



## 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 – December 18, 2018

Next Meeting: January 15, 2019 (Third Tuesday of each month)  
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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#### **Present:**

Dave Lincoln, Anastasios Galatis, Sandy Collins, Kim Schauer, Beverley Rivera, Tony Vellucci, Sue Kovach-Schuman, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang (by conference call)

Erica Yalowitz – Special Guest – [Candidate for Providence District Supervisor](#)

#### **Upcoming events**

- Dyke March Vernal Pool Program, March 3, 2019
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, March 9, 2019
- Fairhill Elementary 3R Planting, April 30, 2019

#### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

##### • In Memoriam Audrey Moore:

Audrey Moore, for whom the rec-center where we meet is named, passed away December 12. Audrey Moore was a Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors who made significant changes toward more environmentally sensitive policies.

By email, Kris commented he was very moved that Audrey Moore knew who were and apparently liked what we're doing and that it would be meaningful for FACC to be at her memorial service.

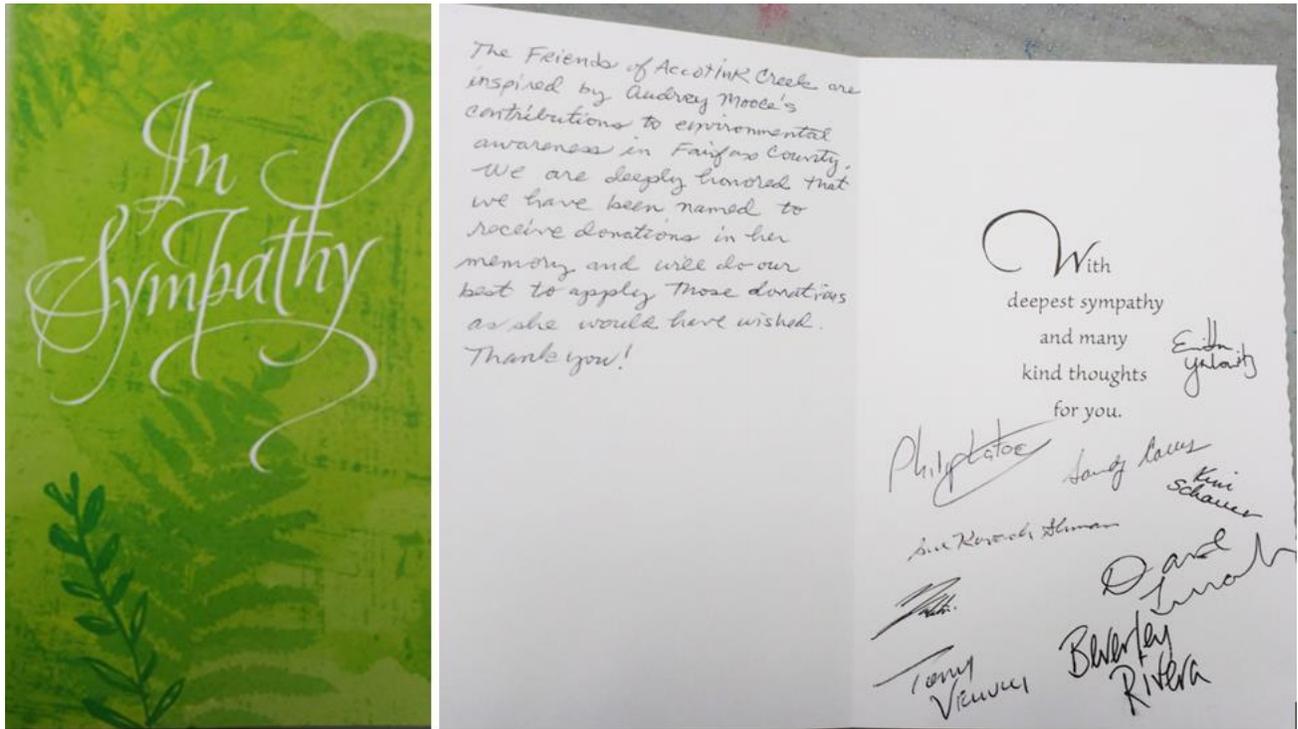


**Our holiday wreath of invasive Oriental Bittersweet and Japanese Honeysuckle**

"A Celebration of Life gathering will be held at Demaine Funeral Home, 5308 Backlick Road, Springfield, on Dec. 22, where the family will receive friends 5-8 p.m. Sandy & Sue can attend.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested contributions in her memory be made to Friends of Accotink Creek. We have so far received two such donations, one of \$30.00 from Edward Robichaud, and one of \$100.00 from her sister, Claire Taylor.

