



## 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 – October 19, 2021

Next Meeting: November 16, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice in the [Friends of Accotink calendar](#).)

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**Present (apologies for any misspelling!):** Bryan Campbell, Sofia Chapin, Julie Chang, Doug Craun, Cathy Field, Philip Latasa, Edward Lee, Dave Lincoln, Henry Mann, Bill Read, Beverley Rivera, Sue Kovach Shuman, Kim Schauer, Sherry Steeley, all via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions.

### Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

**Inaugural Walk, [Annandale Greenway](#):** Sandy and Philip will try to participate in the Inaugural Walk on the Annandale Greenway, October 20.

**Living Shorelines:** The Board of Supervisors, November 4 (see notes below)

**Americana Drive Cleanup:** November 11, 2021

**Accotink Gorge Anti-Wisteria Expedition:** November 24, 2021

**North Springfield Civic Association:** FACC presentation, tentatively February 2, 2022 (see notes below)

### **FACC Subjects Discussed**

#### ***Crook Branch Restoration:***

Sue Kovach Shuman (Mantua Citizens' Association) noted that Fairfax County Stormwater would have a meeting October 21 regarding a three-year project on the Crook Branch of the Accotink, near Mantua. Sue will report on the outcome in the next FACC meeting. In discussion, Philip noted that many of the properties along the branch are in the [Riparian Protection Area](#), in which construction is no longer allowed. It will be interesting to learn what sort of work is planned, to mitigate erosion along stream banks, revegetation, and so forth.

#### ***John Mason Trail:*** [#SaveFairfaxTrees](#)

The Fairfax City Council voted against the plan for the John Mason Trail, which included loss of many trees and addition of new pavement in an RPA, despite available pavement on nearby streets. Kim attended the meeting, and she reported that several Fairfax citizens spoke against the plan. Councilman Sang Yi indicated support for the concerns. (FACC submitted a letter opposing the path expansion, as reported in the September Bulletin.)

#### ***Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:*** : [#SaveCinderBedWoods](#)

Sue attended some Active Fairfax Advisory Committee meetings where the project was discussed. Philip noted the Fairfax County Vision Statement has been amended to include a new environmental goal. However, at this point there seems little indication that another approach will gain support. Philip sent a letter to the Lee and Mount Vernon supervisors urging that Fairfax County follow the example of Fairfax City in cancelling the John Mason Trail. We need to try to meet again with these Supervisors. Philip also sent a FACC letter to the editor of The Connection in response to their story about the John Mason Trail,

again urging that the County follow the ActiveFairfax vision statement. The statement was amended, based on several requests, to include a separate environmental goal. Unfortunately, the statement is still weak and offers no expectation of any restraint in paving.



- **[Accotink Gorge:](#)**

On October 3rd, Avril, Kim, Gary, and Philip surveyed trees in a 15 square yard section of the Gorge using an online survey tool Kim put together. The site was selected for its condition of being where the wisteria is advancing, but not yet impenetrable.

On October 11, a corporate group from Accenture back wisteria vines.

Regrowth from previous cutbacks has been noted, along with regrowth after the herbicide application in ~2019 and cutting without herbicide support in April 2021. We need to gather data on measured plots and submit to FCPA regarding effectiveness of the various eradication efforts.

Our public workday scheduled for Wednesday, November 24th, with herbicide support to be provided by the Park Authority.

***Lake Accotink Aquatic Invasives:***

We were alerted by a [USGS researcher](#) to the presence of a nasty aquatic invasive in Lake Accotink. This is Water Caltrops, *trapa bispinosa*. Groups went out October 9 and 16 to try to collect the weeds before they cover the lake. Another workday is scheduled October 25.



***Fairfax Water Grant:***

Due to the fact that our applicant for the Fairfax Water Grant, Kris, is out of the country, Kim obtained a six-month extension on our \$2500 grant from Fairfax Water for salt education programs, as an

alternative to Kris' planned "Follow the Water" programs. Bryan mentioned connections with several teaches in the Long Branch watershed who would be logical partners. Philip mentioned his recent conversation with Pamela Ahn, TJHSST's Technology Lab Director, who is enthused about future possibilities with EnviroDIY Mayfly datalogger stations. Pamela suggested a pilot datalogger station in Reston (near Kathy's house). She and Philip discussed the logistics of managing a datalogger station. She will look into establishing a post-junior year program to establish lines of investigation for high-schoolers in their senior year. Dave suggested attempting to place dataloggers above and below places where large parking lots drain into the Accotink, as a way to demonstrate the salt runoff from privately owned pavement. This is a topic of part of the [VA DEQ Salt Management Strategy Toolkit](#), the development of which several of us lent a hand as Stakeholders.

### [International Coastal Cleanup:](#)

Philip reported that FACC ended the fall cleanup season on October 9<sup>th</sup>, with a rather disappointing total of 90 volunteers, the lowest since 2009. One cause of low turnout has been discovered: We need to complete the final step in listing our events on the Volunteer Fairfax site in order to make them visible to the public.

We did not lack for interest in our cleanups, though.

