



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 – September 19, 2023

Next Meeting: October 17, 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, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Sandy Collins and Brian Slawski all via on-line meeting.

- *Flint Webb:* Sadly, Philip reported that one of our long-time active members, Flint Webb, passed away August 27th after being afflicted with cancer. He is survived by his spouse, Helen Webb, and children Will and Alice. No information on services seems to be available.

We remember Flint as a masked hero defending America's waters.



- *Represent FACC*

- o *Plant Rescue with [Wild Ones](#), Sept. 17, 2023* Philip stated that we were happy to have some help, as we are falling behind schedule in creating space for the rescued plants in Kutner Park. The turnout was decidedly minimal, though. Any additional help we can get to clear the planting area of English ivy would be welcome.

- o *Community Garden in Annandale, Sept. 30, 2023* Philip said [Hands on Harvest](#) is holding a townhall to discuss the community gardens at the new [Annandale Civic Space](#), a sort of pocket park, opening in late October. We were invited to discuss program ideas, outreach, and volunteer recruitment. Rotary Club, our collaborator on the Americana Drive cleanups has asked us to attend. The gardens will be right on the edge of Accotink watershed, but much of the public will live in our watershed. Gary said he thought he could attend and will followup with Annandale Rotary Club.
- o *Earth Sangha Plant Sale, Oct. 1, 2023* Philip said we have been invited to Open House Plant Sale where many other environmental groups will be setup. Although the Native Plant Nursery location is not in the Accotink watershed, Earth Sangha has been integral to our efforts providing native plants, invasive management, and expertise throughout the watershed. Avril and Sandy said they could staff the table at this event.

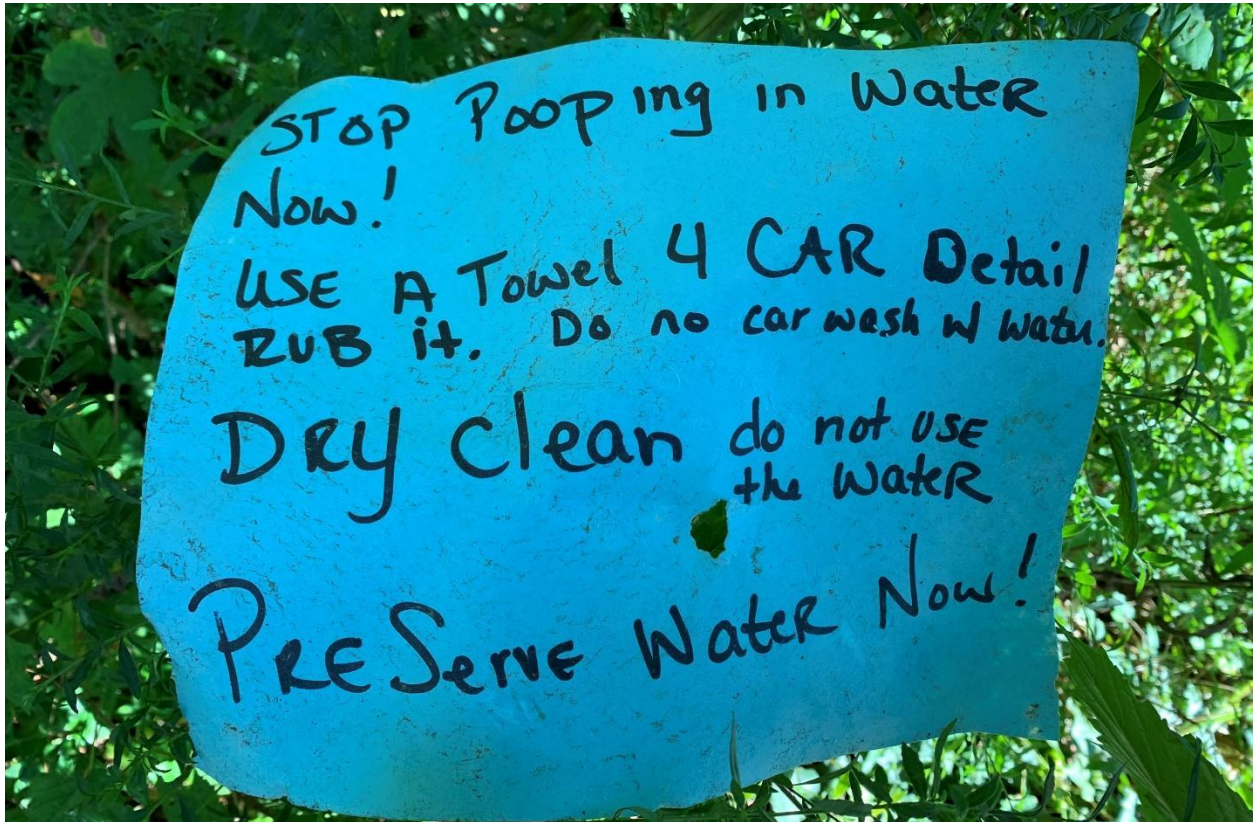
- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:* Philip said that the interested groups will again be meeting with Supervisor Lusk and staff to get updates on October 5th. There is just a glimmer of hope the trail will still move slightly away from the most sensitive and unique habitats.
- *George Snyder Trail:* Philip stated that Fairfax City Council will vote on the George Snyder Trail September 26th. This is expected to be the final approval. Everyone should send comments and speak in person at the meeting to encourage the project to follow the parallel route on the streets.

