



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 – March 20, 2018

Next Meeting: March 20, 2018 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Lisa Turcios, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Kris Unger, Sandy Collins, Elaine Sevy, Flint Webb
Zufan Abate – Welcome, Zufan!
Katie Lau – Welcome, Katie!
Phil Twohig – Welcome, Phil!
Katherine Camp – Welcome Katherine!
Jose Benitez – Welcome, Jose!
Marco – Katherine & Jose's son – 5 months – Welcome, Marco!

Upcoming events

- Plant NOVA Natives Grand Partnership February 27, 2018
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, March 10, 2018
- Teen Job Fairs march 10 & April 28, 2018
- 2018 Lobby Day, March 21, 2018
- Federation Plastics Presentation March 29, 2018
- Potomac Watershed Cleanup, weekends in April & May, 2018

Action Items:

- Philip – Arrange Americana Northside project
- Kris – Coordinate with M.O.M.s

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Represent FACC:

- Lee District Open House 1/20

Elaine attended and noted the many comments she had received about one of her Accotink Creek paintings now posted on the FACC Facebook page



- VCN Lobby Day 1/22

Lisa provided a report of her participation – Virginia Conservation Network has over 120 partner organizations, and focuses on working with the General Assembly. A preview event and preparatory webinar preceded the day. Over 200 participants heard Virginia officials speak at breakfast and lunch during a day of meeting legislators. Lisa met Delegate Kaye Kory (and got a letter back regarding bag bills). She also met Senator Dave Marsden, thanked him for his help on 495 Express Lanes issues, and received his enthusiastic assurance about returning to the topic in spring. Everyone lamented the lack of success of environmental bills, but Kris mentioned the success of the [salamander bill](#) .

- *Mount Vernon District Town Meeting 2/3*
Dave staffed a table for FACC, along with over 50 other organizations. Among the attendees who stopped by and chatted was the executive director of the Mount Vernon historical site itself, who was enthusiastic about promoting reusable water bottles at Mount Vernon. Betsy and Paul of Friends of Little Hunting Creek will follow up.
- *Plant NOVA Natives Grand Partnership 2/27*
Kris advised this is a bringing-together of various allied groups by Plant NOVA Natives. Kris will attend.
- *Road Salts in the DC Region 3/6*
Lisa will attend this meeting at the Metropolitan Council of Governments.

Dave mentioned February 27th is the next meeting of the Accotink Creek chloride TMDL SaMS SAC (Salt Management Strategy Stake Holder Advisory Committee).

- *Braddock Tree Forum 3/7*
Philip enquired if anyone would care to represent FACC at this forum which will present information on the benefits of trees, tree pests, and planting native trees at home, but there were no commitments.

- *2018 Lobby Day 3/21*
This event is organized by the Choose Clean Water coalition to set up meetings with the participants' members of Congress, as Lisa described for us. Lisa relayed the information that the administration proposes 90% cuts in Chesapeake Bay funding (although similar proposals failed last year) and also proposes to limit Chesapeake Bay activities to **monitoring only**. At this, Dave made a satirical comparison to the "[I'm only a security monitor](#)" TV commercial. Kris & Lisa will attend.



- [Federation Plastics Presentation](#) 3/29
Flint let us know about this discussion organized by the Federation of Civic Associations and the Air & Waste Management Association at the Mason Government Center. The several speakers will include Kris, on the topic of "Plastics in Streams and Oceans".
- *Teen Job Fairs 3/10 & 4/28*
Philip noted that supervisors are sponsoring Teen Job Fairs around the county. Two are in or bordering our watershed. Philip asked if anyone was interested in attending to learn what we might be doing to set up a summer work program. Sandy & Katie will attend.

- Trash Action Work Force:

Philip regretted that, although he went to Richmond with members of 350 Fairfax and testified in favor, all three plastic bag bills* failed to get out of committee in the General Assembly. Senator Locke's bill retains a flicker of life, having been "continued to 2019" with a request for a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality study of the issue.

350 Fairfax in the spring plans to start scheduling meetings with delegates and senators across Virginia to find support for next year. We should lend our support.

May 5 is the next Trash Day of Action, although we have no plans yet.