More about Audrey Moore in [Annandale Blog](#) and [Washington Post](#)



Sue brought a sympathy card tonight that all of us signed.

• TMDL Salt Management Strategy:

Dave described the ongoing TMDL salt management process, pointing out it is expected to be a two-year timeline and is looking for outside the box solutions. Meetings resume in April. Dave reminded us the Occoquan reservoir is approaching the point of exceeding acceptable chloride limits as a drinking water source.

Dave is coordinating with the National Home Owners Association to promulgate best management practices for winter road treatments. He mentioned brine as a lower-chloride alternative to rock salt.

There was discussion of getting best practice information onto the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations website.

• Represent FACC:

- General Assembly Preview Dec. 1, 2018

Sandy attended this event presented by the Virginia Conservation Network at the National Wildlife Federation in Reston. There were three areas of focus:

- Healthy Rivers – Coal ash
- Green communities – Transit and transit-oriented development
- Clean Energy – Solar and wind and regulation of small-scale generation

The Virginia Wildlife Corridor Safety Act was also promoted as a bill to require evaluation of the issue. A plastic bag bill was mentioned, but given little hope.

Fairfax County is pushing for regulatory change that will facilitate commercial solar generation on its properties. Sue noted that Dominion is asking for rate hikes to pay for its natural gas pipeline project.

- *Community Foundation of Northern Virginia Dec. 4, 2018*

The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia webinar on Thursday, January 10th is to learn about the 2019 grant process. Sandy and Julie may be able to attend.

- *Christmas Bird Count Dec. 30, 2018*

Philip let everyone know the annual [Christmas Bird Count](#) at Lake Accotink Park is December 30<sup>th</sup>.

- *EQAC Public Hearing Jan. 9, 2019*

The annual EQAC public hearing is January 9<sup>th</sup>. Submissions by video or in writing are accepted as well as in-person. It seems there is no initiative for FACC to comment as a group, so it is left to individual initiative of members.

- *Conservation Lobby Day Jan. 30, 2019*

Philip reminded us to keep the date in mind. Julie mentioned she had attended last year.

- *Vernal Pool Program Mar. 3, 2019*

We were invited to cosponsor a Friends of Dyke Marsh program on vernal pools and staff a half table. Sandy and Anastasios can attend.

- [Trash Action Work Force:](#)

Members of FACC and Friends of Little Hunting Creek met on December 17<sup>th</sup> with three Nestlé representatives at their Rosslyn headquarters. Our argument was essentially that all the good-intentioned Nestlé environmental initiatives don't get the trash out of our streams. The Nestlé people were cordial and sympathetic. They have been addressing plastic trash as an issue at their global level. Some interesting points they made were:

- Nestlé USA will no longer oppose bottle deposit bills.
- There is serious discussion within the IBWA of changing their position on bottle deposits.
- Recycle logos on all Nestlé packaging are being made much larger and more useful.

- [INOVA Project:](#)

Kris addressed the Merrifield Suburban Center Study Task Force December 11. He covered the erosion and sediment controls he had reported there and appealed to INOVA for an onsite meeting. See Kris' remarks [HERE](#).

Supervisor Smyth's office contacted Kris after that to arrange an onsite survey of the situation. Details will be worked out for early January.

Perhaps in partial response to the attention this issue has drawn, Land Development Services has posted [an article](#) describing the challenges in this year of record rainfall and included violation reporting information.

Erica expressed her concern at the documentation of erosion control failures. She noted at the same time the value of the research and health facility vs. environmental concerns.

Sue related that INOVA plans 31 acres (out of 117) of tree save on the site. She proposed donation of that area as parks to INOVA, but got no interest. If preserved, the wooded area would address a lack of open space in the neighborhood, as well as buffering 495 noise from the INOVA buildings.

- Mantua Turkey Trot:

Sue brought the welcome news that the annual Mantua Turkey Trot, with 900 participants this year, is going water bottle free. As a first step, bottles were reduced this year in favor of coolers and paper cups. Next year, no bottles!

- Deer Harvest:

We were contacted by a hunter seeking properties where he would be welcome to hunt deer. He described himself as an ethical conservationist wanting to provide his family and the property owner with true organic free range meat. If we know of anyone interested, we have his contact information.



- I-66 Project:

On December 7<sup>th</sup> Kris, Sandy, and Philip met with representatives of VDOT and the construction company, FAM. Senator Dave Marsden was also there and Delegate Kaye Kory attended by conference call. We explained the Friends of Accotink Creek are concerned with such issues as:

- Loss of habitat
- Introduction of invasive species
- Construction sediment entering streams
- Loss of fish populations in streams within the project.
- Perpetuation of existing inadequate stormwater controls

We presented photos illustrating the clearance of nearly all vegetative cover down to the banks of the tributary that flows in the 123 cloverleaf and unstable condition of some channels. Photos [HERE](#)

We reminded VDOT the wetland at Willow Crescent Drive needs to be preserved. This wetland is reminiscent of the natural spring at the edge of the 495 Express Lanes project that was first protected, then devastated.

Conclusions reached at the meeting were:

- We will meet in April to review and inspect the project.
- The project partners will examine possibilities for:
  - Protection of the remaining wooded area,
  - Conserving fish populations,
  - Accelerated revegetation along streams,
  - Daylighting Hunter Branch in the Nutley Street interchange

Philip inspected the 123 cloverleaf area again on December 16<sup>th</sup> after heavy rain overnight. Most sediment and erosion controls held up well, but there are a few problems, including soil piles left unprotected and silt fence down in several spots.

Philip advised he just learned today the I-66 project permit for wetland and stream impacts is currently advertised for public comment by DEQ until January 9<sup>th</sup>. Insultingly, the notice mentions several other streams, but not Accotink creek. [Public Notice](#) Sandy will draft comments for FACC.

- Chesapeake Stewards:

This was the first time the Chesapeake Bay Foundation held a Chesapeake Stewards session in Northern Virginia. Philip attended and observed the topics are largely an examination of watershed issues we

would already be aware of. The goal seems left open to the participants, although we are urged to support the Foundation's lobbying campaigns in Richmond.

One bit of information from the program is that the Master Naturalists have a Watershed Steward certification for those who have already become Master Naturalists, but this has seldom been offered.

• Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:

One of the Chesapeake Stewards presenters was Frank Graziano of WSSI. Since he is involved in the current reexamination of the lake issues, Philip discussed fish passage with him and he will bring it up at the next meeting.

Jim McGlone was another of the speakers and he confirmed anecdotally that shad migrated as far upstream as the dam when he was park manager.

Philip suggested we should prepare some specific proposals for the general master plan, such as:

- Rehabilitate vernal pools
- Rehabilitate the failing drains at our IMA site
- Reject all suggestions for additional trails, particularly a detour around the Danbury Forest Drive
- Making any new or reconstructed buildings into watershed friendly, carbon neutral showcases, perhaps taking the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's new headquarters as an example.
- And other ideas that others may come up with.

Tony advised that the park Authority is looking for yet another Master Plan manager. Philip conveyed the news that Josh Smith is the new manager for Lake Accotink Park.

• Blake Lane Park:

Last month we heard mention of a possible alternate school site off Lee Hwy. We've learned that site is also parkland. It is two parcels, totaling ten acres, one owned by the school board and one by the Board of Supervisors. The parcels are effectively part of Towers Park, south of Lee Hwy, just west of Nutley street. This leaves us with the dilemma of sacrificing one park or the other. In terms of road access, Blake Lane Park seems more practical from a school perspective.

Save Blake Lane Park reports that their meeting with Supervisor Smyth was quite discouraging.

Erica observed that the area around Blake Lane Park is higher density, with numerous condominium complexes and few alternatives for open space, as well as having traffic issues.

• Follow the Water:

- Fairhill Elementary

Stormwater Planning will bring their 3R Revitalize, Restore, Replant! program to Fairhill Elementary on April 30, putting in a pair of watershed friendly planting areas with student participation. There will be a planning walk-through on January 17 at 1030. Anyone would be welcome to join and help lead the students.

