



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 21, 2019

Next Meeting: June 18, 2019 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang (via conference call), Kris Unger, Katie Lau

Upcoming events

- Chairman Candidate Forum June 6, 2019
- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park June 8, 2019

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Represent FACC:

- Save Blake Lane Park Apr. 27, 2019

Philip noted most, or perhaps all, of the Providence Supervisor candidates were at the Blake Lane Park awareness event, as well as some school board candidates. Attendance appeared to be in the hundreds, perhaps thousands.

Given the display of support, Philip surmised Blake Lane Park is secure, but Towers Park may now be targeted.

- City Nature Challenge Apr. 27, 2019

Kris indicated there were 7 – 8 participants who hiked from the Lake Accotink Park lower parking lot, along the stream, to the vernal pools, and the eagle nest.

- Mantua Outdoors Day Apr. 30, 2019

Kris gave a talk with slideshow regarding FACC and watershed issues, while Philip staffed a table for FACC.

- Mason Eagle Festival May 16, 2019

Sandy was there with a table for FACC, observed lots of attendee traffic, and noted the many 'horse people' among the crowd. Sandy felt this was worth doing again next year. There was a discussion of the value of tabling at events in general and what we hope to achieve.



- TMDL:

- *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant*

Kris explained FACC is a partner, along with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions on this grant application submitted by the Clean Water Fund. The grant proposes an 'Accotink Watershed Salt and Sediment Outreach Project' to increase public awareness of watershed issues in the Accotink Creek watershed. Kris expressed appreciation for strong letters of support from Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District. [Application Text](#)

In response to Philip's observation that watershed issues are new to the Faith Alliance, Kris quipped, "Yes, we are dragging them into our swamp'.

- *Fairfax Water Grant*

Using the concept of the NFWF grant application, Kris has also submitted a smaller scale application to Fairfax Water, focused on three schools.

Kris pondered the value of the PCB studies done for the current TMDL, given the limitations of very small sample size and narrow range of species. Philip mentioned that there is a [PCB impairment listing](#) for the lake, pending TMDL development.

- Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:

Philip explained Supervisor Cook's recent newsletter advised the Board of Supervisors passed its Budget Mark Up on April 30th, including Lake Accotink dredging in the Capital Improvement Program. The County Executive will return to the Board this fall with funding options to be voted on this year. It appears, then, that full-lake dredging is still the plan.

Philip also mentioned eDNA testing for migratory fish is underway and we should have some results soon.

- Conservation Leadership Project:

Katie reported she had a display table with poster board and pots of invasive species at the Earth Day event held by Fairfax City Parks adjacent to her project site. She reported good crowds, with several Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops attending. During the event, volunteers from among the attendees planted several native viburnum shrubs and river birch seedlings in the area cleared of invasives. Katie will be checking on the health of these plantings.

Philip described discussions during the event with a neighbor appalled by the abundance of invasives along the nearby streambank and interested in organizing volunteer removal efforts. There is some hope he may be persuaded to continue in Katie's project area. Philip followed up with the neighbor by email, but nothing concrete has developed.

Katie advised she will deliver a report to the Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Committee by June 5th and will share it with us.

- [4104 Woodlark Drive:](#)

We've received word that the applicant has filed suit against Fairfax County and the individual members of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exceptions Review Committee, asking \$1.2 million in damages. Sandy opined that the County would have anticipated this outcome.

- [Lawsuit Court Filing](#)

Philip queried whether we should we address the court, perhaps by involving the assistance of other environmental legal parties, such as Potomac Riverkeepers or Southern Environmental Law Center? He recalled we were in touch with the SELC over the Clean Water Rule. Discussion reached no conclusion.

- Vernal Pools:

- [Lake Accotink Park Sediment](#)

Kris let us know he is awaiting word from Suzy and the landowner regarding any repair plans.

Kris may remind the landowner.

- INOVA/Fairview Park:

- *EQAC April agenda*

Kris heard second-hand that Land Development Services gave their accustomed defensive version of events regarding the [sediment spill](#). Kris' information was also that Land Development Services indicated a need to increase stormwater control requirements from a 1" ran event to 2".

- *Nature Walk*

INOVA has postponed the proposed nature walk to sometime after Memorial Day. Kris has been in touch with the environmental person at [MedStar Harbor Hospital](#), who is interested in supporting similar efforts and meeting INOVA.

Kris stated he is close to launch attempt for a Friends of Holmes Run.