* [SB139](#) (sponsored by Senator Chap Petersen), [HB981](#) (sponsored by Delegate Debra Rodman [Richmond]), & [SB193](#) (sponsored by Senator Mamie Locke [Hampton])

- M.O.M.S.:

Philip raised the query of whether we have we heard anything from M.O.M.S and suggested we should ping them about the spring cleanups or other interests they may have. Kris will follow up.

- Inova Development:

Inova proposes massive, long-term mixed-use redevelopment of the mostly-wooded former Exxon-Mobil campus on Gallows Road. Philip pointed out that of the 117 acres, almost 3 acres are in our watershed, so we are entitled to have our say. Lisa advised she had informed the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and their board will be considering whether action is possible. According to the Annandale Blog, community engagement will begin in April. Lisa has signed up with Supervisor Smyth's office to receive notifications.

Lisa shared a [county map of proposed zoning changes](#) and noted that many of them were centered around Merrifield. Flint observed that the new county approach to planning tends to focus projects in certain areas.

- Fairfax Plaza Development:

Lisa also provided information on the nearby proposed [Fairfax Plaza development](#), describing it as desirable smart growth involving an already completely paved older shopping center.

- 4104 Woodlark Drive:

Philip reported that, upon receiving the opinion of the County Attorney, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Exceptions Committee voted not to grant the additional exception for further intrusion into the Resource Protection Area. An appeal to the Board of Supervisors is likely, so we should be prepared. The Fairfax County Restoration Project is talking to Northern Virginia Community College about a project for mapping vacant lots in the Accotink watershed or county-wide using a Transurban grant for intern stipends. The grant deadline is March 31.

• Potomac Watershed Cleanup:

Philip presented a proposed schedule for the Potomac Watershed Cleanup schedule. He commented that the Country Club Hills civic association had asked for someone to talk about stream ecology at 11 am following their April 21 cleanup. Dave will relieve Philip at our own cleanup so he can be at Country Club Hills.

Kris remarked that the [Save Lake Accotink](#) group was considering reserving a pavilion after the April 7th Lake Accotink Park cleanup for promotion of their campaign.

Philip explained we are waiting for Project Clean Stream, our source of stipends, to clarify procedures for this year before posting a schedule.

• Wisteria Workday:

Philip reminded us we had talked about a workday in March and we should act if we want to follow through. Kris took the opportunity to describe the [Accotink Gorge](#) and its wisteria issues. Philip will contact Solitude Lake Management for date on which they are available to provide herbicide support.

• EPA Funding Letter:

Philip recalled our earlier discussions of a letter to the editor regarding EPA funding, for which we had planned to gather supporting information about the Pickett Road tank farm leaks. Flint will check on the information.

Again Philip brought up the 90 percent cut in funding for the Chesapeake Bay Program in the President's proposed FY2019 budget, from \$73 million to \$7.3 million. Choose Clean Water Coalition sent out proposed language for contacting members of Congress. With suggested edits, the group approved the draft [text of our letter](#) without objection.

Fund The Bay.
Protect Our Wildlife.



• Loisdale Park:

Loisdale Park received a donation of 8 acres along a small tributary of Long Branch south. Philip commented the owner had original rights from 1956 to develop even in the Resource Protection Area, so we should be grateful the owner company chose another route.

• Flag Run Restoration:

Philip advised we've learned the Flag Run restoration project has been moved up. Construction is expected in fiscal year 2019, which begins this July. There was a general discussion of the nature of stream restorations. Jose inquired if Flag Run information is online yet, but it has not yet been posted by the county. Philip proposed biological monitoring of Flag Run before restoration work begins – he and Katherine will work together.



Loisdale Park Addition

- Park Authority Friends Groups Task Force:

Philip asked if anyone wanted to take charge of this issue now that Julie has moved to Maryland. Dave, Sandy, and Kris will step in. Philip expressed his hope this just goes away for us, but pointed out we have to think about how to help out FLAP. There was discussion of the insurance requirements being imposed by the Park Authority on friends groups and the limitations placed on the alternate designation of “park volunteer teams”.

