Our meeting notes serve as bulletins of our activities, interests, and discussions, supplemented by your submissions.

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Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – May 20, 2025
Next Meeting: June 17 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice in the Friends of Accotink calendar.)

Present: Gary Bangs, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Sandy Collins, Susan Kuiler, Peter Clark, Katy Johnson, all via on-line meeting.

AGENDA

- *Represent FACC:*
  - *Garnett Civic Space Earth Day , April 19, 2025* Gary said that he setup at the Annandale Earth Day event but there was a small turnout. This was the second year for the event. He was able to talk with the Annandale Greenway organizer who indicated that the next step was to place signage which he had not gotten time to pursue. Philip suggested perhaps FACC could offer help if he wanted. Additionally there was a young couple stopped by with their daughter who recently moved into a house that backs into the Accotink Creek parkland in the West Springfield neighborhood. They took information on what programs are available and signed up for the email list.

    Friends of Holmes Run was setup next to us, the location for the event is on the fall line between Accotink and Cameron Run watersheds.

Friends of Accotink Creek at the Garnett Civic Space Earth Day

- *Leadership Fairfax Board and Brew , April 23, 2025* Kim attended this event but she was unable to make our meeting. However, she had relayed to Philip that the event was similar to the previous one. There were a few people who stopped and talked but not a great deal of interest. Additionally, the organization provided 3 names of people who answered questionnaires that may interest our organization for possible followup later.

- *Loisdale Tree Rescue, April 24 – May 3, 2025* Gary indicated this event was organized by Tree Rescuers and Chesapeake Climate Action Network. On April 24 he and Philip joined two others and walked the neighborhood to talk to people about removing vines from threatened trees. Although the park area seemed to have extensive ivy in the trees most of the residences did not. Philip indicated that one reason rescuing trees in this location is of special interest to us is its proximity to the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway, which would be just on the other side of the railroad tracks. Those tracks are even now being expanded, taking away part of the Newington Conservation Site while we can do nothing to prevent it. Tree Rescuers is looking for anyone who would like to commit to this park and neighborhood long term.

- *HisTree Day , April 26, 2025* Philip indicated that we've had a table at this event for several years now. Perhaps it's most useful function for FACC is to help cement relationships with people in City government. Each year, we've featured giveaways of rescued native plants, but that supply is used up, so if we wish to continue we might have to plan to grow some at our homes. Avril discussed the possibility of rescuing some natives where that gravity sewer line project is planned.

- *Earth Sangha Open House, May 4, 2025* Dave indicated he setup again at this event which is good to connect with many native plant people. Several people stopped and talked about various subjects, especially invasive management and planting natives.

- *Bike to Work Day , May 15, 2025* Philip said that we got a rather late invitation to participate in this event, and it's not exactly in our mission area, but the location is close to the intended path of the Accotink Gravity Sewer, so it was a chance to let local constituents of Supervisor Palchik know what is happening.

- *Viva! Vienna! , May 25 & 26, 2025* Avril said that this is an invitation to be listed on the No Casino! information page as cosponsor. This would serve as modest advertisement for FACC. Why we'd oppose a casino - more traffic means more pollution, so more road run-off into streams. More cars means more parking, more impermeable surfaces. It also puts a strain on our infrastructure, new sewer lines like the Accotink Gravity Sewer, for example.

- *Braddock Road Design Public Meeting , June 2, 2025* Philip indicated that the Braddock Road widening is back. We don't know exactly why there is a public meeting at this time, but we have to be vigilant about changes to the realignment of Danbury Forest Drive. Some earlier plans included the possibility of moving the road through the forested floodplain and across the Long Branch tributary. This destructive, but more traditional alignment, is popular with some neighbors. Meeting is at Lake Braddock Secondary School at 6;30 pm.

- *Mount Vernon Summer Palooza, June 7, 2025* Dave said that we will have our usual table at this event, which replaces the environmental expo of previous years. Everyone is welcome to join him.

- *Urban Forest Master Plan , June 11, 2025* Philip said that Fairfax City is developing the city's first urban forest master plan. This will be an open house where attendees can vote on their top priorities.

• *Accotink Gorge:* Katy indicated that on April 19th Fairfax Master Naturalists had their geology and biology walk in the Gorge. We may need to take the initiative to prompt development into a chapter project of wisteria control. She indicated approx. 30 people attended and it was well received. Most appeared interested in helping save this unique ecological area.

Philip said we need to start planning now for fall wisteria control dates. We can coordinate with the Angelus Academy, Master Naturalists, and Park Authority. We should also invite IMA leaders from other areas to provide herbicide support. Herbicide treatment seems to be essential to beginning to make headway.