As an amusing or appalling anecdote, Philip spent some time talking to a homeless individual during our Saturday cleanups. When he mentioned that area and Philip explained that the trail is proposed there, he was astonished, saying *'How can they build there? It's all marsh!'* Too bad we haven't been able to make the Council members see the same thing.

We received an essay from Jerry Bradley, [The High Trail](#), which is a contemplation of the merits of hiking the back trails around Lake Accotink. It very much makes our point about not adding more paving in the woods.

- *International Coastal Cleanup:* Philip said that on September 10th, we had 17 volunteers from Temple Olam Tikvah for a private cleanup at our King Arthur Road site. We had another 17 volunteers September 17th among three sites in Fairfax City. More cleanups are scheduled and are on the FACC calendar.

One unusual find was this handmade sign with an inscrutable message of water preservation!



- [Accotink Gorge](#): Philip asked if there had been any progress on working with Plant NOVA Natives mapping and visiting businesses. At this time someone needs to look over maps and work towards finalizing plans. But not much can be done until final estimates on costs have been completed, and FCPA staff is short handed, so talking with their contractor is difficult. Avril said she would try to discuss with Gloria logistics on herbicide use.

- o *Workday with Accenture Oct. 9th, 2023*

Also we will have an anti-wisteria expedition on October 9th with Accenture company volunteers, just like last year. Herbicide backup will be provided by the Park Authority, but after a delay of a week or two.

- *Park Authority Budget*: Philip stated that he understood that the County Executive has asked all departments to plan for 7% cuts in their budgets. Since the Park Authority has seen declining funding for a decade and only last year received a tiny increase, this could be a greater setback than the 7% figure implies. Philip had drafted comments that simply echo what was sent by Friends of Holmes Run, and asked if Board members approved. Gary stated that he had read the comments and was fine with sending them as is, but he is also concerned that increasing Park Authority budget does not automatically equate to addressing needs protecting natural resources. No other discussion occurred so comments will be sent as developed.

- [Lake Accotink Dredging](#): Sandy stated that the last [task force meeting](#) was held September 11 and next meeting is October 2. She is the chair of the subcommittee entitled "Impacts with and Issues with Staff recommendation to not dredge." She also stated that all task force meetings and information is available

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online for anyone to view. The subcommittees will put together individual reports, which will then be consolidated into a final document for the entire task force to consider.

- [Woods and Field](#): Brian reported that he recently reached out to several libraries to see if they would be interested in this for their programs. He was fairly confident this will be accepted at some locations, and he was going to pursue others as well.
- [Rt. 50 to Thaiss Park Trail Repair](#): Avril said that the feared trail repairs have been completed without harm to the vernal pool. The paving actually skipped the critical area because any new work is likely to be torn up by the [Accotink Gravity Sewer](#) project. In addition, the trail project deployed protection measures to keep passing equipment out of the pool.



Protection for the vernal pool

- *Trail Signs*: Philip indicated that walking along Accotink Creek trails, we've all seen signs that are faded to the point of being illegible. The Park Authority is engaged in a slow motion project to catalog and upgrade these signs. If you would like to send pictures of the specific signs with coordinates Philip will add them to the list. The Park Authority is also looking for suggestions for topics for new signs.

Dave and others discussed whether it's worth thinking about using some of our funds to make invasive informational signs to offer to the Park Authority. It would seem to be along the lines of the signage FACC funded for the kiosk at Americana. No decision was made at this time.

- *Sally Ormsby Award*: Philip stated that we have participated rather loosely in the Alliance of Park Friends, which this year is to receive the Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award, part of the Park Authority's [Elly Doyle Awards](#). We were asked to submit a selection of photos that might be incorporated into the Channel 16 awards video. Gary suggested something involving invertebrate sampling as citizen scientists would be good.

- *Herbicide Legislation*: Avril stated nothing has occurred involving legislation. VDACS has stated that volunteers cannot use herbicides on public lands. They have yet to state their position whether volunteers on other private lands use is prohibited without a permit.

- *Virginia Conservation Network Dues:* Philip reported that Beverley paid the Virginia Conservation Network membership dues of \$100 in August. It is something we've renewed annually, although we don't participate actively as we once did.

Beverley also paid our annual insurance premiums of \$1,621.00 in July.

With the last bank statements, there's roughly \$11,000 in the FACC savings account and roughly \$12,000 in the checking account. Perhaps we should look for ways to put this to good use.

- *Donations:* Philip reported the following donations:
 - o PayPal Giving Fund sent us what they call a "grant", in the amount of \$1.00.
 - o We received \$100 from his daughter's employer, as a matching grant for her donation.