



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 – July 18, 2023

Next Meeting: August 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](#).)

SUPPORT/DONATE
It's easy & free!

Present: Gary Bangs, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Beverley Rivera. Dave Lincoln, Kim Schauer all via on-line meeting.

Guests included Margaret Fisher, Rekha Dolas, Grace Callahan, and Stacy Yike from Plant NOVA Natives.

[Accotink Gorge](#): Gary discussed that last Sunday, a group tour of highlights of the Accotink Gorge with a view toward making real progress on anti-wisteria efforts there took place. After hiking in the Gorge, a vehicle tour of surrounding business areas took place to evaluate the prospect of donations or other forms of support.

Those attending also took time to talk over possible next steps and goals. A few points discussed were:

- Margaret has started a [map](#) of property owners
- .Rekha will get us started with a spreadsheet of businesses
- Avril and Philip will prepare maps of target areas
- IMA will ask their invasives contractor to provide rough cost estimates for those segments.
- There may be opportunities for other contractors.
- We could work in pairs to approach businesses.
- Potential big donors should be especially targeted.
- Donations can be suggested in tiers, such as increments of \$250
- The Park Authority is not the only land owner. We also must contend with private owners, VDOT, and Fort Belvoir.
- The Park Authority Foundation can handle money and pay contractors, if we do not wish to do so ourselves.

- We should seed the donation drive with our own money. \$3000 was a suggested amount.
- This cannot be a one-time funding appeal. It will take many years to have significant impact.
- [Blue Ridge PRISM](#) was mentioned as an example and possible partner.
 - [There is also a [NoVA PRISM](#)]
- The [W&OD Trail](#) has a sponsorship program for invasives control.
- We previously produced an estimate of [\\$80,000 per year](#), but that needs to be refined.

We've not done a volunteer wisteria workday this year, because the Park Authority prefers to provide herbicide support only in the fall. Even before progressing on the donation plan, we can plan multiple workdays this fall after the cleanup season.

Margaret provided some perspective on the role and possible assistance through Plant NOVA Natives.



Scrambling over the rocks to view the falls

- *Herbicide Legislation:* Avril asked if FACC would support pursuing a change in Virginia law allowing for limited use of herbicides by volunteers. An [Illinois' amendment](#) allows regular volunteers (without a pesticide license) to apply pre-mixed herbicides after an annual safety training.

The Certified Pesticide Applicator process is not something a regular volunteer would take on. It requires classes, a test, and two years working under supervision.

Allowing volunteers use herbicides would make a significant dent over endless hand pulling, cutting and digging. The bottle has a sponge tip and is non-spill. Very safe.

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Avril also stated that Margaret Fisher (Plant NOVA Natives), Gary, herself, and Joan Schiller zoomed with Delegate Holly Seibold in April about the issue. Delegate Seibold agreed to co-sponsor legislation. But we need to find a sponsor. Sen. Marsden was mentioned. Gary, one of his constituents, has agreed to contact him.

Blue Ridge Prism was non-committal. IMA said it was too busy to even consider it.

The official support of Friends of Accotink Creek for such a measure would be a start. Then it would be easier to bring other groups on board. And give us more clout with our political representatives. After some discussion FACC board will followup later in the week on this issue.

Represent FACC:

- *CareFirst Equity Week*: Philip stated that he and Avril will be working with CareFirst at Daniels Run Elementary July 19.
- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway*: Philip reported that on July 12th Fairfax County Land Acquisition Services and FCDOT held an [online meeting](#) with residents of Amberleigh to discuss the easement the Bikeway will need across their common property. Even after all our efforts to make residents aware of the issues notices by their board and facing taking of their property, less than 30 residents attended. All who spoke were opposed to the project. Since it is unlikely the HOA will even get a quorum for a residents' vote on granting an easement, it will likely be up to the Board of Supervisors whether or not to exercise eminent domain. Another scenario is that the Amberleigh board could decide to accept the County offer, in which case the legal nicety of a residents' vote would just be overlooked. It is still unknown when the County will be ready to make an offer, but that time is getting closer.
- *International Coastal Cleanup*: Philip stated that we have been dithering for a year, but we need to decide now what to do to replace our Fullerton Road cleanup site, that was fenced off by Costco, before we post our fall cleanup schedule. That should be done by the first week in August. Providence Community Center location was decided upon.
- *Lake Accotink Dredging*: Gary reported that the last meeting of the task force was attended by him since Sandy was out of town. The meeting primarily consisted of county staff and contractors providing a summary of what had previously been presented many times as to what had been done and why the no dredge recommendation came about. Additionally the county attorney's office made a presentation on open meeting laws and FOIA, and stated that the task force and members must comply with those provisions. A new schedule of meetings has been prepared through December. Additionally all meetings and material are available online for anyone to review.
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/lake-accotink-task-force?mibextid=Zxz2cZ>
- *Braddock Road Project*: Philip said there will be a Braddock Road Project meeting July 26, 2023, 8:00 PM at Lake Braddock High School. We should try to be there to wave the Accotink flag.
- *PROSA Parks Survey*: Philip pointed out that the Park Authority is conducting a survey of citizens for future planning. He encouraged all to put in comment favoring habitat preservation.
- *Accotink Gravity Sewer*: Avril said that ominous signs are appearing in the woods along Hunters Branch – more silver disks on trees and surveyors preparing to bore groundwater test holes. Philip has emailed

the project manager requesting updated information, but has yet to hear back. The project's apparent intent is to install a new sewer line along the entire length of Hunters Branch, with grave consequences for the woods and wetlands.

- [I-66 Project](#): Philip indicated that the location in Fairfax City where we are doing our weekly plant rescues is 1.3 miles downstream from the I-66 work zone, and just at the point where the North Fork and Main Fork meet. On June 30th and July 7th the North Fork was opaque with construction sediment while the Main Fork was crystal clear. In both cases, it had not rained for a few days, so the discharge had to be intentional release. He reported the situation to DEQ and Fairfax City, with unknown results. [DEQ Report](#) [Facebook Video](#)



Crystal clear water enters from the left, construction soup from the right.

- [George Snyder Trail](#): Philip said that over the past month, residents along the proposed route of the George Snyder Trail have invited the Mayor and several Council members to walk the woods and hear about alternatives. These walks don't seem to have had much effect, judging from the discussion at the July 11th [Council meeting](#).
- *Donations*: We received donations of:
 - \$100 from Philip's daughter
 - \$50 from Kurt Doehnert