



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 – November 21, 2023

Next Meeting: December 19, 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, Brian Slawski, Kim Schauer, and Peter Clark all via on-line meeting.

- *Represent FACC*

- o [Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan Charette](#), Philip attended November 2, 2023, charette presentation which included an awareness of stormwater issues and suggestions for incorporating stormwater controls into attractive amenities. However, much of the concern was for flooding in the Foxcroft Colony condos and several of the audience suggestions were for excavating stormwater ponds out of the woods.

Additionally, Philip learned the Fairfax Circle Shopping Center has changed hands and the new owner's plan, in the words of the architect, "*includes eliminating the paved area next to the creek and providing a well designed landscaped area there to help with storm water management*". That was quite a positive development and the architect has promised to be back in touch when they have something ready to share.

Philip indicated that we can continue to add suggestions on the [interactive map](#). This plan may offer us a platform to discourage the City from proceeding with the adjacent [Pickett Road Connector Trail](#).

The next public meeting should be in fall.

- o [Beaver Boogie 5K](#), Philip attended the Friends of Lake Accotink meeting and reported that for anyone interested, Friends of Lake Accotink Park will have the first-annual [Beaver Boogie 5K](#) Fun Run/Walk on November 26th.
- o [VCN Legislative Preview, December 2, 2023, Philip \(2 min\)](#)
Philip indicated that the Virginia Conservation Network legislative preview is Dec 2, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. It is \$20 in person or free online. Discussion occurred as to what occur during these presentations, and afterwards some indicated they will try to take part virtually.

- [George Snyder Trail](#): Philip reported that the Fairfax City Council did vote to authorize land acquisition for the trail, but at the same time it plans a work session to consider alterations. The Council also voted to eliminate a small portion of the trail that would have connected to a neighborhood where neighbors were concerned about public safety.

The Mayor, a group of citizens, and three Council members, accompanied by City staff, walked a portion of the trail on November 15th to discuss alternatives. November 28 will be the next council meeting where citizens may still speak out for alternatives, and then December 5 council work session will discuss this project, but with no opportunity for citizens to speak.

- [Stafford Drive Stream Restoration](#): Philip said that on November 15th, there was a final public meeting regarding the restoration. There was little new information, except some slight design modifications that will spare a few trees. Construction should begin in March. The contractors are still planning to transplant some small trees from the project area and use them in replanting.

o *Plant Rescue*

On October 29th, a group of Boy Scouts came to Kutner Park to clear English ivy and plant some of the rescued plants. We will have a group from the [World Citizen Club](#) of GMU on December 9th at 1:00 PM. Rescues will continue until the bulldozers chase us away in spring.



A cornucopia of native Frost Grapes found during the Stafford Drive native plant rescues

o *Carrleigh Parkway restoration*

In an unrelated project, Philip learned the County is about to begin construction of a stream restoration on a small tributary just south of Lake Accotink.

o *Flag Run Phase II*

Additionally Philip said that the Flag Run stream restoration phase II is tentatively scheduled to begin design in FY26 (which starts July 1, 2025). This project will extend from 495 to the lake behind the carousel. There is some hope of influencing the project to incorporate freshwater mussel habitat, a practice currently being [studied in Reston](#).

- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip stated that on Veterans Day we had a turnout of 52 volunteers who removed 100 bags of trash, 19 tires, 6 mattresses, 1 bed frame, 2 toilets, 1 bathroom sink, 1 dishwasher, 10 gallons of paint, a half-dozen rolls of carpet and padding, and a guesstimated 3.5 tons of miscellaneous debris, including much lumber and many chunks of concrete. As usual, our next Americana Drive cleanup will be on Presidents Day.



The kind of rubbish that is all too common on Americana Drive

o [Sanitary Sewer Break](#)

Philip also stated that on November 4th he spotted a suspicious flow running down the sidewalk and entering the Wakefield Run tributary through a storm drain of Americana Drive. Following it to the source, it turned out to be sewage spouting from the ground like a small fountain. He used our [Watershed 911](#) page to contact County personnel who responded and repaired the pipe.