- On September 25<sup>th</sup> at our Fairfax Boulevard site, we observed that water coming from the North Fork in the I-66 construction zone was opaque with sediment, while the main fork was clear. It was bad enough to file a report with DEQ who waited until Monday to react, when they may or may not have done anything. Later the same day we found not one, but two electric scooters at the Old Lee Hwy site.
- On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Little River Turnpike, a passerby gave us a phone he'd found on the trail. Trying to contact its owner, we learned it was a State Department phone and then began to imagine spies behind the trees. The State Department sent someone out to collect the phone.
- On October 9<sup>th</sup>, at the Barkley Drive location, we wasted a lot of energy trying to dislodge a small mechanical looking object from the streambed, but only succeeded in causing it to leak oil. We called the fire department to report the leak. The firefighters spent half an hour to finally extract the object which turned out was being held under the sediment because it was attached to a buried lawn mower.



**Fairfax City Maintenance Yard intervention:**

Henry Mann, a high school freshman who has done a number of self-directed cleanups in Fairfax City. He joined our cleanup at Old Lee Highway and noticed a runoff channel draining the area where salting trucks are loaded on the City Property Yard. He was observant enough to be concerned about salty runoff affecting the creek, and he contacted the Maintenance Department. The Supervisor responded, saying that the Department was “on top of it,” and will comply with the City’s stormwater pollution prevention plan. Thanks, Henry!

**Northern Virginia Conservation Trust appeal:**

Philip reported from the Annandale Blog that the Conservation group wants to prevent development of vacant Annandale properties (annandaleva.blogspot.com). They are trying to collect enough money to buy some of the seven vacant lots in the RPA, asking citizens and conservation-minded organizations to contribute. In light of the recent donation to FACC of \$2000 by the Riggs Cover Foundation, we discussed the possibility of making a sizeable donation to the Trust for the purpose of buying lots in the RPA. Following discussion, the Board members agreed on a \$2500 donation, specifying that it is for the project described in the appeal.

**North Springfield Civic Association request:**

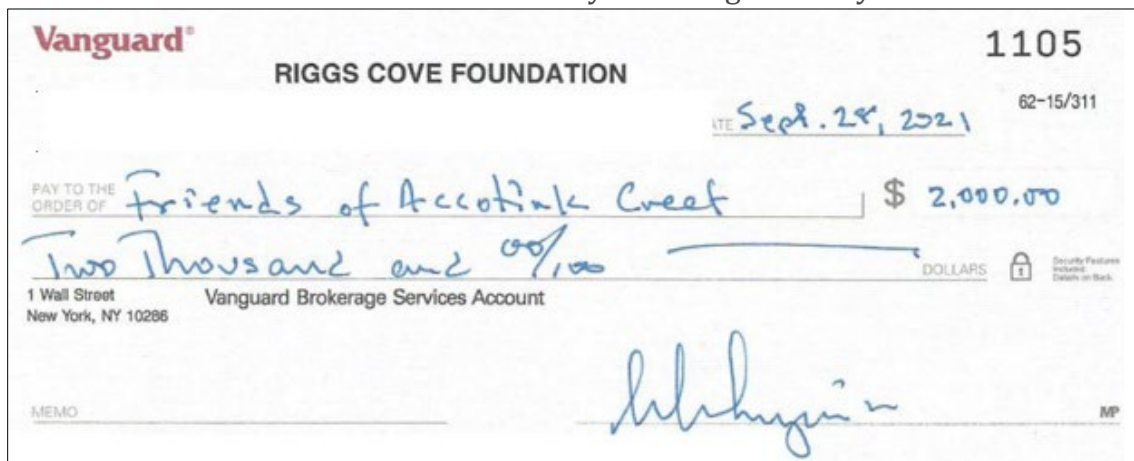
Cathy Field asked whether FACC would be willing to provide a brief for the Association, tentatively February 2, 2022. Philip and Dave agreed to collaborate on a brief—More are welcome to help.

**Virginia Lakes and Water Association**

Philip noted that the Virginia Lakes and Water Association contacted us to suggest more funding is available for “Follow the Water” or similar projects. Since Kris Unger is out of the country, we need to consider alternative programs. We discussed ideas for making use of donations in light of schedule constraints on Kim Shauer, Bev Rivera, Earth Sangha, and FCPA. Beverly is having success working with Fifth Graders looking at the Invasive Management site at Lake Accotink. We will continue to sort out who has the expertise and bandwidth to make good use of future donor funds.

**Donations:**

PayPal Giving Fund sent us \$1.00, as they do from time to time. Philip bought a new event awning for \$127.16 that we may regard as a donation. As noted above, the Riggs Cove Foundation sent us \$2000. This is a family foundation of the late parents of Marya Lundgren, a teacher at Olde Creek Elementary School whom we had met to discuss Follow the Water. Sandy is writing a thank you letter.



- **Whither FACC:**

*Outreach Enhancement:*

In discussion of our media tools, Julie was asked whether Facebook, Instagram, and the web site can be linked together. Momentarily, she and Edward Lee investigated and reported that it is possible, and will establish the links. Julie noted that Philip's birthday is October 29<sup>th</sup>.