



## 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 15, 2020

Next Meeting: January 19, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month)

---

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

#### **Present:**

Dave Lincoln, Julie Chang, Beverley Rivera, Philip Latasa, Avril Garland, Edward Lee – Welcome Edward!

#### **Upcoming events**

- Salt Management Strategy Public Meeting January 21, 2021
- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park March 13, 2021
- Anti-Wisteria Expedition April 5, 2021

# Peace AND Giving

## Read the 2020 Friends of Accotink Creek Newsletter

#### • [Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:](#)

On December 10<sup>th</sup> there was a [public meeting](#) on the status of the dredge. Planning and surveys are underway now, with dredging expected to start in early 2023 and end by late 2025. According to Philip, it seems all options have closed other than a pipeline to Braddock Road, the only questions being the precise routing and the location of the dewatering facility at the terminus.

Stormwater Planning has convened a smaller stakeholders group, including FACC, FLAP, Save Lake Accotink, and some civic associations. In the first such meeting, it seemed clear Howrey Field will not be an option since no one on the County side is willing to face the 'flag vs. forest' issues that were raised by [Howrey defenders](#) on our [Facebook](#) page. Howrey wasn't likely to qualify anyway, but Philip asked would anyone like to reach out to the defenders in search of common ground?



Flag vs. Forest – Not a fight anyone wants to pick



Philip offered one more alternative that we might appeal to have considered:

- A slower dredge could accomplish the same goal over a period of years, reducing truck traffic to tolerable levels. This would essentially mimic the biannual small dredges that are planned after the initial large dredge.

Philip suggested we should submit written comments following up on the meeting. He will prepare a draft.

On the topic of general Master Plan issues, Philip recalled how the November Green Breakfast [presentation](#) on Purple Martin and Chimney Swift houses had reminded him of an old interest in Swift houses. Philip contacted the presenter about putting together a brief proposal we could try to advance with the Master Plan. He declined, saying, quote, “*go to say a group like Friends of Accotink Creek for funding and putting together a corps of volunteers. As much stream cleanup and invasive removal as they do, this is a walk in the park so to speak as far as yearly manpower and maintenance requirements.*” His faith in us is touching. Beverley indicated she would think about taking on the responsibility, but it is a loooooong term commitment.

Discussion led Philip to mention the Chimney Swift colony at Luther Jackson Middle School, (in our watershed) inhabiting an actual old chimney. At dusk hundreds of Swifts can be seen circling like a small tornado as they enter the chimney.

On another general Master Plan meeting Philip pointed out an [Annandale Blog article](#) on an ongoing financial fiasco at White Garden Park in Falls Church. It is not our issue, but does prompt some thinking about how wisely park bond funds are being used. The problem boils down to much money spent, little accounting, and little progress toward original donation goals.

- **Donations:**

PayPal Giving Fund has sent us \$2.00, likely another checkoff by Sandy

Donations via PayPal:

\$25 from Friedrich Mack

\$25 from Mary Edwards

\$40 from Zachary McDonnell

\$100 from Philip’s brother

\$200 from Celeste Land

\$10 monthly from Patricia Franke – This is our first continuing donation.

The sign kiosk at Mockingbird Lane was vandalized once again, after being vandalized in March Philip replaced the broken acrylic for \$39.21 and said we may consider that a donation. Philip managed to put a crack in the acrylic during the operation, if anyone has advice on sealing it.

- [Annual Newsletter](#)

Julie described the Newsletter as a joint effort spearheaded by Beverley. A main difference from last year is the greater emphasis on pictures. Beverley pondered whether the newsletter should be made quarterly. In discussion of the idea, Dave suggested ad hoc production and Philip suggested additions or modifications to the monthly bulletin would work.

- **Insurance Renewal:**

Beverley sent a check for the insurance in July for \$1564.00. Philip pointed out that eats up just about half of the special Anonymous Secret Santa \$3000 insurance donation we received last December, giving us another year to renew before we face the challenge of paying the bill from other sources in 2022 . Beverley emphasized the importance of maintaining coverage, given the potential for something to happen.

