



# 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 – January 19, 2021

Next Meeting: February 16, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice)

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

**Present:** Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa, Flint Webb, Avril Garland, Edward Lee, Kim Schauer, Beverly Rivera, Bryan Campbell, Dave Lincoln  
**Guests:** Mike Hayslett, Principal Consultant, Vernal Pools, LLC; Greg Crider, Friends of Dyke Marsh; All via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions

### **Upcoming events**

- Accotink Gorge invasives planning meeting (Avril, Philip & FCPA IMA Patricia Greenberg) February 3, 2021
- Long Branch central Project, February 11, 2021, Philip
- Mike Hayslett's site visit and review of Vernal Pools & Wetlands opportunities in FCPA land, March TBD, 202
- Audubon Naturalist Society's [Community Action 101 workshop](#) at NoVA Annandale Campus, May 14 (\$20 registration)

### **FACC Subjects Discussed –**

#### Represent FACC:

Fairfax County General Assembly Delegation Pre-2021 Session Public Hearing, January 9, 2021. Avril submitted testimony to the Fairfax County Delegation hearing, supporting positions of interest to FACC, particularly regarding the conservation of open space, and water quality funding.

Virginia Legislative Agenda: Avril pointed out that statements of support for a list of bills should be submitted very soon to be included as bills are considered in committees. Kim Schauer pointed out that the [Virginia Conservation Network's Bill Tracker](#) provides concise talking points in support of their positions on bills being considered by the VA Legislature. Avril took action to submit statements to the legislators in alignment with Virginia Conservation Network positions. Subsequently, Avril submitted written support for: HB 1902 Expanded Polystyrene (Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources); HJR 527 Invasives Study (Rules); and HB 2030 Neonicotinoid pesticides (Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources); HB2042 Tree Replacement; and HB1800 Item 377 #6h Research to Reduce Salt in Water Resources. (Note: Avril found that HB 1045 Tree Banking failed to pass committee, so it was not possible to comment.)

*EQAC Meeting.* Julie Chang provided a recorded testimony to the EQAC meeting on January 13. The YouTube video is at [this link](#). Julie's testimony included FACC's endorsement of the [video testimony by Betsy Martin](#), Friends of Little Hunting Creek. In addition to Betsy's issues regarding one-time use plastic and shopping cart, Julie emphasized FACC's interest in restoring endangered species and eliminating invasive species in the watershed.



Julie addresses the annual EQAC hearing

*Vernal Pools:* Philip introduced Mr. Mike Hayslett, [Virginia Vernal Pools LLC](#), and described his work identifying potential sites and managing projects throughout Virginia towards restoring vernal pools and wetland restoration. Mr. Hayslett has visited Fairfax County and consulted with FACC previously. Philip proposed that FACC fund Mike for a three-day visit this Spring to identify good sites for vernal pools and wetland restoration in the Accotink Watershed. Mike's typical fee is \$1200 for a three-day visit, staying in private homes of the local organizations. Under the current circumstances, Dave suggested increasing the budgeted amount to \$1500 to allow for a hotel stay, and the Board agreed to the proposal by consensus. Philip intends to pursue co-funding by Stormwater, NVSWCD, FLAP and FCPA: A discussion followed about points of contact, in FCPA's Natural Resources Department for possible grant opportunities, along with the Lake Accotink Manager.

Mike's process is to offer a "turnkey" approach, that could result in one or more "brick and mortar" projects to enhance or build features, which he is prepared to manage. Beverly introduced the idea of trying to develop an educational video along with the visit. Sandy asked about reporting: Mike will attempt to provide a somewhat formal report if time allows.

Locations discussed included the area Beverly has cleared of invasives near the Lack Accotink Marina. Beverly has made great progress there, and she has even persuaded the park to give up some mowed lawn in favor of native replanting. Much of the area was a wetland before the carousel and playground were installed decades ago and the soil is still often damp. With the invasive vines cleared away, wetland indicator plants are already reappearing. A wetland restoration seemed like a desirable component of the project. The Park Authority Invasive Management Area manager is on board, but we are just at the concept stage. Other potential areas are ephemeral pools along the CCT and on the west side of the lake and a site along Daniels Run.

*River Farm Appeal:* Mr. Greg Crider of Friends of Dyke Marsh and Friends of Little Hunting Creek, asked for FACC support for a project to save River Farm, a 25 acre property along the Potomac owned by the American Horticultural Society, which has put the property up for sale, hopefully to be preserved as wild space. NoVA Conservation Trust is trying to put together enough funding to buy it and is gathering support from interested partners. FACC will register as a partner, so that our name and logo can be used in appeals and correspondence.

