



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 20, 2022

Next Meeting: January 17, 2023 (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: Gary Bangs, Andrew Butterbaugh, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, , Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, all via on-line meeting.



[A visit from the Christmas Angel Mussel](#)

Opportunities to represent FACC:

Elly Doyle Awards: Beverley was honored with the Park Authority's Elly Doyle Outstands Volunteer award in an online ceremony November 18th.



EQAC Public Comment Meeting January 11, 2023: Avril noted the Environmental Quality Advisory Council's annual public comment meeting is Wed, January 11th at 7:15 PM, in person at the Government Center. Each year, the public is encouraged to identify environmental issues in person, written, or video testimony. Avril will attend on behalf of QC NOVA. Nobody has volunteered to represent FACC as of yet.

Best of Braddock Awards: Philip reported that our constant collaborator, Amy Gould of Fairfax County Restoration Project, was awarded the Best of Braddock title for her work putting together the Americana Drive cleanups.



Another awardee well known to us is Melissa Adams, Canterbury Woods Elementary School teacher, who is very involved in environmental and watershed projects at the school.

Water Caltrop Control: Continuing the search for infestations of the aquatic invasive, Philip reported that he inspected three ponds in our watershed previously reported to have infestations. The Northern Virginia Community College pond was clear. The stormwater ponds at Franconia Metro were also clear, although there were large areas that are difficult to survey among cattail beds, where it may be hiding. However, a stormwater pond behind Inova Fairfax Hospital was covered. Philip has emailed the Inova Office of Sustainability, but has not heard back yet. Since Andrew is on the NoVA campus frequently, he will look into the question of whether the NoVA ponds have been cleared by grounds crews, or whether they are aware of the invasive.

Braddock Road Widening: Philip, Bryan and Gary attended the November 29th public meeting. Philip reported there was little that we hadn't heard before. As far as VDOT is concerned, the unfortunate idea to relocate Danbury Forest Drive through the Long Branch (Central) floodplain is dead, but a number of citizens are still trying to apply CPR. The relocation option is appealing to the public because it produces a simple-looking traditional intersection.

We seem doomed to tree loss and more asphalt to accommodate shared use paths on both sides, not because it is believed they will make a difference, but because they are the only way to secure "multimodal" funding, any other transit elements being absent. Philip had drafted comments on the project for FACC, and the Board approved them. Public comments are due by January 6th.

The next Public Hearing is expected sometime this winter, with final design approval in spring. Here is a link to the [Annandale Today article](#)

[Long Branch Central Project](#): A public meeting is scheduled for January 10th to present preliminary project designs to the public. As we've discussed before, the projects are mostly in-stream, rather than addressing runoff at its origin. We are being promised a lighter touch than what we have seen before.

Melissa Adams, the Best of Braddock winner mentioned above, has secured a DPWES R3 (Revitalize, Restore, Replant) schoolyard watershed project approval for 1200 ft² of native plantings in fall 2023. We look forward to working with her. This project is a feat we hope we help promote to be replicated at the other four schools along Long Branch. Such projects will, in addition to benefiting the environment immediately, be a means of creating wider public awareness of stream health.

[Plant NOVA Natives Model Projects](#): Gary reported that Plant NOVA natives has compiled a list of HOA projects that could be models for the Long Branch project. In discussion of the possibility that some of FACC's funds could support such projects as pilots to enable public awareness. Dave volunteered to look into proposing such to his HOA, Daventry, following up on erosion control percolating survey done by DPWES a few years ago.

[Sanitary Sewer Break](#): We learned of a sanitary sewer break in Long Branch back on June 24th due to the report prepared by Dominick Meade, a neighbor and freshman at Woodson H.S. Dominik's report raised a number of questions about sanitary sewer breaks in general. Philip had prepared a letter to Supervisor Walkinshaw, and the Board approved it for release.

[Danbury Forest Stream Restoration](#): Philip reported that construction on the Danbury Forest Stream Restoration Project was scheduled to begin on November 21st. This project will restore approximately 4,000 feet of a tributary on HOA property just upstream from the lake. The project is expected to be completed in April 2024. We discussed what government agency manages the project, and it seems to be Stormwater Planning.

FLAP Meeting Update: Philip noted a news item from the December 15th FLAP general meeting, that the park manager's office will soon be relocated to the old snack bar.

[Northfax West](#): Philip reported the end is near for the North Fork of Accotink Creek in the Northfax West project. The stream has been diverted into a temporary fabric-lined channel, the natural channel has been scraped bare, and the crypts which will entomb the creek are rapidly taking shape.



The Ditch of Doom being prepared to seal the North Fork of Accotink Creek in darkness forever.

Fish Survey: We at last received some minimal written results from the August electrofishing survey conducted by Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. The biologists state that the results are acceptable for a stream in a developed area, but there is no baseline for comparison. Philip remains dubious, based on his anecdotal observations of fewer fish than just a few years ago.

