



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.

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Our many projects to make the creek healthier depend on your support!

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – August 19, 2025

Next Meeting: September 16 (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, Susan Kuiler, Brian Slawski, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Kim Schauer, Peter Clark, Cindy Haney, Katy Johnson, and Juliana Cui (Representing Supervisor Palchik), all via on-line meeting.

AGENDA:



- Represent FACC:

- o [Gallows Road Study](#): Philip said that he attended the second of the two meetings on July 17, covering the southern half of Gallows Road. The work envisioned seems to largely be confined to already cleared portions of the right of way, so environmental concerns may be minimal. At the meeting, in response to his question about environmental protections, the staff response was limited to saying: Planting street trees might increase the canopy,

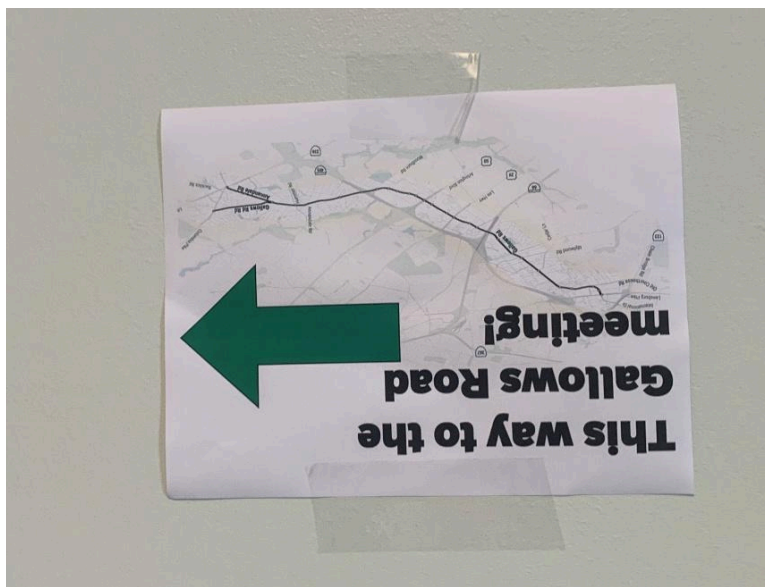
narrowing the roadway in places would reduce impervious surfaces, and new stormwater features would meet current standards.

One interesting feature is parallel pedestrian/bike routes on neighborhood streets, which FACC has long advocated as an alternative to new trails through woodland.

Meeting Notes

As a followup to the meetings, Whitney Redding of Friends of Holmes Run organized a visit with FCDOT staff to the possible locations of a pedestrian/Bicycle bridge over the Beltway in the vicinity of Rt. 50. Dave provided [our recommendations](#) in a letter afterward.

Friends of Holmes Run provided a 1970 survey of flora and fauna in the area that is worth reading. It is a part of our recommendation letter.



Ominous - Signs leading to the meeting were upside down

- o [Transportation Priorities Plan](#): At the July 16 meeting The Transportation Priorities Plan listed projects the County hopes to complete by 2030. Philip said we should be gratified to see the number of environmental comments submitted by the public, and particularly those mentioning the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway. Many of those comments were prompted by appeals from Nature Forward and Northern Virginia Bird Alliance. [Friends of Accotink Creek online comments](#)
[All public online comments](#)
One [comment submitted by letter](#) and shared with us was notable.
- o [Lake Accotink Dredging Open House](#): Philip, Gary, and Peter said that they attended the open house on July 19th, where the county provided a number of possible configurations for the future of Lake Accotink. All the configurations seem to still be largely speculative at this point. Some configurations are for an in-line lake, as at present. Some are for offline or partially offline lakes. The fully offline configurations could involve dam removal. None of

the configurations without dam removal would resolve the stickiest issue of how to get the dredge spoils to a dewatering site and then to final disposal.

However, one option, the Sediment Bypass Pipe, is an exception. Using various means, it would divert sediment out of the lake and pipe it past the dam for release in the creek downstream. Conceptual Layouts A, B, and C all feature this option.

Sediment bypass would not be great for the downstream benthic invertebrates, but it would be no worse than removing the dam or letting the lake fill in, as was once proposed. If the pipe extended downstream beyond the mussel beds, then the worst effects would be avoided. It is a version of one of the suggestions FACC has made in the past.

The dam safety assessment has been stalled for a year, after encountering one problem after another. It is now on hold during the recreation season until after Labor Day. So it is still unknown what problems may be encountered with the dam or when or how problems might be resolved.

[Open House Notes and Displays](#)
[Comments of Friends of Accotink Creek](#)

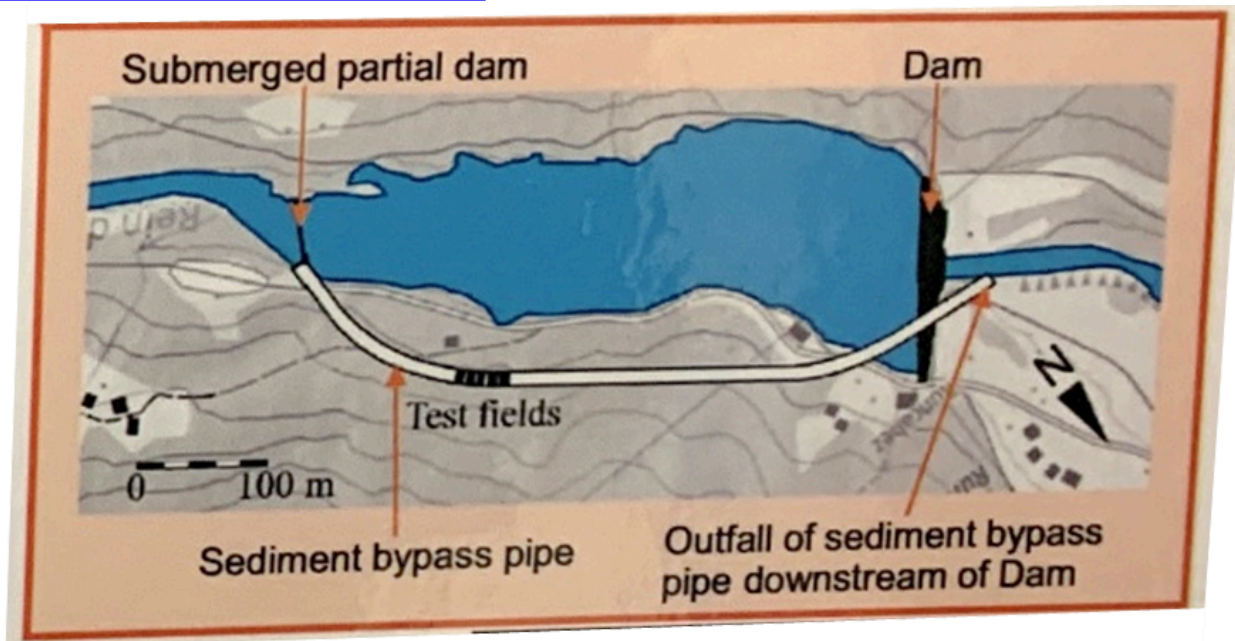


Illustration of a sediment bypass pipe concept in a generic body of water.

- o [AT&T Development Community Meeting](#): Philip reported that the AT&T site in Oakton is a vast parking lot fringed by large trees and a tiny trickle of a tributary. The redevelopers have promised to preserve the stream and most of the trees. We can learn more by joining the community meeting August 27th.
- o [Federation of Friends Meeting](#): Philip said that the Federation of Friends meeting will be coming up September 3rd 5:30 pm at the Herrity Bldg or online. Avril said she could cover this again this year.

