



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.

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Our many projects to make the creek healthier depend on your support!

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – June 16, 2026

Next Meeting: July 21 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice in the [Friends of Accotink calendar](#).

Present: Philip Latasa, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Dave Lincoln, Katy Johnson, Peter Clark, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting.



AGENDA

• Represent FACC:

- *Mount Vernon Summer Palooza:* Dave and Sandy tabled at this event on June 6 for FACC. Our discussions with Mount Vernon district staff members focused on the Accotink Gorge and Cinder Bed Road Bikeway.
- *CareFirst Equity Week:* Philip reminded us that our usual volunteer day at Daniels Run Elementary with Lands & Waters will be on July 15th. Everyone is welcome to join 10am-1pm.

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Philip said there is nothing new to discuss addressing the gorge invasive removals. He said that he still needed to attempt a cold call on the Environmental Division at Fort Belvoir seeking interest in the Accotink Gorge, and wondered if anyone else was interested in helping.
- [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#): Philip said that Virginia Native Plant Society led two nature walks in the Newington Conservation Area. There were about 30 attendees overall, with good discussions at the end of the harms posed by the Bikeway and how participants could contact supervisors.

- *Meeting with FABB*

Dave met with Joy Faunce May 21st at Lake Accotink. Joy has been President of Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling for about a year and wants to increase communication between FACC and FABB, finding common cause where we can and supporting each other's causes when we can. Accessibility and maintenance (sustainability) seems good common causes, supported in principle by both our organizations, but maybe not emphasized by either.

Dave discussed the possibility of common interests and that accessibility to nature areas, as separate from access through natural areas.

Additionally, both organizations are in favor of improvement of existing VDOT shared use paths.

Avril agreed that accessibility is popular, but there should be limits, such as keeping paving out of Resource Protection Areas and there will always be limitations on where ADA compliant trails can exist.

Dave said that he doesn't think we should compromise here. A partnership between us and FABB could be a force multiplier, hopefully we can find points of agreement. Perhaps a followup meeting would be appropriate.

Philip said that there are so many constant excuses, public and private, to reduce our woods and wetlands. So many of these are hard to resist such as roads, railroads, power lines, sewer lines, and by-right development. It's not too much to ask that we forgo yet another optional bike path and ask the bike riders to go around the "protected" woods/wetlands.

Philip also pointed to the northwest corner of the I-495 Little River Turnpike cloverleaf as a possible common interest with FABB. It is a rare place where we have actually advocated pavement (coupled with stormwater controls) to control gullying left over after the Express Lanes project. This segment would also create a useful link between the CCT and the neighborhoods on the north side of Little River Turnpike.

- [Road Salt Dumping](#)

Philip said that after he reported an egregious case of road salt dumping on Cinder Bed Road last April, Public Works and VDOT gave assurances that the contamination would be cleaned up by the responsible company. When he revisited the location June 3rd, the results were less than impressive. The piles of salt were gone, but 500 to 600 square yards of ground was still white with salt. It appeared all or most of the salt had just been pushed around with heavy equipment. Some of this was pushed into Island Creek Park, clearing away vegetation in the process. He again notified Public Works, the Park Authority, and the Franconia district office, with no word on any results yet. [Photos](#)



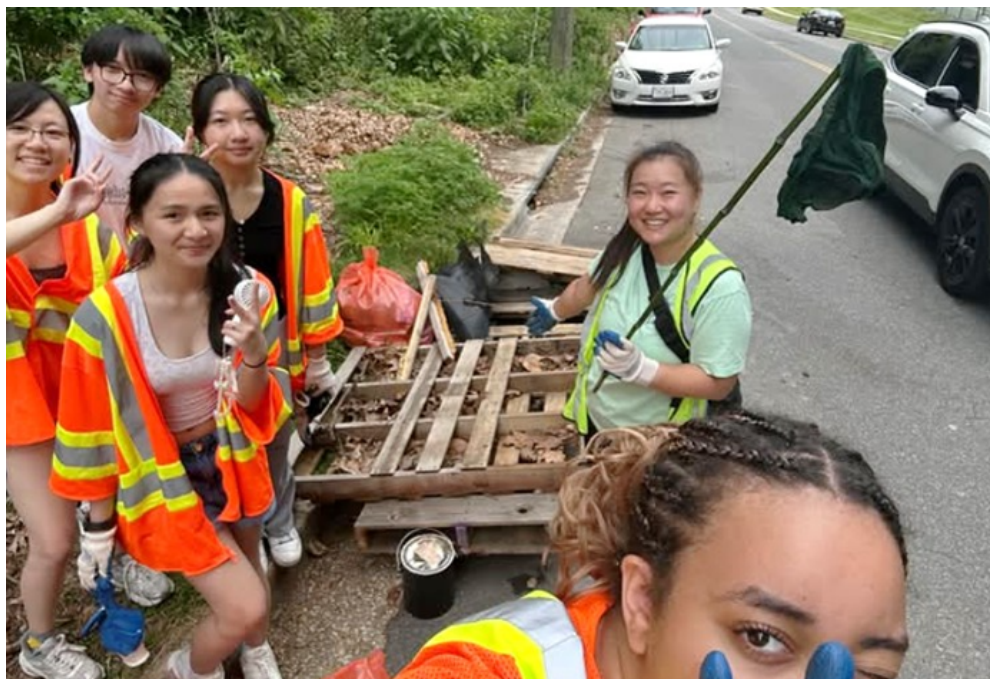
Salt contamination pushed into Island Creek Park