- Fairfax Water Grant:

Philip remarked Fairfax Water’s 2018 Water Supply Stakeholder Outreach Grant applications are due by May 15. Kris confirmed this the same grant we used for the school programs at Little Run Elementary, and he will be seeking a new grant. There was discussion of possible school programs tapping into the fervor over Lake Accotink and connecting with the assistant park manager’s proposal for nature programs at Crestwood Elementary.

Kris mentioned the same Fairfax Water grant had funded our recent workshop with Get2Green at Woodburn High School. Katie observed the Green Club at her school, Fairfax High School, is trying to get more activities going and is currently rehabilitating the school garden.

Philip noted an award for Little Run Elementary project has gone to George Kralovec and Misty Clatterbuck as outstanding volunteer-teacher partners of the year from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



George Kralovec and Misty Clatterbuck receive AAAS award

- Vernal Pool:

Kris commented that [Mike Hayslett](#) is surveying vernal pools in a project with the Park Authority. Mike wants to hear from the public on the locations of lesser-known vernal pools for cross referencing to verify the accuracy of aerial photos in locating pools.

• [Lake Accotink Park Master Plan](#):

Philip provided an update on the rapid developments regarding the future of Lake Accotink:

Since the January 22 public meeting on the future of the lake, neighbors of the park are taking alarm at the prospect of losing the lake.

Ravensworth Farm civic association had a meeting February 6th on the topic, where Supervisor Cook first brought up the need for a county-wide vote on a bond issue to finance the work to keep the lake and challenged supporters to produce 1000 signatures on a petition he could take to the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisors Cook and McKay hosted another meeting on February 13th, with about 200 people attending and receiving media coverage from the Annandale Blog and WJLA Channel 7. Citizens speaking at the meeting generally favored retaining the lake, or possibly the smaller lake option. And it does seem to be narrowing down to those two options:

- Retain the full lake with a new forebay to reduce siltation, or
- Breach the dam and form a smaller lake.

The full lake project would cost about \$43 million and the smaller lake about \$13 million.

An idea that's getting some attention is a variation on the full lake plan that would move [the forebay up to Braddock Road](#) for easier equipment access and possible consolidation with the Braddock Road widening project's stormwater ponds. →

As Friends of Accotink Creek, we haven't been advocating one option over another, but rather have been trying to make people aware of the environmental pros and cons of each.

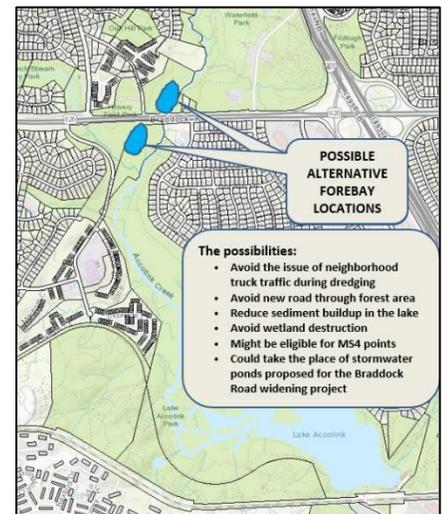
A motivated group of neighbors got together to put up a [Save Lake Accotink](#) website, Facebook page, and online petition. They are getting impressive results and have already shot past the 1000 petition signatures.

Kris remarked on the high level of community concern about losing the lake.

Philip shared a draft of [comments on the future of the lake](#), which the group approved without objection. Citizen comments on the future of the lake are being accepted until May 28th.and there is an [online survey](#) everyone should complete.

Flint noted Lake Accotink does not qualify as an official stormwater facility and therefore does not earn [MS4](#) permit points for the county.

Katherine inquired if the sources of sediment had been studied. Discussion followed of the stress placed on streams by development without stormwater standards, followed by development with inadequate standards. Katherine mentioned her background as Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority Green Infrastructure Manager.



[View Upstream Forebay graphic](#)

Kris mused on bringing county people in for conversations about efforts to improve watershed conditions. The discussion diverged to TMDL issues.

While stopping by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, the director offered Philip the example of [Lake Barcroft](#), where residents voted to create a Watershed Improvement District, paying additional amounts each year to support their lake. She offered to make a presentation to any group interested in the idea. Philip pondered if the community enthusiasm to retain the lake might not generate enough enthusiasm for a Watershed Improvement District.

