



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 – February 16, 2016

Next Meeting: March 15, 2016 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

Present:

Philip Latasa
Sandy Collins
Sue Kovach Schuman
Dave Lincoln
Beverley Rivera
Kris Unger
Flint Webb
Ted Welch

Upcoming events:

- FLAP presentation to Park Authority Board, February, 2016
- Long Branch Falls Park Restoration Project meeting, February 22, 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
- Next FLAP meeting, March 24, 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*
- *Dave – Support FLAP presentation to Park Board*
- *Kris – Contact Choose Clean Water on plastic bag bill*
- *Kris – Discuss storm drain art project with Springfield Art Guild*
- *Kris, Ted, Philip – Plan Creek critters event*
- *Philip – Set up Meetup message*

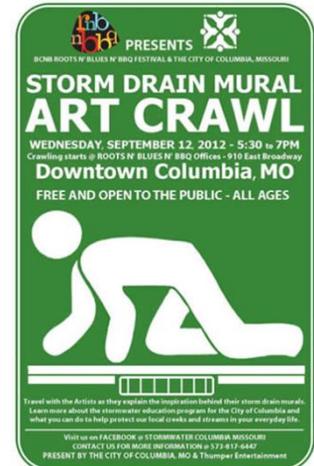
FACC Subjects Discussed –

- Whole Foods Funds/Mastenbrook Grant:

Philip reported the payment has been straightened out, per Fairfax County Park Foundation, and we are still awaiting the final survey report.

Philip returned to the subject of our funds withheld by NVATU. Kris will solicit their recovery as a NVATU donation to the mussel survey.

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- Audubon Naturalist Society Coalition:

Kris advised this coalition, led by Audubon and Clean Water Action, is still in the website building stage and is intended to bring together local watershed groups and allies. There was discussion of how this differs from the broader regional Choose Clean Water coalition.

- Represent FACC:

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

Philip reported this project will be in a small park in the Long Branch central sub-watershed. The unnamed stream comes out of a stormwater pipe and goes back into one within about 200 yards. Planning and design is funded for now; actual work maybe later. The public is welcome to the next design meeting February 22.

- *Crook Branch Restoration Project 2/1*

Sue and Ted discussed the initial public meeting for this project in the Mantua neighborhood, attended by about 30 neighbors. The restoration will cover 1¼ miles of Crook Branch and affect as many as 100 private properties, several of which have more than ½ of their plots in the streamside Resource Protection Area. There is one holdout property which is not yet covered by an easement that would allow the work. It is an estimated 2½ years to completion, and a role for FACC may emerge later.

- *RiverWise Communities Workshop 2/11*

Sandy and Kris attended this Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay seminar in Richmond. The seminar described a pilot program administered by the Alliance to identify suitable private properties and install stormwater control improvements. The Alliance handles the contracting and the city benefits with MS4 stormwater discharge permit credits. Funding is from an EPA grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Service. The program includes a pilot stormwater management tracking system to monitor performance of the control features.

Kris noted Monica Billger of Audubon Naturalist Society was enthusiastic about the metrics element. Sandy mentioned Monica will be meeting with Fairfax County this week to discuss possibilities for local implementation.

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

Dave said he is in touch with Meghan Walker of FLAP and will fix the date of the presentation.

- *Friends of Friends of Parks 2/27*

Kris will be attending and mentioned Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and Audubon Naturalist Society will also be represented.

- *Mount Vernon District Annual Town Meeting 2/27*

Dave has reserved exhibition space for FACC and is coordinating with Friends of Huntley Meadows to share a table.

- *Friends of Oak Hill Park 2/29*

Philip will attend the initial meeting of this group and all others are welcome.

- *Heritage Mall meeting 3/2*

Philip described this project proposed on Heritage Drive in Annandale in the Wakefield Run watershed. 68 townhouses will be replacing an existing parking lot. There was discussion of to what extent, if any, improved stormwater controls are required in such redevelopment cases.

• Accotink Gorge:

Kris described the recent meeting on this topic (and others) of Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax County Restoration Project, and Office of Public Private Partnerships. The meeting was organized by Marie Reinsdorf and attended by Kirk Kincannon, Park Authority Director, and John Stokely, Natural Resource Manager. In short, it seems FACC is OK to proceed with planning hikes and workdays and getting estimates on tackling wisteria removal in the larger area of the Gorge – pending approval of our friend of park agreement. Kris remarked that the Park Authority seems receptive to partnership and that the FCRP and OP3 connection seemed to have helped. Philip observed with some gloom Kirk’s mention at the meeting of a Little League group that had surprised him with a \$200,000 grant for ballfield improvements, whereas FACC scarcely has \$200 to show.

Kris mentioned recent conversations with Earth Sangha on perhaps linking up with the Invasive Management Area program.

Ted put forth that Kirk had cut his teeth years ago as manager of Lake Accotink Park and that his experience along Accotink Creek is of value to us.

• Americana Meadow:

Philip relayed Suzy’s information that the planting dates will be April 29 & 30, presumably 9:00 – Noon, as before. Kris is in touch with NVCC on bringing out student volunteers.

• Plastic Bag Bill:

Sue conveyed the news of the demise of S.B.114, “passed by indefinitely” in committee. The bill would have imposed a 5-cent charge on plastic bags, with a number of exceptions.