- [George Snyder Trail](#): Sue said this project is now called the Wilcoxin Extension. Her understanding is that the George Snyder Trail Eastern Extension, which would have improved Fairfax Boulevard, will be redirected onto Draper Drive to use the on-road route leading to Cardinal Road which we proposed 4 years ago and renamed to avoid any reference to the GST. Fairfax Blvd connects with this approach. The City Transportation Director proposed what she and Katie had proposed several years ago. The objection several years ago was that somebody could get hit by a soccer ball on such a trail.

Katy said that she and Betsy Martin wrote an oped to urge Supervisors to pay attention to environmental issues. NoVA Bird Alliance decided not to send it to the Post. She and Sue will resurrect it and will try to enlist Jessica Laugh, who is running for Fairfax City Council.

- [Canterbury Woods Elementary School](#): Dave said that on June 6th he worked with a group of Girl Scouts on a project to remove invasive species at Canterbury Woods Elementary School. The scouts recruited about 30 volunteers among the neighbors. Braddock District Supervisor Sizemore Heizer joined them. The school is in the Long Branch central watershed, so we took the opportunity to display signage explaining the [Long Branch Central Project](#) and gave a short talk on the nature of the project and how neighbors can be involved. Philip will follow up with the Supervisor, who expressed interest in the Long Branch project.
- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip said that we had our Clean Americana Day cleanup on June 6th. The Annandale H.S. Green Atoms environmental club joined us. We have some hope for future collaboration with the Green Atoms regarding public outreach on Americana Drive and are communicating with their faculty advisor.

We had 33 volunteers, a smaller turnout than usual, who collected 89 bags of trash, seven tires, miscellaneous items from mailboxes to mirrors, and roughly .75 tons of assorted construction debris. We did not find a toilet, though.



Green Atoms on Americana Drive

[Operation Stream Shield](#), the Fairfax County program to employ shelter residents, had conducted their own cleanup here within the past two weeks, contributing to the lighter-than-usual trash conditions. Their haul was 56 bags of trash. They were also back out there on June 11th, so we may hope their increased operations may help keep conditions more under control.

- *Deerlick Park Invasives Donation:* Dave said that Fairfax PRISM has issued an appeal to environmental groups to help fund wisteria control in Deerlick Park, in the neighboring Cameron Run watershed. The concept is to inspire the community and businesses to step forward and take responsibility, and to smooth the way by finding mechanisms for that to happen. PRISM mentioned the vulnerable status of the neighborhood adds to its prioritization. We decided to donate \$1,000.

Philip said that Deerlick Park is not in our watershed, so any interest of FACC would be indirect, by contributing to making PRISM an overall success. We have more vulnerable areas in our watershed, specifically Americana Drive which has Fitzhugh Park, according to the County [Vulnerability Index Map](#).

- *Lorton Core Study:* Sandy said that this study is intended to recommend Comprehensive Plan revisions for the next 20 years. It is concerning that there is no open space/natural areas designated adjacent to Accotink Creek where it is clearly wooded now, and we presumed it was RPA or parkland.