- o [Springfield Bridge Walk](#): Philip stated that this annual event is a joint effort of the Franconia Supervisor's office and Fort Belvoir. A brief walk over the Veterans Bridge is followed by speeches and tabling. Gary and Dave said they would work out coverage on August 30th.
 - o [Latino Conservation Week](#): Philip said Latino Conservation Week will be September 13-21 and Beverley generally uses her invasives management workday for that event.
 - o [Taste of Annandale](#): Philip said that we had a table at the Taste of Annandale last year. This year it is September 20th. Gary said he would look into the event.
- [Accotink Gorge](#): *Avril said that we are proposing October 18 & 25th and November 1st as anti-wisteria workdays. We hope the Master Naturalists will turn out. We have also asked the Angelus Academy to suggest days their students might participate.*

Philip said that with the Park Authority's new volunteer herbicide program, we hope our efforts will be much more effective at preventing resprouting. In addition to Avril and himself, we will be inviting other herbicide-qualified IMA leaders to join us. He has the notion of a small group of volunteer cutters arrayed in a semicircle around an herbicide applicator, cutting and treating the vines in a small area, then moving on a few steps to the next spot.

- [International Coastal Cleanup](#): Philip said that the fall cleanup schedule is posted on our website and at Volunteer Fairfax. The first volunteers have signed up. We begin our cleanup on September 20th.
- [Loisdale Invasives](#): Gary indicated that this is an initiative of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network focused on lower income neighborhoods using Tree Rescuer techniques to protect native trees from invasive vines.. It is scheduled to continue on August 30th and he and Dave will coordinate assisting as Tree Rescuer instructors to others.
- [George Snyder Trail](#): Sue reported they are continuing to look at the actual wording in the contracts and possibly ask the council to reexamine their decision to move forward.
- [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#): Philip said that he and a few of the interested met with Supervisor Lusk July 25th, then a larger meeting with Supervisor Lusk and FCDOT staff on August 14th.

No dramatic change came out of either meeting, although Supervisor Lusk made some vaguely hopeful remarks. FCDOT is splitting the project into two phases, one along Cinder Bed Road itself, and the second through the wooded areas. This raises the faint hope of possible cancellation of at least the second phase.

FCDOT is disputing the Department of Conservation and Recreation delineation of a larger acidic seepage swamp. We will accompany staff from FCDOT and DCR to reexamine the delineation of this rare habitat on September 3.

- [Vernal Pool Contamination](#): In 2019, the farm pond along the Lake Accotink Park entrance road suffered a pipe collapse followed by filling with sediment, followed by excuses, delay, and failed repair attempts. Another repair got underway in mid-July. It's not clear what the plan is, but whatever they are trying to do, they have taken down half the slope and used the soil to build a heavy equipment ramp across the pond.



“Mountaintop mining” comes to Lake Accotink

- [Accotink Gravity Sewer](#): As reported by Philip Providence District summer intern Juliana Cui was at our last meeting to discuss the Gravity Sewer. He and Avril met her and another staff member on site to explain our concerns. They promised to follow up with the project manager.

They also worked in a site visit with Mike Hayslett, vernal pool expert, while he was in town to assess vernal pool sites for the Kris Unger memorial. He hasn't submitted a report yet, but we do have video and transcripts of his assessments.

- [Nutley Street Development](#): Philip said we were contacted by a neighbor concerned with all the trash found along the Hunters Branch tributary, much of it resulting from previous homeless encampments. We passed his concerns on to the Providence District office, which arranged for the office park that owns the woods to conduct a cleanup.