- [Friends of Trees Award:](#)

Beverley described seeing the qualifications for this award and thinking ‘*This is what we do*’ - trying to stop the clearing of trees and our invasives work. She also observed that being able to mention we have received such awards is useful when seeking action from officialdom, especially in the case of her own endless complaints to the Park Authority. Philip noted we received a notice of congratulations from the Tree Commission, but no certificate or announcement on their [website](#) so far.

- [Bamboo Initiative:](#)

Avril recounted the December 4<sup>th</sup> Bamboo Initiative Zoom meeting with Supervisor Alcorn. The request was for regulations, but the County will only go so far as to form a ‘working group’ to provide recommendations for County action. One suggestion is a fund for homeowners to remove bamboo, particularly when multiple properties are affected. The working group will include County staff, nursery industry representatives, and interested citizens. Avril has applied for membership and urged others to do the same or at least remind their supervisors of the issue.

Avril also mentioned Delegate Bulova and Senator Marsden plan to introduce bills to fund a study of invasives in Virginia.

Philip expressed the hope to keep the Bamboo Initiative going and employ it as leverage for more attention by the County to other invasives and action on County properties.

- [I-66 Outside the Beltway:](#)

Philip described his observations of erosion and sediment controls on the I-66 along Saintsbury Drive west of Vienna Metro, where all the erosion gullies made it look like the Badlands of South Dakota. It was ugly enough to warrant a complaint to DEQ. [Complaint](#) [Photos](#) [Video](#)



Guessing game - Guess if each image is Badlands National Monument or the Badlands of I-66

- *Plastic Bag Ordinance:*

Philip advised the Friends of Little Hunting Creek have gotten in touch to ask our support for two County litter ordinances that follow Virginia legislation passed this year. One is the plastic bag tax and the other makes stores responsible for shopping carts. These were discussed, but not acted upon, at the last Board of Supervisors' meeting. We are being asked to make a presentation to the EQAC annual public meeting January 21<sup>st</sup>. This can be live or by recorded video.

Julie will work on the presentation with Friends of Little Hunting Creek, but may face work conflicts at the end of January. Philip suggested we add topics of our own, such as the Bamboo Initiative and invasives. Dave mentioned the Accotink Gorge as a topic.

- *TMDL:*

Dave advised the 200-page Salt Management Strategy Toolkit was approved at a December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. A public hearing will follow on January 21<sup>st</sup>, followed by a 30-day comment period. DEQ will coordinate comments with the stakeholders, then publish the Toolkit. Dave explained the Toolkit is not compulsory, but is primarily a set of tools oriented toward reducing salt use while saving money, incorporating a number of interesting ideas from jurisdictions to the north. Dave noted VDOT and local jurisdictions are already demonstrating a proactive approach, but it will be more challenging to convince private managers who "want to heat the salt crunch" to avoid lawsuits.

- *Accotink Gorge:*

Avril described our December 12<sup>th</sup> Anti-Wisteria Expedition as a well-organized success. We had 14 people join in. Avril mentioned the Hunter Mill Tree Commissioner was there, who played a leadership role in preventing a deceptive [retirement home application](#) from being approved. Philip noted our volunteers included a contingent from the Lewis High School Junior Class, returning after their less-than-perfect experience at the same spot during the fall stream cleanups. Avril suggested more delegating next time, such as one person responsible for photos and another for handling sign-ins. Philip lamented he had neglected to give the volunteers a talk on the unique nature of the Accotink Gorge and how it is harmed by the wisteria.

