



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 – May 15, 2018

Next Meeting: June 19, 2018 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Dave Lincoln, Kris Unger, Su Jewell, Julie Chang, Flint Webb, Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa

Upcoming events

- Flag Run Stream Monitoring, May 19, 2018
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, June 9, 2018
- SaMS Salt Management Strategy meeting, May 24, 2018

Action Items:

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

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Fish Passage:

Su initiated a discussion on improving fish passage, noting she works in the US Fish & Wildlife Service next to the National Fish Passage Coordinator. Su advised streams are being reconnected across the country by removing small dams and improving culverts. Dam removals are done in controlled circumstances to avoid flooding and other undesired consequences. Downstream habitats may be degraded for a time, but then recover. Hatcheries can provide refuge for mussels until they can be returned to the stream. Su allowed there is reason to doubt the county would use the best methods to carry out a dam removal.

Dave asked for links to successful dam removals, citing personal witness to unfortunate results out West. Su will provide links.

Kris suggested fish ladders as a substitute for dam removal. Su doubted whether fish acclimated to living in streams would be willing to migrate through the still warm waters of the lake.

Philip observed there are no good solutions until such time as erosion and sediment are brought under control. Sandy mentioned her company has built fish passage projects and that VDGIF has a fish passage program that could be of value.

There was discussion of incorporating fish and eel passage into the dam, either now or at a later time. Philip noted the hollow structure of the dam may allow for interior fish passage. He will see about an inspection tour.

• Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:

Supervisors Cook, McKay, Gross, and Herry attended the April 30 master plan meeting at Lake Braddock Secondary, as reported by Philip. Supervisor Cook and Supervisor McKay fielded most of the questions, with some input as well from Supervisor Gross.

Some meeting highlights:

- Supervisor Cook estimated the crowd at over 300.
- Measured by number of speakers and applause, the audience was heavily in favor of retaining the lake.
- Supervisor Cook made the encouraging statement, "I don't think making money is really the goal" of Lake Accotink Park.
- Supervisor Cook observed that without the dam, Fairfax County would likely be obligated to collect an equivalent amount of sediment at twice the cost.
- Supervisor McKay noted that Lake Accotink has received more commentary and more review than any project in recent Park Authority history.
- Both Supervisor Cook and Supervisor McKay were quick to give their thumbs down to a possible special tax district to support Lake Accotink
- Su Jewell spoke on the environmental benefits of stream reconnection
- Kris spoke and lamented the difficulty of letting beavers solve the sediment problem. He urged all to "Get involved and stay involved".
- Recommendations from the Park Authority are expected in early fall.

Supervisor Cook plans to present the Save Lake Accotink petition signatures to the June 19 Board of Supervisors meeting. Philip suggested anyone who would like to show support plan now to be there with a Save Lake Accotink t-shirt or sign.

Philip passed on the information that Glenda Booth, of Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, had let us know she drafted comments on the lake for Audubon. [TEXT](#) She also spoke to Supervisor McKay, who told her, "We will save Lake Accotink."

Kris and Philip attended a Save Lake Accotink meeting yesterday. The main points were:

- Save Lake Accotink's observation is that events are coasting toward approval of the full lake with forebay option.
- There was discussion of a fishway to provide some of the benefits of stream reconnection
- A tour of the hollow interior of the dam might offer fishway ideas
- Save Lake Accotink may have a marina cleanup on May 28, Memorial Day, along with presentation of their petition to Supervisor Cook.
- There is some possibility of a Save Lake Accotink entry in the Cardboard Boat Regatta June 3rd.

Philip wondered if we should change from our neutral position on the dam to favoring the dam with forebay, not as the best solution, but as the least bad option at present. He reasoned the sediment it provides would not benefit the creek. Philip presented a draft of comments to the Park Authority and supervisors setting out the new position. After brief discussion, the change of position and comment were approved without objection. [TEXT](#)

Philip also offered a draft of a letter to the editor of the Fairfax Times on the topic of the future of the lake. After some edits, the draft was approved without objection. [TEXT](#)

- Represent FACC:

- Teen Job Fairs 3/10 & 4/28

Sandy reported the job fair at West Springfield High School was packed, with the displays dominated by pool companies. There were a few non-profits, one offering \$350 per week and others unpaid service opportunities. Sandy observed the paying non-profit benefitted from corporate sponsorship. Discussion centered on the need to find funding and structure for an Accotink Gorge summer jobs program.

- NVCC Green Festival 4/25 & 4/26

Kris remarked that the festival was not so well attended as in past years. He was pleased that the tray of invasive plant species we displayed received a fair amount of attention and added to the mix of people whose attention we draw.

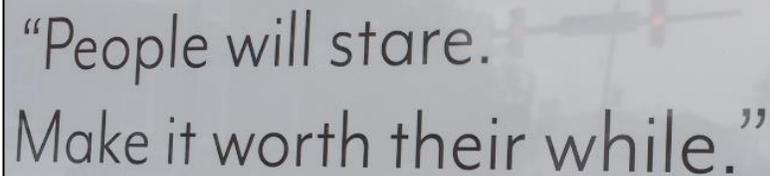
- Trash Action Work Force:

Kris advised the May 5th [Trash Day of Action](#) was successful. About 10 people marched at the International Bottled Water Association, King Street Metro, and the National Association of Convenience Stores, before marching down King Street to the riverside plaza at the Torpedo Factory.

Kris provoked much mirth when he noted that a Facebook search for “International Bottle Water Association” turns up only Trash Day of Action postings.