Kris asked if we should draft our own bill for next year to shift the discussion. He described the concept of the “[Overton Window](#)” to redefine the range of acceptable ideas. Flint offered the recent D.C. bill as a good starting point that received broad public support and acquiescence from interests that might have been opponents. He also noted rural districts, where bags interfere with farming, as potential allies. Flint proposed we should sit down with legislators with our bill to ask them to champion it and support them with lobbying in Richmond. There was no decision on action, but Kris will bring the idea up with the Choose Clean Water.



Philip shared his photo of S.B.114, “seen washing down a storm drain outside the General Assembly”.

• Gerry Connolly:

Sue is trying to nudge the Congressman toward joining our April 9th cleanup, but his schedule is only set one month in advance. Sue already has several scout groups coming that date.

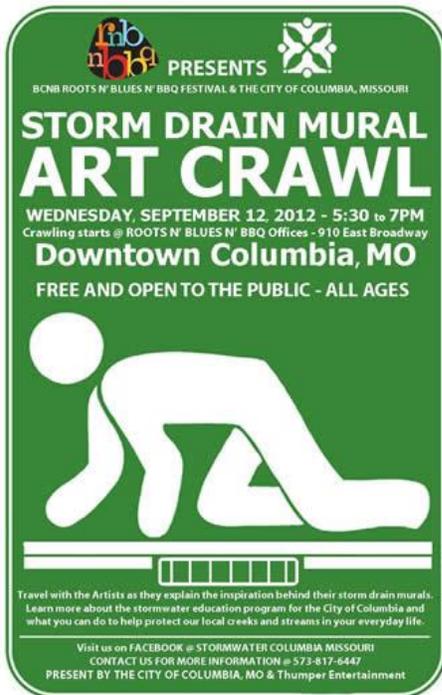
• Community Grant:

Philip reminded of the need to develop ideas for a renewed community outreach grant or for other grants in general. He passed along the availability of [Dominion Power environmental grants](#) of up to \$50,000. There was discussion of working with DPWES on such a grant.

For the community grant, Philip suggested paid advertising or paid writing in civic association newsletters or other media.

A second suggestion Philip offered was to emulate the storm drain art projects done in such places as [Columbia, Missouri](#) and [Montgomery County, Maryland](#). Flint noted the similarity to the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District's [rain barrel art](#).

Kris recommended NVSWCD and Fairfax County Restoration Project as partners. Philip proposed Fairfax City as a first venue or acting in conjunction with Springfield Days or the Springfield Bridge Walk and noted working in a parking lot would eliminate the need for official approval. Ted urged that the event be documented to spread the idea. Kris suggested we could invite anyone to decorate their local storm drain and submit photos. Kris will discuss ideas with the Springfield Art Guild.



Ted mused on enhancement to the storm drain art by having an actor portray a character such as “Storm Drain Ninja”. At this point, the conversation regrettably descended into costuming suggestions ranging from plastic bags to body paint.

• Creek Critters:

Kris talked about the potential of building on the May 7th Creek Critters stream monitoring at Wakefield Park. Ted offered the idea of taking small groups on walks to observe stream health. Sandy added the thought of participants understanding the relationship between what is observed and the findings during monitoring. Flint suggested a mosquito element might build on the current Zika virus publicity. Friends of Audrey Moore and Tony Vellucci were named as possible supporters. Kris, Ted, & Philip will plan.

- Master Plan Lake Accotink Park:

Philip conveyed the intelligence that the long-delayed master plan shows signs of movement. A project website may appear in February and public meetings may be set for the end of March or early April, if not delayed yet again. He asked what we should do. Our [comments drafted a year ago](#) focused on watershed-friendly and habitat-friendly guidance. Ted contemplated the possibility of a [hydro powered trash trap](#), as in the Inner Harbor. Philip speculated on a dream project like the [Dutch Wind Wheel](#) . No action was decided.

- Meetup/Facebook:

The group edited a draft greeting message to be sent to our new Meetup members. Philip will set up for automatic distribution.

- State Corporation Commission Renewal:

Kris signed the annual State Corporation Commission report. Beverley issued a \$25 check for the annual renewal fee.

- Senator Warner Letter:

Philip displayed a letter of congratulation from Senator Warner (below) for our Elly Doyle Award.

- IRS Form 990:

Philip advised he had submitted this annual online filing stating only that we received under \$50,000.

- Green Breakfast:

Flint recommended the [Green Breakfast](#) March 12 on climate change impact and adaptation and its relevance to watershed issues.

MARK R. WARNER
VIRGINIA



UNITED STATES SENATOR
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 5, 2016

Mr. Kris Unger
Primary Conservator
Friends of Accotink Creek
9306 Saint Marks Place
Fairfax, VA 22031-3047

Dear Mr. Unger,

I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to Friends of Accotink Creek upon receiving the 2015 Elly Doyle Park Service Award from the Fairfax County Park Authority.

This recognition serves as a tribute to your organization's exemplary leadership and community involvement. Individuals, community groups, schools, and businesses are renewing their commitment to participate in cleanup, beautification, and recycling projects that help to keep the Commonwealth beautiful and prosperous. We cherish our natural resources and must protect them so future generations can enjoy them as we have. Members of Friends of Accotink Creek have contributed countless hours of service to ensure that these natural resources are protected and that residents of Fairfax County can enjoy the Gerry Connolly Cross Country Trail. Your commitment to preserving the environment is commendable.

On this important occasion, I am very pleased to join with your family, friends, and community in saluting Friends of Accotink Creek's accomplishments and wishing you the very best for continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Warner".

MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator