



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 – September 17, 2024

Next Meeting: October 15 (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, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Beverley Rivera, Peter Clark, and Sue Kovach Shuman all via on-line meeting.

- *Represent FACC:*

- *Taste of Annandale:* Gary and Dave will staff an information table at the Taste Annandale on September 21, 2024 from 10:30am - 6 pm. It is at the Eileen Garnett Civic Space, at 7200 Columbia Pike in Annandale. The location is the dividing line between Accotink and Cameron Run watersheds. The Rotary Club is greatly involved with Americana Drive cleanups and other FACC activities. This is also a central location for the Annandale Greenway, which FACC has an interest in connecting wildlife corridors and hopefully extending across I-495 to Cross County Trail where a major erosion problem is washing sediment into the creek.
- *Latino Conservation Week:* Beverley stated that she would be hosting an event at her Lake Accotink Park IMA site on September 22 from 9-11 am. She and Philip will provide instruction on identifying invasive species as well as removal. Other volunteers will be present to help those who wish to help in the IMA site, and they are planning a cookout..
- *CareFirst Equity Week:* Philip said that after canceling their July workday due to the heat, CareFirst will go ahead with their workday in the outdoor classrooms of Daniels Run Elementary School on October 2nd. He anticipates about 50 volunteers, so anyone willing to act as a volunteer wrangler would be welcome.
- *Earth Sangha Open House:* Avril and Sandy will setup a table at the Earth Sangha open house on October 6. This annual event is well attended, although people are most interested in buying native plants. Many of the "Friends" groups will be setup.

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Philip said that in an online meeting with Aaron Campbell of the Franconia District office, he, Gary and Avril outlined the situation in the Gorge and discussed the need for coordination with Fort Belvoir and VDOT, which own the portions of the Gorge in that district. Aaron will coordinate with Mount Vernon District and take steps to bring the stakeholders together.

We received an estimate from Green Steeze, an environmental landscaping service.

- \$23,750 per week (would cover approximately 1 acre)
- \$4,750 per day (approximately 1/4 of an acre)

To do the entire clean-up, they would hire and train a team dedicated to this project, treating approximately 9-12 acres each fall.

This is higher than the rough estimates we have so far, but the environmental commitment of Green Steeze is high.

Delegate Kathy Tran has requested a tour of the Gorge, set for November 15th. Anyone is welcome to join.

- *International Coastal Cleanup*: Philip said that the cleanups began on September 7th. We took a break last Saturday for stream monitoring and will have more cleanups on September 21st.

On our last day of cleanups, October 12th, we have been asked by the Park Authority to check out the large long term homeless encampment that the County recently cleared out in case missed trash remains to be cleaned up. That is at our Pickett Road site.

- [*Americana Drive Cleanup*](#): Philip said our next cleanup on Americana Drive will be November 11th.

The September 11th EQAC Meeting focused on Americana Dive and the issues affecting it. Representatives from VDOT, FCDOT, FCPD, Public Works, Code Compliance, Health Department, and the Braddock District office were there. Supervisor Herrity of Springfield District also attended.

Amy Gould and he spoke to the meeting. The members are engaged on the topic. EQAC advises the Board of Supervisors, so perhaps their recommendations will bring more official action. There was a followup call to meet with Supervisor Walkinshaw to discuss ideas.

- [*Accotink Gravity Sewer*](#): Philip stated that he finished his review of the responses from Public Works to our questions about the 95% plan. There is nothing in there to indicate the slightest interest in doing anything to accommodate environmental preservation beyond whatever small concessions have already been incorporated.

Philip also said that he has been in touch with the Providence District office and they are asking questions as well, but there seems to be little hope.

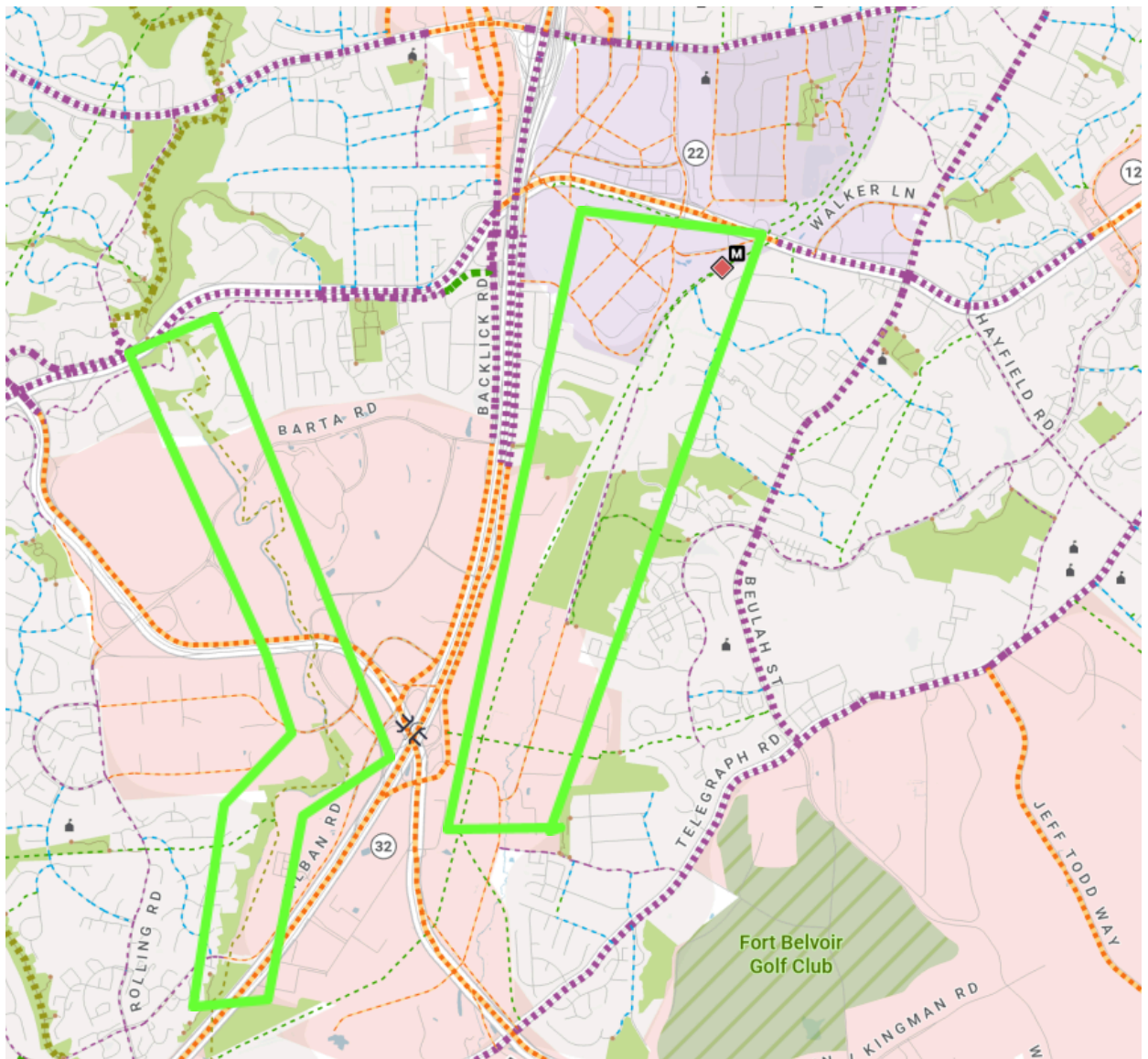
One especially galling detail is that the plan calls for covering all of the path of the sewer with geotextile presumably to hinder root development around the sewer line eliminating any tree replacements.



- Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:

- ActiveFairfax Meetings: Philip said the ActiveFairfax series of public meetings is presenting a draft plan of future trails and street routes. Some of the proposed lines on the map seem to have been drawn with little regard to desirability or practicality. For example, the map shows a bike trail through the Accotink Gorge, which would require challenging feats of engineering and unlikely granting of easements, as well as being an environmental crime. The map also shows a parallel route to the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway along the railroad, which we have repeatedly been told is not possible. It's also aggravating that the map shows all our alternate routes to the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway, which we have repeatedly been told are not good enough.

He encourages everyone to express their opinions in favor of protecting wooded habitat from pavement, either in one of the public meetings or in writing.



ActiveFairfax draft map in the Accotink Gorge and Cinder Bed Road Bikeway area

- *October Plantings:*

- *Lake Accotink Park Pollinator Garden*

Beverley is ready to begin planting the new pollinator garden at her site as soon as the weather is cool enough. The date has not been set, but it will be one of her regular Thursday workdays. Everyone is welcome to join.

- *Kutner Park Rescues*

Likewise, we are watching for favorable cooler, and we hope, wetter weather to transplant all the native plants rescued from The Stafford Drive Stream Restoration into Kutner Park. It is likely to be a weekend date in the latter part of October. Again, everyone will be welcome to join.

- [Park Authority Budget](#): Gary stated that as part of the budgeting process, all County agencies were asked to offer a plan for worst case scenarios of 10% reduction.. The Park Authority proposal includes cutting the IMA program, specifically by eliminating the new junior ecologist position. Comments will be submitted in favor of fully staffing the IMA staff.

- [Fairfax Elections](#): Philip stated that early voting begins on Friday. The Fairfax City Council elections will likely determine the future of the [George Snyder Trail](#) and [Pickett Road Connector Trail](#), so we should urge anyone who lives in the City to take interest and take part. As a nonprofit association we cannot campaign for anyone but individuals may participate as they see fit.

I ❤️ Accotink Creek and I vote!

- *Donations*: Philip reported that we received one donation of \$19.00 from Emily Chesnes.

- [Whither FACC](#):

- [Leadership Fairfax](#): Philip said that a group called Leadership Fairfax invited us to have a table at an event titled Board and Brew which aims to match persons interested in serving on non-profit boards with organizations looking for fresh leadership talent. The event is October 22nd at the Reston Association from 5:30 - 8 pm. It sounds like it has the potential to be more productive than our typical tabling events.

Also, our friend Tony Velucci wrote from his new home in Florida to recommend a book titled [The Emerald Mile](#). It details how a few individuals came together to fight the federal government when they wanted to dam up The Grand Canyon.