



## 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 – November 20, 2018

Next Meeting: December 18, 2018 (Third Tuesday of each month)  
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

**SUPPORT/DONATE**  
*It's easy & free!*

-----  
**Present:**

Dave Lincoln, Flint Webb, Philip Latasa, Anastasios Galatis, Sandy Collins  
Ilona Futer - Special Guest – Save Blake Lane Park

### **Upcoming events**

· Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, December 8, 2018

### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

- [Blake Lane Park:](#)

Our guest described the current situation with Blake Lane Park. It seems two sites are under consideration for a new school for 800 student in the area, Blake Lane Park and an unspecified location near the intersection of Lee Hwy and Nutley Street (possibly [Walnut Hill Farm?](#)). The Blake Lane Park property was transferred from the school board to the Board of Supervisors in 2006 as part of a school funding arrangement. Sandy pointed out the site was originally intended as a school site that never came to be and has long been administered by the Park Authority. Flint observed that many parks are former school sites.

According to Ilona, the site may not be large enough to meet the typical standards for a school of this size, but the possibility of a vertical school has been mentioned.

Ilona mentioned the loss of the park would come on the heels of the loss of adjacent wooded areas along I-66 and could require stormwater control measures beyond those now being put in place for the I-66 project. Ilona also noted the lack of open space in the area and mentioned the extensive informal use of the playing fields, the presence of a dog park, and a recent Girl Scout butterfly meadow planting.

There was discussion of a general lack of open space and a consensus that the need for parks is the best argument for keeping the park. Flint framed the argument as being a case of needs having changed since the original land acquisition; that ensuing development has made a park in this location a necessity.

Fairfax County Public Schools has so far done little to formally begin the process of re-acquiring the site, so Ilona believes Save Blake Lane Park may be a few steps ahead.

There was discussion of the prospect of the Providence school board member running for supervisor next year, and the possible effect on the future of Blake Lane Park. The vice-chair of the Providence District Council is also a candidate for supervisor and Ilona will attend the Council's next meeting.

Save Blake Lane Park is planning to meet with Supervisor Smyth. So far, they have 616 signatures on their petition. Flint will also try to attend this meeting. He offered his rules for effective meetings with public officials:

1. Rendezvous at an outside location before proceeding to the official's office
2. Have a timekeeper and note keeper designated beforehand
3. Always lead with a 'thank you' for some action by the official (beyond just meeting you)
4. Ask how much time the official has.
5. The timekeeper should announce when time is nearly up. (At which point it may be hoped the official will continue on.)

• Represent FACC:

○ *Accotink Bay Walk & Paddle Oct. 30, 2018*

Philip relayed Beverley's report from this event, which was a pilot to test the option of having potentially four or so similar events a year seasonally rather than an actual physical trail through the Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge as part of the Potomac Heritage Trail System. The person who conducted the guided tour was the fisheries and wildlife person for Fort Belvoir. He has no intentions of paving anything, and he was not at all happy about being on the receiving end of Fairfax County's trash. It was all very positive and we made some good connections. Dave will follow up on strengthening those connections.

○ *Mount Vernon Environmental Fair Nov. 10, 2018*

Dave staffed a table for FACC at this event. We shared the table with Friends of Little Hunting Creek, who were unable to attend. There were about 30 tables and about 300 attendees. Dave reported a good conversation with Supervisor Storck in which the Nestle Waters plant in Lorton was a topic, along with trash issues.

Philip added we got a mention in the [Mount Vernon Gazette](#), along with a picture of one of our plastic protest puppets.



- *Plastic Free Challenge Nov. 27, 2018*  
Philip enquired if anyone would care to attend the Plastic Free Challenge gathering to build connections for our next action and for a [#PlasticFreeDMV](#). There were no takers.
- *General Assembly Preview Dec. 1, 2018*  
Philip enquired if anyone would care to attend this [annual Virginia Conservation Network event](#). The main event is in Richmond but there are remote video links, including in Reston. Sandy may be available.
- *Community Foundation for Northern Virginia Dec. 4, 2018*  
Philip enquired if anyone would care to attend. This group has begun offering environmental grants in addition to community service grants, so could be a useful connection. Flint may be available.
- *EQAC Public Hearing Jan. 9, 2019*  
Philip recalled we discussed this at our last meeting and left it up to individuals to speak or submit suggestions. In any case it is an annual county environmental event where it is good to be heard.
- *Conservation Lobby Day Jan. 30, 2019*  
Philip mentioned the Virginia Conservation Network's annual Conservation Lobby Day is approaching.