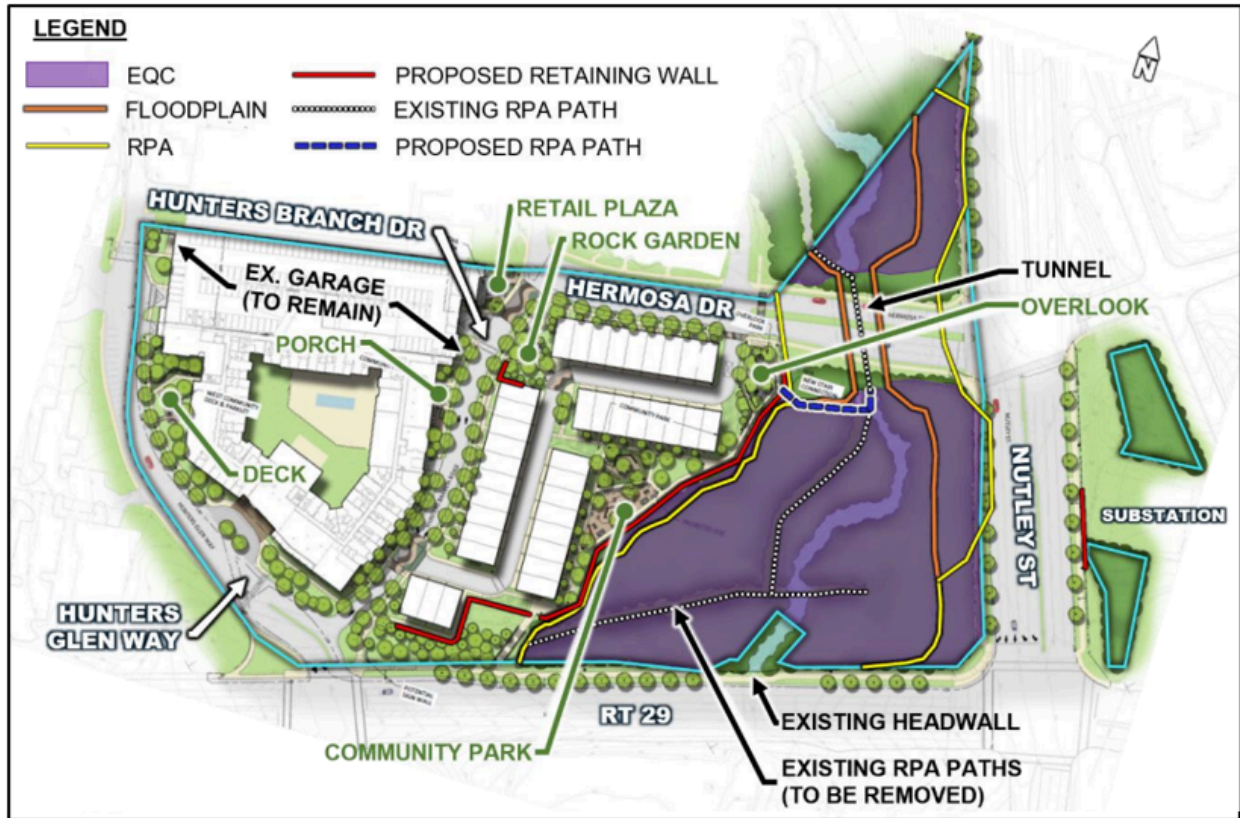
The Providence office also provided an update on the redevelopment plan for the site. It was a pleasant change of pace from the usual degradation of Resource Protection Areas we usually see. The woods will be left untouched, an asphalt trail will be removed, and a 5-year invasives program will be in place.

Unfortunately, the Accotink Gravity Sewer will also go through here, ruining much of what the planners hoped to preserve.

FACC submitted [comments](#) on this redevelopment in 2023.



Trash along Hunters Branch



The redevelopment preservation plan

- *Daniels Run Elementary School:*

- o *CareFirst Equity Week Dave/Avril (10 min)*

Avril said that we had about 20 to 30 CareFirst volunteers who worked on different parts of the campus removing invasives and weeding.

Dave said that he and Juan led CareFirst volunteers to remove the deteriorated old boat in the courtyard Literacy Garden and replace it with the new one. The installation went well and the new boat is very stable. Philip said that he returned to make some adjustments, such as



removing foam from the seats, covering the holes in the seats that turned out to be under the foam, and drilling additional drainage holes.

They also spent time during the event doing some heavy weeding and clearing in the Literacy Garden.

First voyage of the Literacy Garden boat

- *Kris Unger Memorial:* Philip said that Mike Hayslett of [Virginia Vernal Pools](#) conducted a survey of suggested vernal pool sites in three parks. We recorded the survey visits on video and he is preparing transcripts.

We can then conduct the online meeting to discuss next steps.

- Whither FACC:
 - o *FACC 20th Anniversary:* Philip said that we could still use some planning for some sort of event in December. He found this photo of the modest observance of our [tenth anniversary](#). Several were interested in doing something and will discuss possible activities.



Friends of Accotink Creek 10th Anniversary