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Philip said that he prepared the estimates requested by Plant NOVA Natives for acres of private land that will need treatment. It's about 34 acres private and 33 acres Park Authority, plus the 5 acres belonging to VDOT and as much as 60 acres on Fort Belvoir. We learned that a more detailed

estimate for treatment is around \$3,600 - \$4,600 for the first year (cut/treat, spray twice), second year \$2,700 - \$3,600, and third year \$1,800- \$2,800.

Now the next task we've been assigned is to get cost quotes from sources other than the Park Authority contractor that may be less costly.

- [State of Streams](#): Gary and Philip said that the State of Streams report release is anticipated in April 2024. This is a delay to enable Nature Forward to have a more complete report and increase outreach. The third and final workshop meeting is December 11th. Certain factors which were considered such as amount of litter is hampered by a lack of data on all streams. Data has been spotty for Accotink Creek because the county does not maintain data on specific streams in a usable format. Additionally data such as stream bank erosion is descriptive and not conducive to statistical analysis.
- [Lake Accotink Dredging](#): Sandy indicated that the final task force meeting is December 4, and then the findings report will be presented at the Board of Supervisors meeting December 5. On December 11 task force committee and subcommittee chairs will attend the Environmental Committee meeting where there will be broader discussion. After this, it is anticipated that the Board will revisit the task force report in January after new members are sworn in. The process is less clear after that, but opinions are that the Board will eventually instruct county staff to evaluate the report and provide cost estimates.
- [Vernal Pool Contamination](#): Philip said that he again prodded Site Development & Inspections for news and received only the same words about "actively coordinating" and "addressing the comments". He said he again complained to the Franconia District Supervisor Lusk's office, making a point of how poorly the years of inattention and ineffective action happens here, compared with the rapid response to the sewage leak. As yet no reply. This seems to have gotten caught up in a processing permit action as opposed to an environmental or stormwater enforcement concern. Assurances from 2019 that stormwater management would continue to monitor to ensure protections for salamanders and others have either been forgotten, or those who gave the assurances retired in the over four years this has gone on. Still evaluating options to try to stop this pollution of Lake Accotink Park and downstream into Accotink Stream Valley Park.
- [Woods and Field](#): *Avril/Brian (10 min)*
Brian and Avril presented the poem Woods and Field at Oakton Library on October 30, along with a few other selected nature readings and information on Accotink Creek and its issues. Unfortunately turnout was almost nonexistent, with one person attending. But it was useful development for future presentations.

The next presentation of Woods and Fields will be [December 4th at 7 PM](#) at Fairfax City Regional Library.

- [Invasives Disclosure Regulation](#): *Avril/Philip (5 min)*
Philip and Avril stated that the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is seeking public comment on proposed regulations requiring written notification to property owners for all plants proposed for installation that are on the Virginia Invasive Plant Species List. There are only a few comments, so we should all contribute.

Additionally, Avril discussed three other bills being proposed this legislative session. The one on changing requirements for volunteer usage of some herbicides when removing invasives, a labeling/signage proposal for retail outlets letting customers know which are invasive plants, and a pilot funding proposal for VDOT addressing invasives along right of ways that are too dangerous for volunteer

activities. Board members Gary and Avril expressed interest in FACC support for these 3 bills and will talk further with other board members.

- *Donations*: Philip stated that we received donations of:
 - \$20.00 from his great nephew
 - \$30 from Mike Perel and Jeanne Kadet, longtime collaborators
 - \$1000 from Riggs Cove Foundation, which has made such generous donations before.

- [Whither FACC](#): Philip reminded us that we will have FACC board elections at our December meeting. Dave is a candidate for Purser and Brian for Conservator-at-Large.

Additionally, Beverley agreed to do this year's newsletter but asked for photos to get it completed.