IBWA was aware of our scheduled protest and declined an invitation to a Friends of Little Hunting Creek cleanup, Kris reported. Kris offered the thought of recycling the IBWA in effigy next time.

Kris remarked on the motivation the marchers drew from a sign spotted along their way:



“People will stare.
Make it worth their while.”

- Donation.:

Philip advised we received a donation of \$100.00 from Mary Donovan \$20.00 from Kelly Feight, both much appreciated.

- The Nature Conservancy:

Philip inquired what is the status of our contact with The Nature Conservancy from earlier this year. They may have interest in the Accotink Gorge. Kris will get back in touch.

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay:

Philip mentioned seeing in the newsletter of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay that the Alliance was collaborating with the Reedy Creek Coalition in Richmond, involving a watershed much like our own. They responded positively when he contacted them about possibly doing something similar. It seems their main thing in Richmond is called RiverWise Assessment, training volunteers to educate, evaluate, and implement private property watershed projects. Of course, we would find it challenging to find such volunteers, but perhaps something could be done. The Alliance is the same organization that provides financial support for our spring cleanups. Philip will stay in touch and see what happens.

Philip remarked the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program is something similar and needs to be better known. There was discussion of VCAP funding availability and adequacy.

- *M.O.M.S.:*

Philip related we had a tabl at the April 22 M.O.M.s “Save the Dandelions” environmental event, but they had never gotten back to us with a date for staff volunteering.

- *Frontier Drive Extension:*

Philip shared his notes on Supervisor McKay’s public meeting May 8th on the Frontier Drive extension. If funding is available soon, we can expect a design public meeting late this year, followed by construction by early 2022 and completion in 2024. By July we should know if the Regional Transportation authority has funded the project. TSA will be moving into this location in 2020, but the project was planned long before that was known. Philip observed the irony of putting in a 4-lane road for the stated goal of improving Metro access. There was discussion of when the project might be funded, given the recent legislative diversion of some Virginia transportation funding to Metro.

- *Potomac Watershed Cleanup:*

Phillip announced have completed the spring cleanups at our 12 adopted sites, with 316 volunteers who removed 313 bags of trash. We will have one last cleanup May 19th on Flag Run at the request of Asian American LEAD and that will overlap with our stream monitoring on Flag Run the same day.

The strangest thing found was a working electric grill which a volunteer took home. We also found three nice backpacks at three different locations which we donated to Dave’s church on the day they did their own cleanup.



- *Transportation Plan:*

Flint indicated he had attended the recent public meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, but did not speak given that there were already 300+ speakers ahead of him. Flint described most of the speakers as bike and transit advocates. Philip added that the Coalition for Smarter Growth has circulated a draft letter of comments, which, to our dismay, endorses the Frontier Drive extension.

- *Audrey Moore RecCenter:*

Philip relayed information on a county report which recommends Audrey Moore RECenter be demolished and replaced. There should be no watershed implications, or perhaps improvements as modern stormwater controls are incorporated. The Park Authority will hold a public meeting to present the results of the study on June 5th.

<http://annandaleva.blogspot.com/2018/05/report-recommends-audrey-moore-recenter.html>

- *Flag Run Restoration:*

In advance of the restoration Philip will be having a stream monitoring session May 19. A plant rescue is also planned on a date to be determined.

- *4104 Woodlark Drive:*

The developer has appealed to the Board of Supervisors and the issue will be on the agenda at the June 19 Board of Supervisors meeting, Philip let us know. Without objection, the group approved comments to be sent to all members of the Board of Supervisors. [TEXT](#)

- Fairfax Water:

Kris advised we will not apply for a Fairfax Water grant this cycle.

- West Springfield Elementary:

Kris met with a concerned neighbor and teacher interested in doing a cleanup in the adjacent park. Kris is planning a 4th grade watershed walk in June, possibly followed by a longer term Follow the Water program in fall. There was discussion of grant funding sources.

Dave mentioned he lives about ½ mile from the school and a restoration project was recently completed on the same tributary.

- Americana Northside Project:

On April 19th, the involved parties went to visit the site, Philip indicated. Although the grading done last year had held up well, a recent rainstorm opened up an ugly gully in the trail. VDOT will undertake interim measures to regrade the trail and direct the uphill street drainage away from it. FCDOT advises the permanent trail portion will likely take three years to get underway. FCDOT, VDOT and DPWES will coordinate on trail design to optimize stormwater control.

The parties will need to decide whether to proceed now or await FCDOT work on the trail and it's not quite certain where that decision was left.

- PEREC Migratory Fish Study:

Philip indicated this spring he has been accompanying the researchers from GMU's Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center in their studies of migratory fish in Pohick Creek and Accotink Creek. Shad and river herring numbers are low, and much lower in Accotink than Pohick. Low numbers are attributed to overfishing at sea, largely as bycatch. Spawning fish are not being observed more than six kilometers upstream on Accotink Creek. However, the park maintenance staff has reported that migrating shad gathered at the base of the dam up until about 20 years ago.

- Grace Presbyterian:

Dave announced his church, Grace Presbyterian, located adjacent to Brookfield Park, has received a \$1250 Audubon-at-Home faith community native plantings grant. The church is also considering applying for Virginia Conservation Assistance funding for one or more Filterra-type bioretention stormdrains.

- Drinking Water Forum:

Flints described his initial efforts to organize a local drinking water forum. All details are yet to be determined.