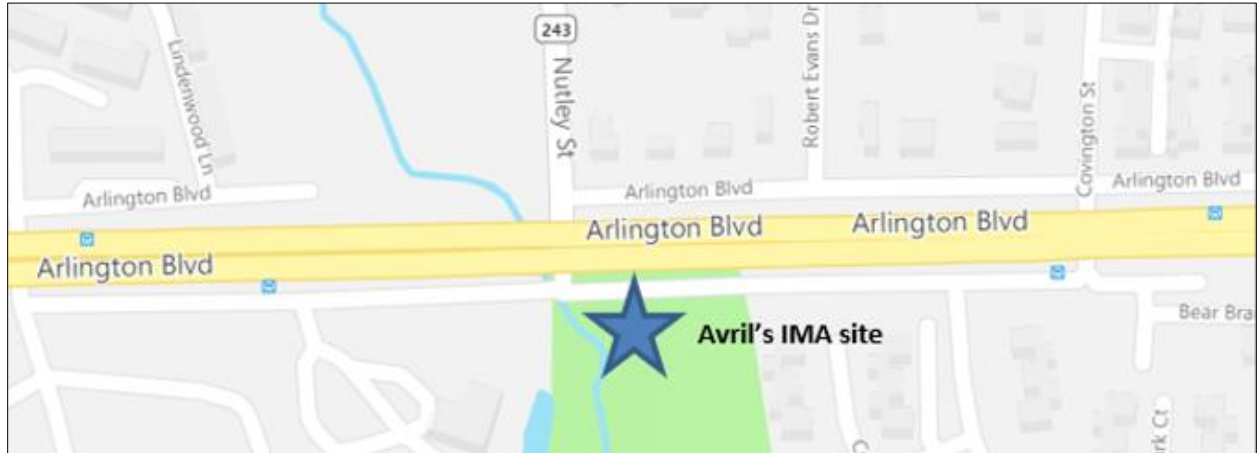
Avril suggested next time scheduling on a teacher workday would enable the Park Authority to provide herbicide support. We also discussed the possibility of getting Solitude Lake Management to again provide pro bono herbicide support, but would need to clear that with the Park Authority. There was consensus to schedule April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1-4 PM. Avril noted she contacted the Lutheran Church in Springfield this time, but they wanted three weeks' notice, which we should keep in mind next time. Avril will also work on getting a reporter next time.

Dave is going to follow up on another issue we saw – the winter salt carelessly stored in the open in the Boston Properties parking area. Philip pointed out the delicate line we need to tread between enforcement and the need to stay in the good graces of Boston Properties.

There's not much we can do now about the latest insult to the gorge – the 10-acre development on the opposite side, taking out trees and meadow habitat. Dave will try getting in touch with the owners regarding native planting, protecting the gorge, and possible support.

- **New IMA Site:**

Avril announced her new Invasive Management Area site along Hunter Branch at the south side of the intersection of Nutley Street and Route 50 is now official.



- **Whither FACC:**

- **FACC Elections**

By acclamation, Dave was elected to the position of Chronicler and Avril was elected to the position of Secondary Conservator.



A Braddock Beacon article mentioned that FLAP is seeking board candidates, specifically for President and Vice-President. Philip pondered what their difficulty means for their future or implies for ours.

Philip pointed out the [Washington Post](#) article about [Ward8Woods](#), a two-year-old group in Anacostia that has managed to get organized enough to find grant funding for full-time crews to remove trash and invasives. He asked "Why can't we be like that?". Julie quipped "Because we don't have 2-year-old members". Avril will check with Ward8Woods and see what their secret is. Dave mentioned two other watershed groups in the same area, [Anacostia Riverkeeper](#) and [Anacostia Watershed Society](#).

Philip opened a discussion of how we can make effective use of donors and members and the resources and skills they represent. The discussion included:

- Grants as the funding source of nonprofit staff employment
- Questions of whether our public presentation needs changes to enhance engagement
- The usefulness of appealing to varied interests
- Merits of a Facebook page vs. Facebook group (A group has no direction by administrators.)
- The question of how many attendees at our meetings is optimal
- Whether a few attendees who take action is better than many who sit on their hands
- Whether the purpose of our meetings is clear
- The value of assigning meeting attendees specific tasks each time
- The inspiring nature of group trips, and the merits of enjoying Richmond as a destination during lobbying outings

Edward and Julie will cooperate on examining means of more effective communication, including the possibility of opening an Instagram account.