



## 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 – January 19, 2016

Next Meeting: February 16, 2016 (Third Tuesday of each month)  
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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#### **Present:**

Sandy Collins  
Suzy Foster  
Sue Kovach Schuman  
Dave Lincoln  
Beverley Rivera  
Kris Unger  
Philip Latasa

#### **Upcoming events:**

- Lee District Open House, January 30, 2016
- FLAP presentation to Park Authority Board, February, 2016
- Next FLAP meeting, February 18, 2016
- Crook Branch stream restoration meeting, February 1, 2016
- RiverWise Communities Workshop, February 11, 2016
- Friends of Friends of Parks, February 27, 2016
- Mount Vernon District Annual Town Meeting, February 27, 2016
- Friends of Oak Hill Park Meeting, February 29, 2016
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, March 12, 2016
- Creek Critters Stream Monitoring, May 7, 2016

#### **Action Items:**

- *Everyone – Brainstorm grant application ideas*
- *Kris – Solicit NVATU contribution to mussel survey*
- *Philip - Draft spring cleanup schedule*
- *Sue – Coordinate event with Rep. Connolly*
- *Sue – Send Long Branch trail paving comments*
- *Dave – Confirm & send SLAF comments*
- *Dave – Support FLAP presentation to Park Board*
- *Kris send letter regarding Fort Belvoir*
- *Kris & Philip – Review new member welcoming letters*

#### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

- *Whole Foods Funds/Mastenbrook Grant:*

Philip reported somehow the Fairfax County Park Foundation did not follow through on payment. We are now waiting for Daguna to register as a vendor to get a check. FLAP has been advised of the delay, since some of the funds are theirs. We are also still awaiting the final survey report, since Daguna has higher priority customers facing legal deadlines.

• Represent FACC:

○ *Long Branch Trail 1/12*

Philip advised the Park Authority proposes to pave Long Branch Stream Valley Trail. The meeting was organized by Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley, with about 30 attendees. FLBSV also did an online survey, with about 74% of respondents' opinions against paving. The group approved draft wording of comments on the paving proposal, which Sue will send.

○ *Environmental Quality Advisory Committee 1/12*

Kris recounted his remarks before the EQAC, which mostly focused on more funding for park resources. Kris mentioned our Accotink Gorge video presentation to EQAC also attracted interest. Board member at-large Mary Cortina was particularly interested in the gorge as an opportunity for increased resource stewardship by the Park Authority, and referenced the [recent survey](#) showing public support of park natural resources.

In addition, Kris noted a side discussion with another presenter concerned about outdoor auto repair runoff pollution, with whom collaboration may be possible.

Philip presented a draft letter on the Virginia Stormwater Local Assistance Fund, based on comments of Monica Billger of Audubon Naturalist Society. Dave will send, after confirming details with Monica.

○ *Long Branch Falls Park Restoration Project 1/20*

Philip indicated he would attend the meeting to discuss this project. Suzy noted there were problems of flooding here associated with a VDOT culvert. Suzy also mentioned the project will include invasives control and deer fencing to limit browsing.

○ *RiverWise Communities Workshop 1/22*

Sandy described this as a program begun in Maryland to encourage installation of stormwater BMPs (Best Management Practices) on private property. Kris believed it could be useful for us to join this initiative in communities. [Note: The workshop has since been postponed to 2/11 due to the predicted snowstorm.]

○ *Lee District Open House 1/30*

Philip asked if anyone was interested in attending and noted our new friends in Springfield Art Guild would exhibit. Dave will attend.

○ *FLAP presentation to Park Authority Board 2/??*

Philip explained the FLAP president will speak to the Park Authority Board in February, to draw attention to Lake Accotink Park as planning for allocation of the 2016 bond issue proceeds. Others are also invited to speak in support. Philip also presented draft remarks, taken from our positions on the park's master plan, which is still delayed. Dave will coordinate with FLAP president.

○ *Friends of Friends of Parks 2/27*

Kris described this as an initiative of the Park Authority and Fairfax County Park Foundation, which we hope to influence in the direction of resource stewardship. About half the member groups are focused on nature. Kris and Beverley will attend.