- ***[Trash Action Work Force:](#)***

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, a dogged band of protesters marched in front of the Nestlé USA headquarters in Rosslyn with signs, props, and chants to call attention to Nestlé's contribution to plastic trash in our waters. We left a letter explaining our concerns with a representative at the front entrance and have been invited to meet with them at a time yet to be settled on.

Clean Fairfax Council is pushing for a plastic bag bill in the 2019 General Assembly. The effort has its own [Litter Free Virginia](#) website. People are encouraged to photograph trash and share locations with the hashtag [#LitterFreeVa](#)

The Potomac Riverkeepers have expressed interest in the route of legal action to force action on trash entering the Potomac. They noted their disappointment in the lack of action by both the county and environmental groups that do not push hard enough. We shall have to keep in touch.

- ***[INOVA Project:](#)***

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Kris visited the INOVA campus construction area and witnessed an unidentified discharge of black water. Using our [Watershed 911](#) page, he reported the incident and the Fairfax County Fire Department responded within the hour. Unfortunately, the discharge had stopped by the time they arrived and it remains a mystery.

However, Kris also found a number of erosion and sediment control failures which he also reported. County Land Use Services responded and issued the typical less-than-impressive orders for the contractor to begin doing what they were legally required to have been doing all along – no penalties. This was reported in the [Annandale Blog](#) with much community comment, prompting the County to issue a [rebuttal in the Blog](#). All this was on the Holmes Run side of the INOVA site.

Kris' INOVA erosion & sediment photos: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)

Flint discussed ongoing considerations of environmental and traffic conditions in meetings of the INOVA Task Force, projecting results with and without the INOVA project. He expressed some task force dissatisfaction with county staff support, specifying stream impact data not received.

• *I-66 Project:*

The tree clearing continues, mostly focused on the 123 cloverleaf. It had seemed that the areas around the tributaries in the cloverleaf were being spared, but this is clearly not the case. Although the larger tributary has fencing and signs designating it as protected wetlands, the clearing is nearly to the banks in many areas. The smaller tributary has no protections other than silt fencing and has been completely cleared. Philip is still awaiting a meeting to discuss stream protections with VDOT. He has been given a date of December 7<sup>th</sup>, but no time or place yet.

Flint shared the startling news of a proposed change to the Nutley Street cloverleaf involving a traffic circle at each end of the overpass. Brilliant innovation, or design nightmare? There is no info yet on the [project website](#).

• *Chesapeake Stewards:*

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation 's first [Chesapeake Stewards training course](#) in Northern Virginia will be beginning November 27<sup>th</sup>. Philip has enrolled

• *Alban Maintenance Yard:*

On November 10<sup>th</sup> volunteers planted a pollinator meadow at the Alban Maintenance Facility in Springfield. Most of the one-acre site was mechanically seeded, but volunteers added another 700 plants and trees. Volunteers came from Department of Vehicular Services, George Mason University's Engineers for International Development, and Stormwater Planning.

Following the planting, a small group of the volunteers made an excursion to the nearby Accotink Gorge but found the going was tougher than ever, due to the advancing Chinese wisteria vines.

• *Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:*

The Park Authority presented an update on the Master Plan at last month's meeting of the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association.

According to the update:

- WSSI has been contracted to look at the alternatives again, study to be completed this year.
- For some reason Option F, for a smaller lake is also being considered, but contemplating a larger smaller lake.
- The project will be added to the 5-year capital improvement plan in spring 2019.
- Briefings for the Park Authority Board, Board of Supervisors, and the public in will happen in early 2019.
- The Board of Supervisors must decide on a bond issue or Virginia Water Quality Improvement grant. There is some suggestion the bond may not be on the ballot until 2020.
- The rest of the Master Plan is on hold for about a year.

There is some vague idea of the fish ladder floating around in the Park Authority and DPWES, but nothing solid. Baring some brilliant ideas, the new trail flyway opportunity will get away from us. There was discussion of which fish species, migratory and resident, might benefit from a fish passage. Philip

mentioned the possibility that juvenile eels can slither past the dam now, but this has not been documented.

Braddock District Supervisor Cook has announced he will not seek reelection. It's hard to say how loss of his advocacy will affect the lake, but the lake could likely become an election issue.

- Park Friends Groups:

The issue of parks friends groups has returned. The new coordinator sent out messages advising that she will be getting in touch with each group and seeking to get Memorandums of Understanding signed. There was discussion of the requirement for insurance as an obstacle to entering a memorandum.

- Follow the Water:

- Fairhill Elementary

Stormwater Planning Division will fund a planting program at Fairhill Elementary next spring.