*Watershed Disasters:*

*Oil Spill:* Philip described reports of an oil spill January 6 in Fairfax City, near Van Dyck Park, whose source has been identified (no results will be forthcoming) The neighbors reported it to the Fire Marshal after consulting FACC's [Watershed 911](#) web page. Fire Marshal placed contamination booms in the creek and traced the source to a leaking heating oil tank

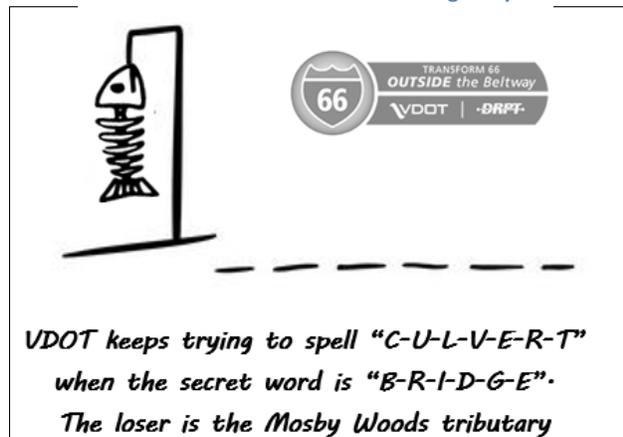
*Water Main Break:* In addition, Philip described a water main break that resulted in sedimentation January 7 at Daniels Run. Fairfax Water website confirms that such breaks are commonplace, with a half-dozen or so listed every day. Philip wrote to Fairfax Water about preventing and remediating such contamination, but their answer was non-committal.

Construction Sediment: Some Fairfax City neighbors contacted Philip about repeated instances of cloudy water. This appears to be pumping of stormwater from construction sites. Both the neighbors and Philip sent reports of observations on several construction sites to Fairfax City Public Works. However, only a few minor actual violations could be documented.



Contamination boom contains heating oil spill

I-66 Outside the Beltway: Philip sent out another violation report to DEQ January 19, mostly regarding a silt fence in sorry condition at the Nutley Street interchange. Philip noted that the consent decree that grew out of our complaints to VDOT about erosion and sediment controls is about to be made available for public comment. More to follow.



Potomac Watershed Cleanup: Philip brought up the question: What shall we do about the spring cleanup? Last year, we skipped the spring cleanups, but went ahead in fall with COVID precautions and it went well. Now the situation is somewhat different, with rising infection rates, vaccination, and new virus strains. After a discussion of chances of liability for anybody who might claim they get sick after a cleanup, the consensus was to go ahead and schedule the spring cleanups, without having to publicize them until March after more information is available.

Accotink TMDL: Dave related DEQ's scheduled public meeting on January 21 to open a month-long public comment period on the Salt Management Strategy Toolkit. An overview of the toolkit is [at this link](#). Discussion followed, mainly focused on how the Toolkit will be publicized, and what entities have to comply. Dave explained that the Communications subcommittee of the Salt Management Strategy Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SaMS Sac) planned outreach activities, and that no sanctions are envisioned to enforce use of the toolkit. Rather, the SaMS Toolkit has information on how reduction of salt wastewater can be accompanied by cost savings for private and public operators. (Background from the Notice: In May 2018, EPA approved a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study for the Accotink Creek watershed that identified chloride (salt) from snow and ice management as a contributing cause of a water quality impairment. Additionally, review of water quality data throughout the Northern Virginia region suggest that the patterns observed in the Accotink Creek watershed are not isolated, but instead occur region-wide. In order to assist in the implementation of the Accotink Creek chloride TMDL and proactively address salt pollution throughout the Northern Virginia region, DEQ convened the SaMS SAC to develop a strategy capable of balancing the benefits of winter salt use with the negative impacts. Through this effort, the SaMS SAC developed the SaMS Toolkit, which is a comprehensive resource comprised of winter maintenance best practices, an education and outreach toolbox, tools and plans for tracking salt use, best practice implementation, and water quality improvement, in addition to other informational resources.)

Blake Lane Park: Philip presented a letter supporting a Board of Education decision to keep Blake Lane Park as a park, rather than building a school on the property. The Board approved the letter.

Accotink Gorge: Avril discussed a meeting she has set up with FCPA's Invasive Management Coordinator Patricia Greenberg on February 3 to discuss invasive wisteria eradication in the Gorge.

Donations and expenses: Philip described three donations, most notably including Sandy's \$250 donation to be matched by her company, Gwen Latasa's \$166 match to donations received by her Facebook fundraiser on our behalf, and longtime supporter Jeanne Kadet's \$25 donation. Expenses include \$131 for domain renewal and \$15 for web hosting, which Philip donated.

Whither FACC:

- The Board re-elected Sandy Collins to continue as Primary Conservator by acclamation. r
- The topic of Outreach Enhancement was tabled until next meeting.
- Several attendees complimented and thanked Beverly and Julie for their highly successful work on the FACC Newsletter for 2020, with its thorough coverage of many FACC accomplishments.
- Avril reported via email her conversations with Ward8Woods, which has been successful with restoration for Oxon Hill in the District of Columbia. This continues our efforts to compare notes with other Friends groups regarding fundraising, recruitment, and outreach.

Communications: Philip noted that we have been using FreeConferenceCall, a service by a non-profit that has begun to ask for contributions on the order of \$7 per month. Discussion of whether we want to continue and contribute to it as a worthwhile cause was tabled until next month.