- *Mount Vernon District Annual Town Meeting 2/27*  
Philip observed there is a new Mt. Vernon supervisor and staff and asked if there was interest in attending. Dave will attend and check about setting up our display. Suzy suggested including Accotink Gorge materials, as much of the gorge is in the Mt. Vernon district.
- *Friends of Oak Hill Park 2/29*  
Philip advised Glen Erickson Bell, informal steward of Oak Hill Park, will be organizing a friends group, encouraged by Tony Vellucci. Philip will attend.

• *Accotink Gorge:*

Kris spoke about a proposed meeting being arranged by the Office of Public Private Partnerships of FACC with the Park Authority to discuss our agreement on operations in the gorge. Philip remarked that the agreement is slowly undergoing a mysterious process of review by the Park Authority, and Dave mused that perhaps the sluggish pace is due to the agreement first being translated into hieroglyphics and then back.



Kris pointed out that both Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and Earth Sangha are interested in cooperation on workdays.

In keeping with the Egyptian theme, Dave shared this photo of a stone formation in the gorge, which was promptly dubbed the “Eye of Osiris”



Philip suggested the nameless tributary parallel to Boston Blvd is worth a visit. A [virtual visit](#) is on our website.

• *Americana Meadow:*

Suzy said Americana Park is on the list of projects to expand in spring, with the expectation of putting in additional meadow area between the driveway and the VDOT ramp and possibly up onto the ramp itself. Earth Sangha will provide plants. Cooperation with FACC for planting is desired. Suzy will coordinate dates in relation to the spring stream cleanup with Philip.

• *Plastic Bag Bill:*

Sue mentioned [SB 114](#) puts a 5-cent cost on disposable plastic bags, and was sent to the Finance Committee January 13. Philip proposed a draft letter of support. Kris will send after reviewing the bill and adjusting the text.

Sue suggested an online petition of support. Sue & Kris will collaborate on a petition.

Philip mentioned the recent [national ban on plastic microbeads](#).

- Rep. Gerry Connolly:

Sue is working with the Congressman's staff on an April 9<sup>th</sup> or April 23<sup>rd</sup> date to join our cleanups.

- Lake Royal:

Philip noted Tony Vellucci is organizing community support for a rescue of mussels in May or June when Royal Lake is drained. Some rescued mussels will go to Lake Accotink. There are a number of other ponds in our watershed that might be candidates. Tony has also suggested recently restored streams may be stable enough to support mussels. [His appeal is posted on our website.](#)

- Community Grant:

Philip asked if we have ideas for a new community grant or any grant. Kris noted Lands and Waters consistently gets about \$10,000 from Fairfax Water for educational projects. Discussion focused on possible education initiatives, possibly in schools before cleanups. Dave suggested interpretive signage at the Accotink Gorge. Philip noted at some point funding for professional herbicide treatments in the gorge could help. Kris will work on ideas.

- Fort Belvoir:

Kris stated Monica had brought to our attention the comments by our sister group Friends of Huntley Meadows regarding lack of proper environmental study before a proposed housing development on Fort Belvoir. Philip observed that 31 acres would be cleared and offered a draft letter of support for the position of the Friends of Huntley Meadows. Kris will send.

- Social Meeting:

Philip let us know FLAP is planning a social meeting with us, FLBSV, Friends of Audrey Moore, and Friends of Oak Hill Park in the next month or so. Kris will check in with FLAP.

- Creek Critters:

Philip informed that Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District proposed a monitoring session with FACC focused on the [Audubon Creek Critters](#) app. Over a dozen volunteers have signed up for May 7.

- Web Hosting:

Philip presented receipts he had paid for renewal of website hosting \$119.40 and domain name \$11.05. The group approved reimbursement and Beverley issued a check.

- Meetup/Facebook:

Philip noted our Facebook had slowly but steadily increased to 539 likes and Meetup is now at 211 members. He wondered if a welcome letter should go to Meetup members inviting them to join our listserv, similar to the letter we send to persons who join FACC on our website. Discussion covered the content of the current automatic acknowledgement going to new Meetup members, the usefulness of adding financial support information, and whether we should sign up for the Combined Federal Campaign. Kris & Philip will work on the welcoming letters.