

I have always enjoyed working with Friends of Accotink Creek and felt that the work you did was incredible. So having worked with several "Friend's groups", I just wanted to share some thoughts and experiences with you.

First, the problems you are experiencing in both recruitment and involvement are nothing new. They are common to every Friends group which is why I tried to get the Braddock District Friends groups to talk with each other to realize that many share the same issues, and they could share successes / lessons learned. Many folks are busy, but they have an incredible amount of time to waste each day and weekend. It is frustrating. I found that by having a consistent schedule and a set time for participation, it helps somewhat, but not always. For example, I started Road Raiders in Kings Park West where neighbors go out every second Saturday of the month for 30 minutes to clean up common areas along the road way. Thirty minutes is nothing but still it's hard to get folks out there sometime.

Next, one person who is a leader with a passion can make an incredible difference. Look at what Glen Erickson-Bell was able to accomplish. But when he left, Friends of Oak Hill Park absolutely fell apart and imploded. I can't tell you how much time I spent trying to get someone to take the lead and capitalize on the momentum Glen had initiated in the community, but I was not successful. Glen was successful because he approached people and was not shy about asking them to get involved. Waiting for folks to come to you never works, no matter what the cause. You have to go out and actively recruit.

Next, if the community is really concerned about something, they will mobilize and quickly - witness the success of Save Lake Accotink (SLA). Problem is, once the issue is resolved, then the organization just withers unless there is a dynamic leader, as there is no longer a cause celebre and folks have other things they want to spend their time on. Oh the organization may continue for awhile, but it eventually dies, or gets merged into another organization.

Do what you can and realize that organizations sometimes take one step forward and two back we wish it was the other way around, but

Anyway, I truly appreciate the work FACC members did, and do. I hope you appreciated what I did, although I know you did not always agree with me. That was enough for me though - peer recognition that we made a difference, albeit, a minor one, but still a difference to make things better. I really enjoyed the Mussel Rescue parties

Best Regards -
Tony