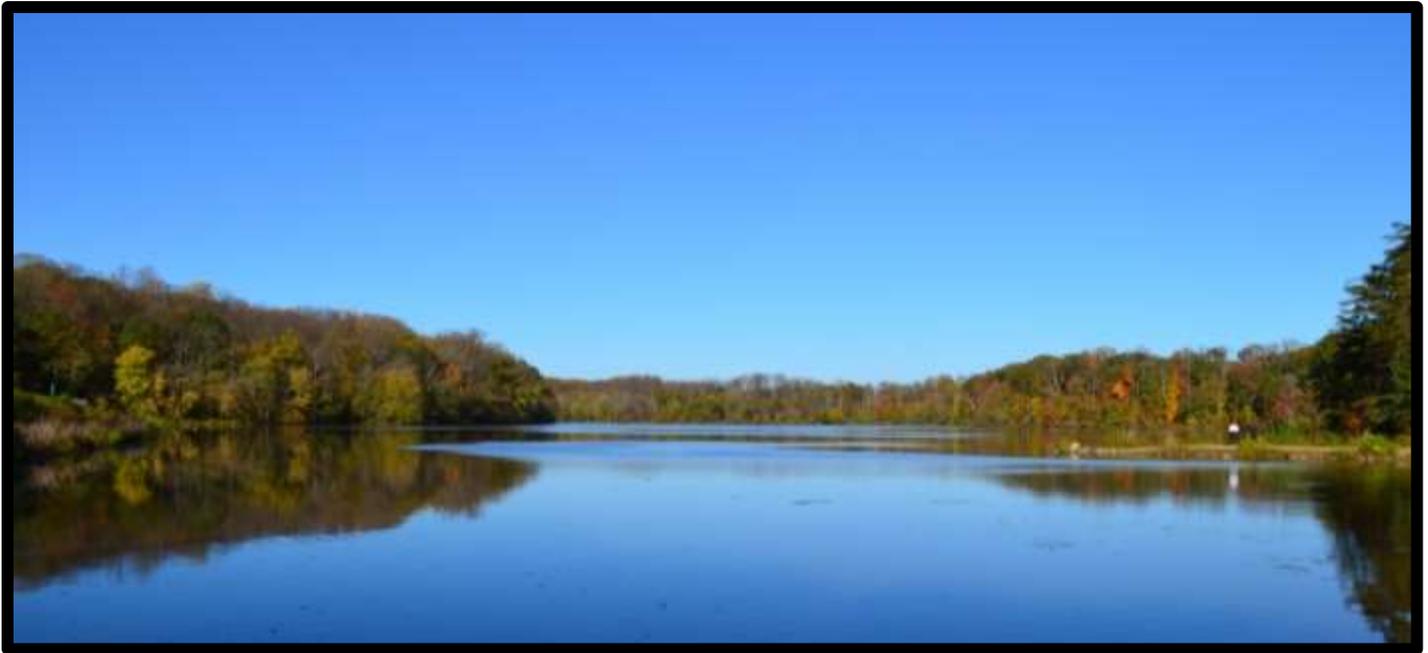


FRIENDS OF ACCOTINK CREEK 2020

Happy Holidays to you and we hope this newsletter finds you safe, healthy and - at least virtually - immersed in a project to help protect our waterways.



It's been another busy year for the Friends of Accotink Creek working on dozens of projects throughout the community to protect and champion our watershed:

- Advocating for a more environmental approach to projects such as the [proposed dredging of Lake Accotink](#). Coordinating a pipeline walk with officials and residents to try to find a better solution than the proposed clearing of five acres of trees for a dewatering station.
- Collaborating with the Audubon Naturalist Society to encourage a more environmental approach to the [Northfax West](#) development.
- Removing 224 bags of trash across 12 adopted stretches over 12 weekends for the [International Coastal Clean Up](#), as well as an [Americana Drive](#) cleanup of a suburban area notorious for dumping construction materials, and a cleanup with Homeless Angels of America.
- Coordinating twice-weekly invasive plant removals at different sites. Organizing volunteers, Scouts and students every week to remove invasives. In 2020, planted more than 350 local eco-type native trees, shrubs, sedges, grasses and flowering plants.
- Recipient of a 2020 Fairfax County [FRIENDS OF TREES AWARD](#).
- FACC also received a TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARD for working with people who are currently experiencing homelessness – watch the NBC4 coverage [here](#).
- FACC continues to monitor and uphold environmental standards on the [I-66 Outside the Beltway](#) development.
- Board members participated in a [VCU lecture](#) educating people about TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads of pollutants, including salt levels, in our waterways).
- FACC holds quarterly [stream monitoring events](#) to monitor the health of the local waterways.
- FACC members ensure that standards of construction-related sediment are maintained.

There are many more things that FACC has been involved in on a weekly basis ...



After heavy rains, freshwater mussels in the stream south of the Lake Accotink Dam become stranded on higher grounds. As the waters recede the stranded mussels are left helpless to predators or to drying out. FACC organizes volunteers to return the mussels to deeper waters, ensuring the survival of the limited population.



FACC is currently involved in a combined initiative to step up measures to remove exotic invasive plants from parks and work towards an eventual ban on sales of exotic invasives. Here volunteers show the extensive porcelainberry root systems that they have dug up – the roots can be twenty feet long and as thick as someone’s wrist. It is still a popular garden plant as people do not realize the extent of the damage that it is doing to the local forests and the amount of work it takes to try to permanently remove it.

The Friends of Accotink Creek work in so many ways throughout the community to raise watershed awareness, and to inspire others to protect and advocate for critical and intertwined ecosystems; whether it's organizing trash pick ups or monitoring whether sediment regulations are being enforced, working to keep more asphalt trails out of forests, removing invasives, partnering with other environmental organizations for a ripple effect of local advocacy, and of course, attempting to prevent acres of local forest from being cleared.



FACC's Artist Naturalist Elaine Sevy also continues to lead free Nature Journaling walks to teach students about the wildlife value of native wildflowers such as Cardinal Flower, New York Ironweed, Goldenrod, Asters, and Milkweed. This activity, which involves sketching and making field notes in a journal, improves observation skills, reawakens curiosity about the natural world and can inspire stewardship of critical wildlife habitat.

The Friends of Accotink Creek have achieved great things in 2020 and your donation can help us grow in 2021. Please consider making a [tax deductible donation](#) to our 501(c)3, and please remember us when you are doing your holiday shopping by typing the Friends of Accotink Creek into [Amazon Smile](#), [Goodshop](#) or Goodsearch.

And we would love to see you at a volunteer event, check our [calendar](#). All the best to you in this holiday season and as always, our dedicated commitment to the local waterways is reflected in our motto:

“Get your brain wet”

