



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 – January 17, 2023

Next Meeting: February 15, 2023 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice in the [Friends of Accotink calendar](#).)

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Present: Gary Bangs, Andrew Butterbaugh, Avril Garland, Philip Church, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Katy Johnson, Beverley Rivera, Brian Slawski, and Bryan Campbell all via on-line meeting.
Guest - Anna Safford, Fairfax city Urban Forester

Guest Presentation:

City of Fairfax Urban Forester Anna Safford - provided an introduction and brief overview on her newly created position and projects. She organizes invasive removal, Arbor Day, and other events within the City of Fairfax. With changes to the mayor and council, she is expecting changes.

Philip L. asked if she was aware of several American chestnut trees located near the tank farm, to which she replied she had heard they were somewhere there but had not visited them. Philip offered to provide her information on exact locations.

Katy expressed she is a City of Fairfax resident and many of the citizens are concerned about the destruction of their remnant forests, and encouraged Anna to reach out to them for support.

Anna invited feedback or guidance for the City's urban forest management to her or the newly elected mayor. Her email is Anna.Safford@fairfaxva.gov.

Opportunities to represent FACC:

Wildlife Corridors Testimony January 5, 2023: Avril spoke before the Virginia Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee advocating funding for wildlife corridors. These could provide for the safe movement of wildlife along major highways, but so far there are only two along I-64.

Plant NOVA Natives Partners Meeting January 17, 2023: Avril and Philip attended the Plant NOVA Natives partners meeting. It was something of a "Who's Who" of Northern Virginia environmental groups. The intent is to attract more corporate grants to our region. Toward that end, groups have been asked to prepare a list of project proposals by the end of February. Our proposals might include:

- Accotink Gorge ([AccotinkGorgeOutline202301222.pdf](#))

- Americana Drive (Cleanups/invasive management - [Fitzhugh Park](#))
- George Mason Park (Invasive management-restoration)
- Long Branch Stream Restoration Project ([community outreach](#)/invasives)
- Cinder Bed woods restoration ([invasives/education/protection](#))
- Daniels Run Elementary School ([TBD](#)-stream water quality)
- [Barta Road replanting](#)
- [Brookfield Park](#) ([Invasives/restoration management](#))

Federation of Friends Meeting, March 14, 2023: Avril agreed to attend this virtual meeting but would like some guidance on what FACC would like discussed. It was also suggested to look at the last meeting online notes/presentation to see what occurs.

Mount Vernon Town Meeting Exhibit Area, February 11, 2023: Dave plans to staff an FACC table at the meeting, as we have in previous years.

Mathy Park Conserved Open Space: Fairfax City has placed this wooded parcel in a stormwater conservation protection status, preserving it from development by private or public action.

George Snyder Trail Petition: The Fairfax City Environmental Forum is preparing a petition at Change.org urging the City to halt paved bikeway projects in wooded areas. Katy indicated one of the new council members is trying to realign the trail back away from the wooded area.

Plant Rescues - Stafford Drive Restoration: The [Stafford Drive stream restoration project](#) will include 2,300 feet of stream restoration from Fair Woods (Plantation) Pkwy to Ranger Road Park in Fairfax City. Construction begins in late summer 2023. Katy announced they will be organizing native plant rescues beginning with the spring growing season. City gets stormwater credits for the rescue. Plans are to rescue certain plants and maintain them elsewhere, to be relocated back when restoration is finished.

Braddock Road Widening: We received a positive response to our [comments](#) from Delegate Vivian Watts indicating she will be in touch with VDOT to find ways to reduce the loss of tree cover to shared use paths. We received a mixed response from Supervisor Walkinshaw that regarded the shared use paths as the best outcome possible.



Long Branch Central Project: There was not too much new at the January 10th public meeting. Construction should begin in 2024 and end in 2032.

Monitoring during and after the construction phase will include eDNA sampling. It was gratifying to see that the data sample shared at the meeting confirmed the presence of American eels in Long Branch central. One way or another, at least some of them manage to migrate past the Accotink Lake dam.

Species	% match	# species
Ameiurus natalis (Yellow Bullhead)	99.4	1
Anguilla rostrata (American eel)	99.4	1
Catostomus commersonii (White sucker)	100	1

We still need to continue doing whatever we can to see that a strong public outreach element is incorporated.

- **Sanitary Sewer Break:** Wastewater Management sent a disappointing and uninformative response to our questions about the sanitary sewer procedures and practices. Bryan will follow up for a more responsive response.

Americana Drive Cleanup: We're getting a rather late start organizing, but our next Americana Drive cleanup will be Presidents' Day, February 20th.

Microsoft Grant: Plant NOVA Natives got in touch regarding a good-sized grant available from Microsoft. After offering a number of suggestions, it seems probable the grant will go to reforestation and invasives control at Lake Accotink Park. It would be in the approximate amount of \$35,000, administered by the Park Authority Invasives Management Area, over a three to five year period.

Microsoft volunteers would do most of the initial tree planting, while contractors would do most of the ongoing invasives work. In addition to Beverley's IMA area around the marina, the reforestation would replace a mowed area by the Ravenel Lane entrance. The invasive work would focus on the fence line along the railroad, the wisteria patch north of the lake, and the Highland Street entrance.

Springfield Town Center Redevelopment: Gary followed up with Supervisor Lusk's office who referred him to the General Manager of the Town Center. He then spoke with the developers who relayed there are many steps yet in the process before any decisions will be made on payments of the proffer which states, "Applicant will contribute \$7500 to Fairfax Releaf, Clean Fairfax, or an alternative organization for the planting and preservation of native trees, habitat restoration, litter prevention, community cleanups, and/or other related efforts in the Accotink Creek watershed." There are two projects for a total of \$15,000.00. We plan to monitor this and other developments within Accotink watershed for similar proposals to ensure coordination and best success of project sustainability.

Salt Watcher of the Month: Gary was named Izaak Walton League's Save Our Streams program [Salt Watcher of the Month](#) for December 2022. Chloride contamination from winter salt is a cause of water quality impairment, subject to the [Accotink Creek Chloride TMDL](#), so this work is important to maintain awareness. While a voluntary program for reducing road salt usage is in place, readings after snow/ice events still exceed TMDL. As shown on our webpage, poorly stored piles of road treatment and excessive usage in parking lots remains a problem. Links are available for best practices on our page.



Donations: Philip renewed our domain name for \$17.54 and our web hosting for \$153.74, which we may regard as donations. The web hosting increased \$23 from last year.

We also received:

\$200 from Francis Bradley III
\$350.00 from Philip's daughter, Gwen

Also recognized our ongoing monthly donations from:

Brayan Pozo
Patricia Franke

Whither FACC

Free Conference Call is free, but depends on donations. We last gave \$50 in April 2021, so FACC board members voted to provide a \$100 donation now, and plan for \$75 annual donations in the future.

#SaveCinderBedWoods

