



Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting

September 15, 2014

Next Meeting: October 20, 2014

Audrey Moore Rec Center, Clubroom 3
(Third Monday of each month)

Present:

Kris Unger
Philip Latasa
Ted Welch
Heather Breiner
Flint Webb
Suzy Foster
Dave Lincoln
Liz Kirchner
Lucy Varley – Welcome Lucy!
Robert Kupczek - Welcome Robert!

Upcoming events:

- International Coastal Cleanup, Now – October 18, 2014, 2014
- Next FACC meeting, October 20, 2014
- Friends of Long Branch Kickoff meeting, September 22, 2014
- Fall for Fairfax, October 4 & 5, 2014
- Watershed Projects Presentation, Providence District Council, Oct. 21, 2014
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, December 13, 2014
- FACC Board elections, December 15, 2014

Action Items:

- *Philip & Ted – Put up Adopt-a-Stream signs*
- *Kris - Work with Heather on fall cleanup recruitment*
- *Kris – Arrange Anacostia trash trap visit*
- *Kris, Philip, & Suzy – Work on Merrifield historic marker*
- *Suzy – File bylaws with Virginia Corporation Commission*
- *Philip – Purchase chemical monitoring kit*
- *Philip – Get mussel survey information*

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• *International Coastal Cleanup:*

Philip reported the past weekend's cleanups had brought out 31 volunteers who collected 56 bags of trash. Next weekend will feature the Accotink Canoe Raid on Saturday and a special cleanup with long-time partner Temple Adat Reyim Sunday at Lake Accotink Park. Philip noted Virgin America will bring a group of volunteers to our Braddock Road cleanup Oct. 4th and the daughter of the Virgin America coordinator will also bring her American Heritage Girls troop and parents.

Adopt-A-Stream signs

Philip and Ted are still working on putting up the Adopt-a-Stream signs, except those on VDOT property, for which we still have to plan to gain authorization.

St. Stephen's Methodist Church

Philip advised we had been approached by St. Stephen's Methodist Church on Braddock Road about scheduling a cleanup for them on Oct. 5th, a Sunday. Exploring alternatives with Tony Vellucci and Chris Bauernshub of Friends of Long Branch, St. Stephen's decided to work with Chris on a cleanup of a section of Guinea Road suggested by Tony.

Outreach Initiative

Heather has had responses from several supervisors who will mention the cleanups in their newsletters. Flint has mentioned the cleanups in the newsletters of the Federation of Civic Associations and the Providence District Council and at the Green Breakfast.

Celebratory Gathering

Kris felt that given the competing claims for the attention of our hoped-for partner, Friends of Lake Accotink Park, we should scratch plans for a gathering this time.

• Walnut Hill Farm

Lucy and Robert described their efforts in our watershed, including "freelance" stream cleanups, but centered on the 10-acre Thompson family property at 9815 Lee Hwy, newly christened [Walnut Hill Farm](#). Formerly much larger, the property has been in the family for generations and the sons of the current owner (age 99) seek to preserve it as some form of community garden/open space with public access. Lucy & Robert, with a loose group of a half-dozen friends have had a garden there for about five years, gradually building it up, including a honeybee apiary of 20 hives. Composting waste from M.O.M.'s Organic Market in Merrifield goes here. The property borders the Bear Branch tributary of Accotink Creek and has a spring-fed pond. There are some large debris items in Bear Branch such as shopping carts, etc. that might be the target of a cleanup project.



There was keen discussion of the possibilities of collaboration and mutual benefit.

• TMDL:

Philip mentioned the first Technical Advisory Committee meeting took place Aug 26 & the first public meeting Sept 10. He noted the whole process is starting over, rather than building upon data collected for the last TMDL. Target completion is early 2016.

In discussion of the topic, Flint observed that Accotink Creek is a test case and the parties may be hoping newer data will be better, establishing that current practices are paying off. Suzy questioned whether the TMDL study will cause any change in County practice, particularly in view of the new Virginia stormwater control requirements now coming into force.

Kris indicated the TMDL process brings attention to Accotink Creek, particularly as it follows the previous TMDL lawsuit. Kris was contacted by a Connection Newspapers reporter on the topic, and gave him a 'Stormwater 101' briefing. The story should appear next week.