• *Potomac Watershed Cleanup:* Sue said that she handled the May 10th cleanups in Fairfax City. They had a day of great weather, and 45 volunteers removed 34 bags of trash.

Supervisor Palchik joined our April 19th cleanups in the Mantua area. She invited us to collaborate next year with her.

Philip said that our stream cleanup season is now concluded for this year. Overall, we had 220 volunteers who removed 193 bags of trash. Our most unusual finds included a cassette player, a TV, a pair of electrical transformers, and a rusted electronic object we think may have been a CB radio.

Supervisor Palchik joins our Barkley Drive cleanup

• *Americana Drive Cleanup:* Philip said that we will have our Clean the Bay Day cleanup on Americana Drive on June 7th. As always, what we really need is ways to convince the illegal dumpers to change their ways.

• *Park Budget Cuts:* Dave said that he spoke to the Board of Supervisors budget hearing on behalf of FACC in support of maintaining funding for the IMA program and invasives control in general. The comments were a followup to a letter he sent to the members of the Board.

• *Accotink Gravity Sewer:* Avril said that Supervisor Palchik has agreed to meet us to view the area on May 28th. Anyone interested is welcome to join, especially residents of Providence District.

At the Providence Bike to Work Day, the supervisor's replies to concerned constituents were not very promising. She seemed to be saying the only influence she could have would be on the restoration after the construction. Her chief of staff indicated there will be a public meeting at some future date. It's unlikely, though, that the engineers will be seeking any public input.

We've also noticed the supervisor's transportation aide has not received answers from the engineers to the inquiries he submitted on our behalf several weeks ago.

Enchanting trio of Spotted salamanders found in the path of the Accotink Gravity Sewer

• *George Snyder Trail:* Sue and Katy indicated that the GST issue has become quite messy. City staff bypassed the Council and held discussions with VDOT with the result that VDOT has given the City until June 30th to decide to go ahead with full build or pay back the $3.7 million already spent on planning.

We are all in for cancelling the project. There may be momentum on the Council to do so but many are concerned about paying back the money.

Northern Virginia Bird Alliance has sent out an action alert with a link to send comments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and VDOT, to let them know we oppose such onerous repayment terms for cancelling a destructive project that should have never been started. We need to show up in City Council on May 27th when we can expect a vote.

Philip indicated that 10270 Fairfax Blvd is back on the market. This is a 6.7 acre wooded parcel along the proposed path of the George Snyder Trail. An online auction last December did not result in a sale. We may hope this attempted sale will also lead to nothing.

• *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:* Philip said that the group of the interested had an online presentation on May 6th. On May 18th, there was a nature walk in the path of the Bikeway led by Virginia Native Plant Society. There will be a second nature walk on June 1st.

• *Daniels Run Elementary School:*

- *Literacy Garden Boat Replacement*
  Philip said that we have collaborated for many years with Lands and Waters on maintaining the outdoor classrooms at Daniels Run Elementary School. One task we were not able to help with is repair of the wooden rowboat in the school's Literacy Garden. Beverley's husband, Juan reevaluated the boat and recommends replacing it with one of the used aluminum boats he found online for $300 to $400. Philip said that he offered for FACC to pay, if the school cannot.

This sinking ship needs replacement

- *CareFirst Equity Week*
  Philip said that CareFirst is hosting its annual Week of Equity and Action July 16th. We've hosted them at Daniels Run for several years now and will be doing the same this year.

• *8211 Little River Turnpike:* Philip said that 8211 Little River Turnpike is a residence that did extensive unauthorized earthmoving in 2019, causing a lot of erosion and runoff that brought County inspectors into the picture. We were surprised to learn that the case has never been resolved and that the County just now is preparing to take legal action against the owner.

• *Follow the Water:* Philip said that on April 28th, we had our usual spring Follow the Water session at Canterbury Woods Elementary. Bryan Campbel organized things, as usual. Stormwater Planning Division provided an ecologist to do a lot of the explanations for the students.

• *Donations:* Philip said that we received one donation, $10.00 via Venmo from Lynne Corley, a cleanup volunteer.

• *Whither FACC:*

- *FACC 20th Anniversary:* Philip said that we need someone to plan any observance we'd like to have of FACC's 20th anniversary in December. Or we could just put a mention in our annual Newsletter.

- *Newsletter Updates:* Philip reminded all that we need to get better at sending Beverley material and photos for our annual newsletter.

- *Webpage Volunteer:* Philip said that he has not done anything to advance this issue since our last meeting. He added that he is not prepared to completely overhaul our website as George still wants to do. At the same time, he doesn't seem to be able to persuade him to make some smaller fixes for us in a way we can really use. Our student volunteer, Jay, seems to have become too occupied with school to finish setting up new photo galleries. He has just left Jonathan, the person who spoke at our last meeting, hanging without following up.