Route 50 Bike & Pedestrian Improvements: The Fairfax City to Beltway pedestrian and bike project along Rt. 50 is underway. Although parts of the project will incorporate existing sidewalks and side streets, there always have to be trees to clear away without mitigation.



First thing we do, let's kill all the trees!

[Boston Blvd Industrial to Housing Development](#): Gary reported that a proposal has been developed to convert zoning of five parcels, about 29 acres, at the western end of Boston Blvd from current industrial use to residential. Watershed-wise, there should be little change, and perhaps some improvement with modern stormwater controls. There is change afoot to change a restaurant near COSTCO to gas pumps.

[Springfield Town Center Redevelopment](#): Gary reported that Supervisor Lusk discussed Springfield Town Center development plans in a Springfield Civic Association meeting, noting that, with an increase in elevated parking to support planned apartments, green space will replace what are currently paved areas. Proffers from the developer provide opportunities for non-profits to help landscape the areas to reduce water runoff and increase native trees/plants, to be funded at \$7500.

The Board of Supervisors approved some of these modifications in the December 6 meeting. Notably the plans include a 1 acre "park" along Spring Mall Drive starting at Loisdale Road. This will include the 10' wide impervious trail (as always), but they did specify native plants would be used. They are also placing trees along all walkways and common areas. There are provisions for low impact development and reducing phosphorus levels by 20% from pre-development loads.

[Northern Virginia Transportation Authority Plan](#): Philip reported the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority has published its latest 20-year plan. While many projects are welcome promotion of transit, it speaks for itself that the word "widen" appears 230 times in the [project list](#).

Some of the projects relevant to Accotink Creek (Also, see [Patch Article](#))

- **Route 50 Widening**: Widen Arlington Boulevard/Route 50 to six lanes between the City of Fairfax and Arlington County.
- **Little River Turnpike Widening**: Widen Little River Turnpike/Route 236 between the City of Fairfax and I-395 to six lanes.
- **Route 29 Widening**: Widen Route 29 to six lanes between the City of Fairfax and I-495.
- **Chain Bridge Road Widening**: Widen Chain Bridge Road to six lanes between the City of Fairfax and Town of Vienna.
- **Frontier Drive Extension**: Extend Frontier Drive from Franconia-Springfield Parkway to Loisdale Road

[Fairfax Elections](#): In November, Fairfax City elected a new Mayor and several new members of the City Council, both of which promise a more environmental outlook. Philip will prepare congratulatory and introductory letters for FACC.

[In other elections news](#):

- The special election for House of Delegates member is on January 10th in the 12th district. This is the Merrifield/Vienna area, confusingly renumbered after reapportionment last year.

- Mason District [Supervisor Penny Gross](#) has announced she will not seek reelection in 2023. Three other Democratic candidates have announced, [Andres Jimenez](#), [Steve Lee and Reid Voss](#). Other candidates can be expected. We should send them an environmental questionnaire when the field is more settled.
- In addition to Board of Supervisors, in 2023 there will be elections for offices including General Assembly, Soil & Water Conservation District, and School Board.

Clean the Bay Day: The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is searching for new Clean the Bay Day partners on Saturday, June 3rd. Philip thought for many years about participating, but did not, mostly because it can be too hot in June. After discussion, FACC's Board agreed we will do it in the spot that needs it most, Americana Drive. Amy Gould, our constant collaborator on Americana Drive, says she would support the choice.

Blenheim Boulevard: We had hoped the Fairfax City street renaming process would change Old Lee Hwy to Accotink Avenue. Instead the city chose the name Blenheim Boulevard after a historic building located on the street.



Donations: Philip noted with pleasure these generous donations:
\$21.22 from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of activity between July 1 and September 30, 2022.

\$25 from our friend Jeanne Kadet

\$40 from Kirsten Jones, whom we have some hope will become an active member

\$100 from Jeff Hartge

\$500 from Loren Kropat, one of Avril's invasives volunteers, citing her work

\$1000 from our friend Betsy Martin of Friends of Little Hunting Creek

\$2,500 from Carefirst, a company participant in stream cleanups and invasive control at Daniels Run Elementary School

Philip recommended that FACC share donated funds with Lands & Waters, since the Daniels Run Elementary project is entirely theirs. He suggested \$1500, and the donation was approved unanimously.

Whither FACC:

FACC Elections: Sandy opened the floor for nominations for Primary Conservator, Secondary Conservator, and Chronicler. Dave nominated Gary Bangs for Chronicler, noting his active participation in stream monitoring and issues tracking, and Gary agreed to serve. By acclamation, Sandy Collins was re-elected for Primary Conservator, Avril Garland as Secondary Conservator, and Gary Bangs as Chronicler.



Website Modification: [WordPress Alternative.](#) We are still in need of a webmaster to continue work upgrading our web site.

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