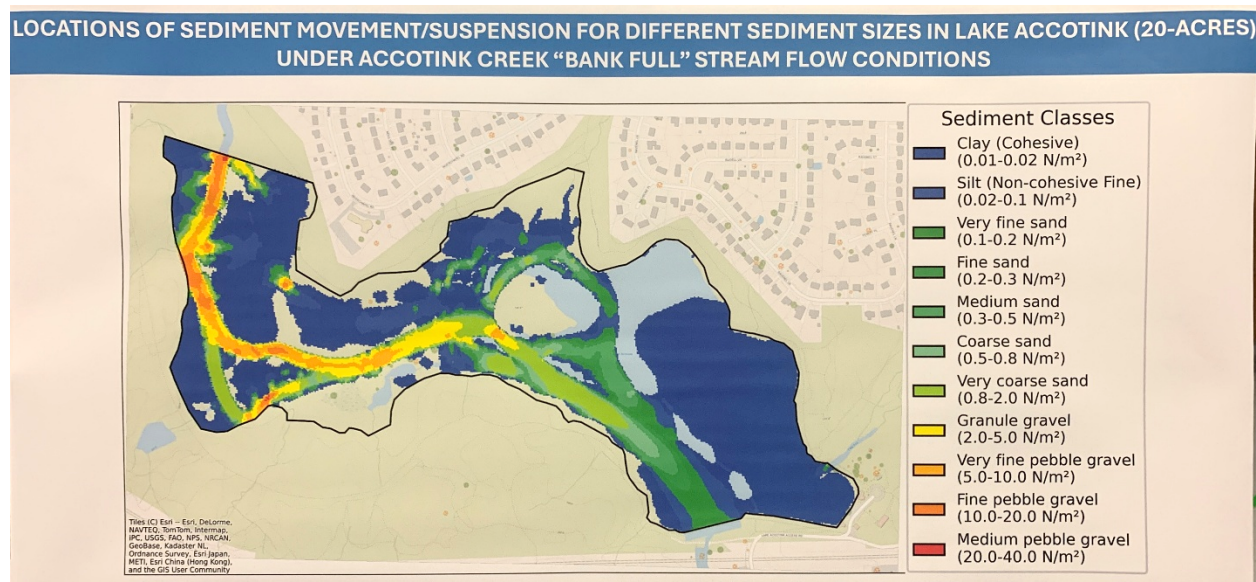
Philip felt the actual area where changes are being considered is the area labeled “Lorton visioning Study Area”, which, in our watershed is only a small strip along Rt. 1, all of it already developed. [Philip will draft a letter to Planning with input from Sandy.

- *Fairfax Elections:* Sue said the main election event this year for Accotink Creek is the Fairfax City elections for City Council and Mayor. Being non-partisan, there is no primary. The general election date is November 3rd. The August 4th primary will concern federal offices unlikely to change hands in November.

• [Lake Accotink Dredging](#): Philip said that on June 6th, Public Works held an [open house](#) with updates on the Lake Accotink Dredging Study. There did not seem to be much change to what we already knew about the state of study.

- Three options are in play for sediment final disposal sites.
- No improved options for sediment dewatering sites have been found yet.
- New graphics illustrate how sediment would continue downstream past the dam in the various offline smaller lake configurations.
- The sediment that actually goes over the dam may only be the finer suspended particles, which may not differ that much from the present.
- No scheme of dredging for the sediment outside a smaller lake seems to be in development.
- The dam has passed its inspection with no significant issues

We should follow up with comments to Public Works and the supervisors bordering the lake.



Sediment (green & yellow) passing over the dam in a smaller offline lake scenario

• [VDOT Draft Landscaping Guidance](#): Sue said that the [guidelines](#) are 122 pages of promising changes to environmental practices by VDOT. We submitted comments on several of the included topics of most interest to FACC. Our comments were also sent to Virginia legislators and supervisors in our watershed. VDOT is the largest land manager in Virginia, with a network extending across the commonwealth, so its decisions are among the most important.

• [Chesapeake Bay TMDL Comments](#): Philip said that the County Phase III TMDL plan is a largely administrative regulatory document, difficult to glean any information from. In a nutshell, the plan says the County has achieved all its TMDL targets ahead of schedule and need do nothing else. We did submit brief comments saying well done and keep trying harder.

• [Stream Monitoring Changes](#): Philip learned that some changes have been made to biological stream monitoring standards, namely that monitoring should only be done during spring and fall, rather than all four seasons. Data collected outside those periods will no longer be used by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

So, we have the option of doing just two monitoring sessions per year, or reactivating another site and doing two sessions there. Discussing this with the volunteers during our session June 13th, the consensus was to take on a second site. There is one at the south end of Wakefield Park that was done in the past, by the Soil & Water Conservation District.

- [Kris Unger Memorial](#): Sue said that we are still waiting for Mike Hayslett to prepare a plan for the City. She has reminded him that everyone is waiting.

- *Website Updates*: Philip provided a link to the test version of our [new photo albums](#) prepared by an IT volunteer in the meeting reminder. The new system allows us to host our photos on our own server on our own terms. Some details remain to be worked out, but hopefully it basically looks OK to everyone.

The meeting reminder also had links to the new front page and calendar. Designs prepared by another IT volunteer. The changes all look generally positive, but some fine tuning is underway, particularly in looking for ways to better fill the homepage space.

- *Donations*: Philip said that we received one donation, \$51.52 from Sharon Barlett. The notification said this was a matching gift, but we are not at all sure who is matching what.

- [Whither FACC](#): Philip provided that if we are to have an annual newsletter this year, we need to have submissions of text and photos beforehand.