• Conservation Leadership Project:

Julie recapped the project Katie has undertaken with the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Her project involves removal of invasive species at Daniels Run Elementary School. Katie hopes to make the project long term, perhaps with support of the Park Authority IMA program. Julie is acting as Katie's mentor, a requirement of the program.

- *Americana Drive Cleanup:*

A slow-motion discussion of a cleanup of the dumping sites along Americana Drive is apparently proceeding on Nextdoor. There is a possible target date of Martin Luther King Day, January 21st.

- *Smithsonian Conservation Commons:*

Smithsonian Conservation Commons contacted Kris. They and Global Co Lab Network are designing a DMV area network of teen activists who want to “address environmental challenges and lead a global effort of teens”. What they expect our involvement to be remains to be seen.

- *Gallows Road Retirement Development:*

On November 27<sup>th</sup>, the Mason District Land Use committee [unanimously voted](#) to not recommend approval of the proposal to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission hearing originally scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup> was postponed to January 9<sup>th</sup>, supposedly for non-related reasons. The suggestion for FACC0020030 to testify or submit written comments got no takers.

- *Industrial General Permit and Construction General Permit:*

Kris forwarded a message from Virginia Conservation Network asking us to submit comments to DEQ by December 28<sup>th</sup> on the Industrial General Permit (IGP) and the Construction General Permit (CGP). Philip asked if anyone had any familiarity with these. Julie mentioned she had done some work with both of these on Fort Belvoir. Sandy explained these regulate stormwater discharge, with the CGP covering construction erosion and sediment controls, and IGP grouping industries by like activities. Sandy will submit comments.

- *4104 Woodlark Drive:*

The December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Protection Ordinance Exceptions Review Committee denied the application. This may not have been surprising, since the applicant’s changes in response to the Committee’s earlier comments actually increased the intrusion into the RPA. The applicant’s options are to return yet again with a smaller design or to appeal to the Board of Supervisors. We should send comments to the Accotink supervisors.

- *Long Branch Falls Park Stream Restoration:*

Philip advised the restoration project is complete and looks much like other restorations. Stormwater Planning led a community tour December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

- *Crook Branch Stream Restoration:*

Sue described the status of the project. Residents documented in a video the effect of Saturday's heavy rainfall, giving it to the County. Some yards have experienced 6 – 8 feet of recent streambank collapse. Residents are confused about some design elements, including “pools” alongside the stream. Another 3 years are likely before completion. Another walk-through is planned in spring. The project going to go through to Prosperity Avenue in Phase 1. There was discussion of the challenges of obtaining all the needed private property easements.

- *Flag Run Stream Restoration:*

The final design plans for the Flag Run stream restoration have been posted for public comment. Comments are due by January 18<sup>th</sup>. The plans are posted [HERE](#).

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• Donations:

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay sent our stipend for our 2018 spring cleanups in the amount of \$688.00, much later than usual, and after we had forgotten it was due.

We also received other individual donations recently:

- \$50.00 USD from Suzy Foster
- \$50.00 USD from Matt Bright
- \$50.00 USD from Lisa Bright

• G3:

Kim brought to our attention the G3 ([Green Streets, Green Jobs, and Green Towns](#)) grant program of the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The focus is on green infrastructure such as stormwater, streams, and green space. Grants may be used on public or private property for concept through implementation. Amounts are \$15,000 to \$100,000. Kim suggested possible use for school projects. Philip pondered if these grants might be used for the trail repair and planting of the Americana North concept. There was discussion of the program's mention of "vacant urban lots", touching on Woodlark Drive and 8800 Richmond Hwy.

• FACC Elections:

We conducted elections for FACC officers. With only one candidate for each office, the voting involved no late night nail biters or recounts.

Chosen without objection and by acclamation were:

- Primary Conservator – Sandy Collins
- Secondary Conservator – Dave Lincoln (reelected)
- Chronicler – Philip Latasa (reelected)



The term of office for each will be January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2020.

Philip let us know that our outgoing Primary Conservator, Kris Unger, is planning to apply for the position of Northern Virginia Conservation Advocate for Audubon Naturalist Society. We wish Kris luck.

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