Suzy opined that the way to address sediment issues is "Go after VDOT. Go after VDOT. Go after VDOT." She noted that some exemptions for VDOT are grandfathered in, but wondered if they are a "good" grandfather or a "bad" grandfather, provoking general amusement.

- Whole Foods Funds/Mastenbrook Grant:

There was discussion of the possible uses of the funds developed at the last meeting -Professional mussel survey, Water quality test instruments, Fishing net for trash gathering. Ted reported a net might be about \$300, but the logs and branches in the marina could make it an impractical approach. Philip advised he had found electronic monitoring probes in a broad range of prices, with a confusing array of options, but none seemed to measure phosphates, a feature we need.

This led into Liz describing working with Fairfax High School on a Chesapeake Bay Program grant related to the student watershed awareness program underway there. The student monitoring kits being used there are suitable for our needs and in the \$200 range. Without objection, the group authorized Philip to purchase one kit with FACC funds, apart from the Whole Foods funds.

Consensus formed around the mussel survey option. Philip remarked that he had contacted a number of sources of information. Two had responded with interest, the well-known WSSI and smaller Creeklab. He is awaiting proposals.

- Friends of Long Branch:

Meeting

All are welcome at the Sept. 22 Long Branch meeting, where we may encourage cooperation, rather than splintering into separate Accotink groups. Danielle Wynne will make a presentation on watershed issues.

Stream Walks

Kris related that 15 – 20 kids and parents had fun at the Aug. 30 nature walk, studying fish, spiders, and native and invasive plants.

Cleanup

Tony Vellucci is still working on plans for cleanups along Long Branch Oct. 18, but details are few. Flint mentioned Tony's vision is for each neighborhood to clean their section of stream.

In general discussion, Philip solicited ideas on how best to share our website with the new group. There was some questioning of the value of sharing at all. Suzy broached the idea of organizing a run along Accotink and Long Branch and Liz noted the length of Accotink Creek is close to the 26 miles of a marathon. Ted suggested friendly competition between FACC, FLAP, and FLBSV would be healthy.

- Scout Project:

Philip reported he met Eagle Scout candidate Andrew Leal and his dad to survey the Ellick Preserve tire dump. About 2000 tires remain. We are waiting to hear from Andrew.

- Represent FACC:

Federation of Citizens Associations, Sept. 18, 7:30 pm, Mason District Government Center

Kris indicated all was on track for his presentation. He and Flint will confer. All are welcome to attend!

Fall for Fairfax, October 4 & 5

Liz and Ted will work with Suzy to share a booth with Fairfax County Restoration Project. FCRP will be leading tours of the nearby green roof and stream restoration project.

Springfield Town Center Opening, October 17

Dave will explore a possible relationship between FACC and this major new development in our watershed. It may relate to the nearby Metro property into which it drains and which badly needs a cleanup.

Providence District Council Oct. 21, 7:45 pm Dunn Loring School

Flint reminded us Danielle Wynne of Stormwater Planning Division will speak on watershed projects. All are welcome!

Anacostia trash trap visit

No news yet.

- Wakefield Run:

Monitoring can resume after we receive the monitoring kit mentioned above. Philip noted the presence of numerous lung snails, usually a sign of poor water quality.

- Fairfax High School:

Kris described the educational outreach grant from Fairfax Water that is funding a partnership with the Science Department and Lands and Waters to inform students on watershed issues. Liz and Ted will bring equipment for the stream monitoring sessions next week.

- Merrifield Park Historic Marker:

Kris is awaiting a written proposal from historian Marion Dobbins on the project to place historic markers regarding the African American communities previously located in our watershed, beginning in Merrifield Park.

- 501c3:

Suzy confirmed the IRS has received their requested modifications of our bylaws, after some back-and-forth. Suzy still needs to send the modifications to the Virginia Corporation Commission. Suzy and Kris will also confirm the meaning of a notation Philip found on the Commission website, indicating FACC is "terminated".

Philip noted the elections for Primary Conservator, Secondary Conservator, and Chronicler are coming up in December.

Philip Latasa

Friends of Accotink Creek