The Fairhill administration and PTA are on board with the program. We will likely find a role for Kris and the Follow the Water program.

- Parkway Planning Study:

Fairfax County Department of Transportation is studying changes to the Fairfax County Parkway and Franconia -Springfield Parkway. These parkways cross our watershed from Route 1 in the east to Rolling Road in the west. Apparently we missed a series of public meetings in October, but there is an [online survey](#) for citizens to provide input.

- Huntley Meadow Trail Removal:

The Planning Commission is considering a plan amendment to remove two paved trails planned to cross Huntley Meadows Park. There was consensus to send a comment in support of the Friends of Huntley Meadows. Philip will send.

- CCT Paving:

In contrast to Huntley Meadows, where paving is being taken off the plans, the Park Authority will begin construction to pave Cross County Trail between King Arthur Road and Woodburn Road in Annandale this month. The project is expected to be completed in May 2019. The cost is \$412,700, from park bonds.

- Woodson Reserve/Kena Temple:

Woodson Reserve is the new name of the former Kena Temple site. Work has begun on 22 lots selling from \$1.2 million. Kris visited the site on October 28 and witnessed strange bubbling in a puddle in the woods near the site. It did not look natural, but neither did anyone follow up.

[Photos & video](#)

The developer is also in the process of clearing a trail through the woods to connect to the Cross County Trail.



Woodson Reserve Layout

- [Americana Drive Cleanup:](#)

We received late word yesterday that neighbors are making early plans to organize a cleanup of the dumping sites along Americana Drive. It's a thing we certainly want to facilitate.

- [Braddock Road Project:](#)

Also at the October Ravensworth Farm Civic Association meeting we learned the Braddock Road project is not on hold due to funding changes. The project is still funded. Work will start in 2021 and be completed by 2025.

- [Gallows Road Retirement Development:](#)

Neighbors in opposition have been conducting a series of meetings with anyone and everyone who might affect the outcome. The principle thrust is that this proposal is the same one that was rejected last year, but now in the guise of a senior living community, which gives it some advantages and allowances. The Raintree townhouses downhill from the area are already experiencing regular parking lot flooding, which may increase the stormwater control requirements of the proposal. The next meeting is the Mason District Land Use Committee, 11/27, at Mason Government Center. The Planning commission considers the case 12/6.

- [8800 Richmond Highway:](#)

"Dead for now" is how Flint described the status of the project. In the face of much opposition, the applicant has deferred their request for a Comprehensive Plan amendment. Flint has mentioned the case to Providence Supervisor Lynda Smyth, who commented 'I was raised in Saint Louis and know not to build in floodplains'. Dave quipped about the project, if built, becoming the "Venice of Fairfax County"



- [Long Branch Falls Park Stream Restoration:](#)

The Long Branch Falls Park stream restoration is complete. The project manager would like to have a walk-through for the community on Dec. 1 at 1:00pm..

- [Thaiss Park Project:](#)

The City of Fairfax is planning to work on the ballfields in Thais Park. Philip has suggested they try to incorporate stormwater improvements, including looking at the slope below The Enclave.

- [Giles Run:](#)

We sent some letters of support in the past for the Mason Neck Citizens' Association trying to get action against the many stream protection violations by a junkyard on Giles Run. Many administrative actions by the county have lead to only partial compliance, so the county has filed suit asking for compliance and significant civil penalties. [Text of court filing](#)

- [Donations:](#)

We received a \$6.29 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation, \$9.72 from GoodShop, and a PayPal donation of \$70.00 USD from Adam Hatchl.

- [Phishing in Accotink Creek:](#)

A search on Bing for "Friends of Accotink Creek" includes results for sites that appear to be phishing scam sites. A complaint to Bing basically got the response 'Not our problem'. This does not seem to happen when searching on Google.

[Friends of Accotink Creek Home Page - hack.gr](#)  
[www.hack.gr/bu-tic.ru](http://www.hack.gr/bu-tic.ru)  
[Friends of Accotink Creek Home Page - mindfulnesscalgary.ca](#)  
[www.mindfulnesscalgary.ca/www.hesslawns.com/cgi-bin/uno?page=c...](http://www.mindfulnesscalgary.ca/www.hesslawns.com/cgi-bin/uno?page=c...)



- FACC Elections:

Our elections for Primary Conservator, Secondary Conservator, and Chronicler will be at our December meeting. For the record, the Board of Conservators is officially denying all rumors of voter suppression and closed polling stations. To ensure accuracy, we will be bringing in the Florida Election Commission to do the ballot counting.

[NOTE TO FUTURE: This is a tongue-in-cheek reference to recent elections much in the news.]

---