- Fairfax Healthy Communities Coalition:

- *Cable TV debate*

Kris attended and shared his impressions of the debate. [Debate Video](#)



Board Chairman Candidates Debate

- Elections:

- *350 Fairfax Forums*

The May 2nd supervisor candidates forum was for candidates from north county districts. [Video](#)
Kris is still working on posting the video from the May 9th forum for south county candidates.
Kris will coordinate with 350 Fairfax on plans for video of the June 6th chairman candidates forum.

- 495 Express Lanes/I-66 Tour:

Kris summarized the 495 walk with Senator Marsden. Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling and Audubon Naturalist Society also participated. Some of the replanted trees appeared to be impaired by salt runoff. There was no visit to the natural spring.

The group discussed the proposed meadow and trail upgrade in the Americana north staging area.

- George Snyder Trail:

Philip lamented this project in Fairfax City that proposes putting a paved trail through the woods along the Accotink Creek North Branch from Ranger Road Park to Chain Bridge Road. He noted alternative parallel routes are available on existing paved streets. Funding is being provided by I-66 mitigation funds, 'mitigating' the loss of trees along I-66 by replacing even more trees with asphalt. Kris suggested FACC could send a statement of concern.

- Follow the Water:

- *Fairhill Elementary*

Kris indicated he provided a Life in the Soil learning experience during the planting of the storm drain garden by DPWES on April 30th.

- *Canterbury Woods Elementary*

Kris will be leading Follow the Water sessions May 28th for two classes, including stream monitoring.

- Friends of Parks:

- *Insurance*

Kris passed on the information that Beverley is still awaiting a response from the insurance agency.

- Accotink Creek @ Wakefield Park Restoration:

Philip described how this project is an innovative technique, at least for this area, so will be monitored more than other restorations. There will be five-year monitoring cross sections every 25 feet, checked annually, also groundwater wells to see if the aquifer rises. Invasives control will extend 25 feet beyond the limit of disturbance. Shared use of the Cross County Trail and also use of the streambed for equipment access will somewhat reduce tree loss. A sanitary sewer crosses the creek at the lowest weir and needs work anyway. Work will be coordinated and combined.

At a meeting on this project, we learned that the nearby Turkey Run dam suffered a collapse some months ago. It was not catastrophic, but the lake was drained for safety. Repairs are under consideration. Land Development Services is involved. There are questions of what permits and standards apply.

- *Truro Restoration Planting:*

Philip advised DPWES is considering a planting event in the end of June in the Truro neighborhood to supplement planting by the restoration contractor.

- *Potomac Watershed Cleanup:*

Philip reported this year's Potomac Watershed Cleanup only yielded 186 volunteers, well below the 300-some we usually see in spring. We removed 208 bags and 10 tires. A plastic pickle was perhaps the most bizarre thing we found.

Philip reminded us the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay will not provide its usual cleanup stipend this year, eliminating one source of income.

There was discussion of the low volunteer turnout. Kris brought up the feasibility of corporate sponsorship of cleanups. Sandy opined it was worth a try. Kris will combine this idea with the fundraising letter he is working on.

- *New School Monitoring Grant:*

Philip informed us we were contacted by the New School, which plans to undertake stream monitoring on Accotink Creek at Thaiss Park, adjacent to their school. They asked for a letter in support of their grant application for equipment, which we provided.

- *Donations:*

Philip outlined recent donations:

- ✓ \$20.00 from our friends Mimi & Will Friedman
- ✓ A late donation of \$40 from the Facebook Fundraiser we discussed back in February.
- ✓ A \$6.33 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile activity between January 1 and March 31, 2019.

- *Ancestral Knowledge:*

Philip advised we were contacted by [Ancestral Knowledge](#) which offers outdoor survival skills training, including for homeschoolers at Lake Accotink. They suggested we should connect and see if we can work together. Philip recalled meeting some of these homeschoolers once, when they borrowed his knife to clean a dead fish they'd found before grilling it.

- *Asad Rouhi Retirement:*

Philip learned that Asad Rouhi, Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District's Urban Conservation Engineer will be retiring from the agency on July 31st after 20 years. Philip will check on what plans NVSWCD may have.

- *Boardlink:*

Philip let us know he inquired about Volunteer Fairfax's [Boardlink](#) program, to provide non-profits with experienced board members. To participate we would need insurance and would have to increase our Volunteer Fairfax membership from \$75 to \$150 per year. Philip's hope was to bring on board a Mover and Shaker Rainmaker type.

There was discussion of ways of increasing participation in FACC and drawing in funding. Philip suggested relating this need to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, if received.