### Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:

Avril and Philip surveyed the area Monday trying to document more about the conditions. They found that:

- Existing trails in Island Creek Park connect Cinder Bed Road to a neighborhood route of more trails and quiet streets, much of which is already labeled as a route to Metro.

- Cinder Bed Road itself is wide enough to accommodate a shared use path on the east side, sparing the narrow strip of riparian buffer on the west side.
- Magnolia bogs cover a larger area than we had previously observed, some of which seems to be in the path of the trail.
- One cannot walk along Long Branch and ever be out of sight of schools of fish.

There will be a meeting with Supervisor Lusk June 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM with representatives from Audubon, Friends of Dyke Marsh, and Friends of Huntley Meadows. Sandy, Avril, Anastasios, and Philip are signed up.

Philip suggested he would visit the HOA's in person and will submit an article for the Sierra Club June newsletter.

Avril suggested a "Save Cinder Bed Woods" petition at Change.org, but Sandy advised waiting until after the meeting with Supervisor Lusk. Sandy wondered just how many people have sent in comments against the Bikeway.



*Signs already point the way to an on-street option. Let's follow them!*

**Other Activities and Issues of Interest:**

Long Branch Project: Sandy advised the project will be trying public walks and other activities, perhaps in July. She is waiting for the next meeting to review the summer field work.

Frontier Drive Extension:

Sandy submitted our comments and received a perfunctory "Thank you" response. She will send a prodding response to the response.

Litter Legislation:

Philip shared news he had recently learned about a couple of anti-litter measures in Virginia:

- This year the General Assembly passed a polystyrene (Styrofoam) ban for food vendors in Virginia. The law will take effect in July 2023 for vendors with more than 20 locations; in July 2025, it will apply to all vendors. Violation can result in a \$50 per day fine.
- In March, Governor Northam issued an executive order requiring all state agencies to stop the use of single-use plastic by July 21, including plastic bags, food containers, straws, cutlery, and water bottles.

Last year, the General Assembly approved SB 11 giving local communities the ability to place a 5-cent fee on single-use plastic bags. Partly due to the virus, only Roanoke has enacted a fee. Sierra Club and [350 Fairfax](#) are getting ready to push Fairfax County to follow suit. Philip asked who would like to coordinate with them: Sandy will contact the groups.

*Nutley Pond:*

Nutley Pond is a stormwater pond of about three acres adjacent to Nutley Street at the Vienna Metro. Stormwater Planning Division is working with the homeowner's association that owns the pond on an upgrade project. The project will dredge the pond, install aquatic benches, install floating wetland islands, and add native landscaping.

The pond is located in-line in Hunters Branch and unfortunately is designed in such a way that it prevents movement of aquatic life upstream and downstream. That may not make much difference, since immediately downstream from the pond, Hunters Branch goes into a quarter-mile long culvert to pass under the I-66 cloverleaf at Nutley Street. Our pleas to daylight this stream as part of the [I-66 Outside the Beltway](#) project have fallen on deaf ears. Philip will write to the project manager and to the Providence supervisor to suggest they look at what can be done to provide a degree of reconnection.



*CCT Paving:*

The Fairfax County Park Authority will soon begin trail paving work in Sally Ormsby Park. This will add 2,000 feet of asphalt to the Cross County Trail, extending westward from Barkley Drive where the trail is now gravel. The trail will be closed with no detour provided, indicating just how insignificantly trails are regarded as a means of transportation.

Project completion is anticipated this winter, so we may need to make some adjustments to our fall cleanup at Barkley Drive.



*Lake Accotink Flyover:*

The Lake Accotink dam trail flyover construction should begin in July and extend to next summer. This is to provide a dry crossing of Accotink Creek during high water. The area is already paved, but no doubt the project will find some excuse to cut down a swath of trees.

*Health Center Redevelopment:*

The Willard Health Center at the corner of Old Lee Highway and Layton Hall Drive is in the City of Fairfax, but owned by the County. The County and City are collaborating to devise redevelopment plans that would incorporate the adjacent City community center and police station. Van Dyke Park is not included, but borders the project area. The area is mostly paved over, so not much harm can be done, or at least we hope.

Health and Human Services CIP Projects**2020 BOND**

## Willard-Sherwood Campus Redevelopment



**Providence District**

- Located at 3750 Old Lee Highway in Fairfax
- HHS Departments: Health Department, Neighborhood and Community Services

**Summary:**

- Joint master plan study with City of Fairfax for ‘campus-wide’ redevelopment
- Proposed Facilities (County)
  - Clinic, Dental, Pharmacy, X-Ray Services, Infant & Toddler Connection, Speech and Hearing, Vital Records, Women Infant Children, Central Reproduction, COOP needs, Early Childhood Education (Pre-K)
- Proposed Facilities (City of Fairfax)
  - Senior center, fitness facility, gymnasium, improved parking and vehicle circulation

**Status:**

- Year Built: 1954
- Ongoing coordination with City of Fairfax

**Funding:**

- TPE – \$58,000,000

*Park Authority Renewal:*

The Park Authority is up for a thirty year renewal. A public hearing is scheduled for July 13<sup>th</sup>. Apparently, this semi-independent model has been abandoned by all other Virginia Counties and their parks operate as a county department. It’s hard to say what difference a change might make for the environment, but this might be an opportunity to advocate for environmental stewardship as a primary mission of parks. Philip will draft comments.

*Quiet Clean NOVA Petition:*

Avril verified that FACC would endorse the [Quiet Clean NOVA petition](#) without objection. The group had some laughs about how Avril had jumped the gun earlier, followed by a discussion of the merits and demerits of leaf blowers.

*Best Urban BMP Award:*

Philip announced the Friends of Accotink Creek have received a third place award from the Chesapeake Stormwater Network for Best Residential BMP of 2020. This is actually a Lands and Waters Project at the Yorktown Square apartments in Merrifield and in the Holmes Run watershed. Our sole contribution was supplying rescued native plants from the [Northfax West](#) project.



• *Donations:*

We received a \$23.64 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile activity between January 1 and March 31, 2021.

Whither FACC:

HTTPS:

After many years Philip made the effort to change our website’s “http” to “https”. It only took hours of fruitless searching through our server host’s help documentation, then more hours with their help desk to finally learn this is accomplished by simply adding a single short file to the website. Philip didn’t know what practical difference this makes except a padlock icon now appears next to the URL address instead of a security warning.

In negative tech news, the [Posters](#) page Philip proudly announced a few months ago has mysteriously stopped working as intended. It’s still functional, but much less easy to use than before. Anyone with the expertise to diagnose the problem is welcome.

*Outreach Enhancement:*

Julie is still looking for the correct way to align the credentials to link our Facebook and Instagram pages. She explained credentials belong to the manager, which is different from administrators. Philip provided Julie an email address for the departed founder of our Facebook page.

Avril suggested the need for a "Donate" button on our Facebook page. Philip will work with Julie to try to accomplish this.



**The bison gone.  
The passenger pigeon fallen.  
The mighty chestnut tree no more.**

**Yet the gentle cicadas live on,  
returning in their wondrous  
multitudes when they may please.**

**They harm no one, they sing for all,  
and then they slumber again,  
leaving us the memory of what  
once was and the promise of what  
may be once again.**