



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 – November 18, 2025

Next Meeting: December 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](#).

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**Present:** Gary Bangs, Philip Latasa, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Peter Clark, Dave Lincoln, Brian Slawski, Suzie Foster, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting.

**AGENDA**



- *Represent FACC:*

- o *“Ocean” Film Screening, October 27, 2025:* Philip said that he attended the screening, where we had a table focused on urging people to contact the Fairfax City Council regarding the George Snyder Trail. There were perhaps 200 people in attendance but not all visited the FACC table.
- o *Fairfax City FACC Proclamation, December 9, 2025:* Sue Kuiler said that Katy and others had talked with the City of Fairfax about recognizing FACC at a council meeting. Now, Friends of Accotink Creek is to be recognized by Proclamation on December 9<sup>th</sup> for our 20th Anniversary and many years of service to the City of Fairfax. We need to write and send the draft proclamation no later than November 26<sup>th</sup>.

Philip explained that the Proclamations are a part of each Council meeting. What typically happens is that several members of the group come to the front of the chamber where the Mayor reads the proclamation and a member of the group makes appropriate appreciative comments. He suggested that someone other than Sue or himself needs to be the one making the comments.

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Avril said that we had three workdays in the Accotink Gorge in October. Two of them were very poorly attended, with just one volunteer at each. Our workday with the [Angelus Academy](#) was better, with about a dozen eighth-graders and adults. The students wrote nice illustrated [“Thank You” notes](#).
- [Fairfax PRISM Launch](#): Philip said that our First Fairfax PRISM event was one previously scheduled by Fairfax City at Van Dyke Park on October 26<sup>th</sup>, before the official launch week.

Avril added that we had several Fairfax PRISM events:

- ◆ Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> – [Accotink Trail IMA site](#), Providence District Supervisor Dalia Palchik attended.
- ◆ Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> -
  - ◆ Accotink Gorge, Mount Vernon District, staff members of Supervisor McKay and Congressman Walkinshaw attended.
  - ◆ Annandale Park, Mason District, organized by Friends of Homes Run, even though it is in our watershed.
- ◆ Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> – [Southside Park](#), Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn and Town of Vienna Councilmember Jessica Ramakis attended.



November 8<sup>th</sup> in the Accotink Gorge



November 10<sup>th</sup> at Southside Park

Dave stated that PRISM is fundraising to initiate a program through the Department of Forestry. FACC agreed to provide \$1500.00.

- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip said that we had another Americana Drive cleanup on Veterans Day. We had 59 volunteers, including veterans groups from [Team Rubicon](#) and [Wounded Warrior Project](#). We collected 208 bags of trash, 22 tires, 2 toilets, one three-wheeled motorcycle and an estimated 2.3 tons of loose debris.

There was a delay in VDOT picking up the piles of rubbish, which led to a rather negative article in [Annandale Today](#).

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This sign spotted in a car window says it all, summing up the feelings for the day.



- *Vienna Water Tower Park Tree Planting*: Avril said that the Native Vienna group planted seven native saplings at the Water Tower Park, following a Town of Vienna plan. FACC provided wire cages hopefully to place for protection from deer.
- *Tree Rescuer Herbicide Training*: Gary said that he had taken the FCPA training on October 25th. The training covered identification of invasives, techniques, and safety. Twice now he has utilized herbicides, once at Accotink Gorge and then at the IMA site at Lake Accotink Park.
- *IMA Leader Tiers*: Philip said that the Park Authority Invasive Management Area program has adopted a tier system for invasives leaders:

Tier 1 = Tree Rescuers

Tier 2 = Tree Rescuer plus all other species

Tier 3 = Current IMA leaders

Tier 4 = Experienced leaders who can become trainers for new IMA leaders

He doesn't know if this was done in response to our previous suggestions that volunteer leaders could be authorized to train new leaders, but since we did suggest it, we should provide what support we can. So far, it is just an announcement. Nothing concrete has been done yet.

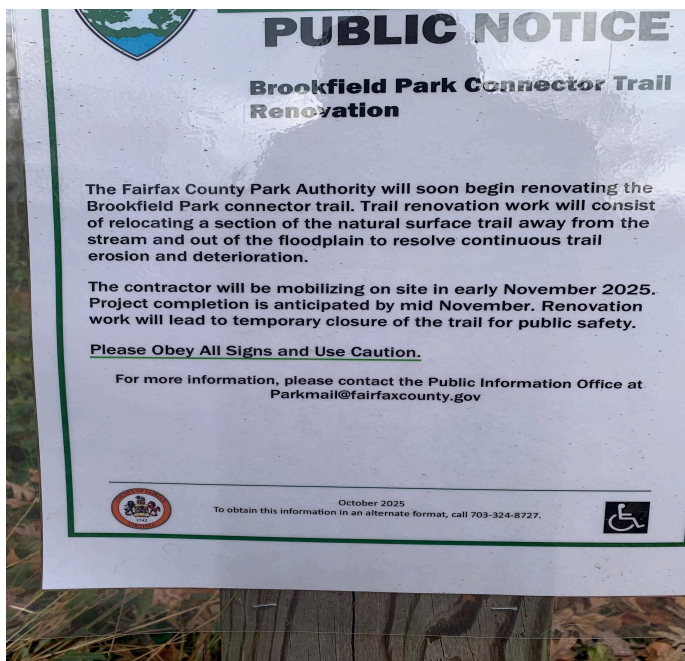
- *Lake Accotink IMA Site*: Gary said that he had attended a meeting with Gloria and Bev to discuss the future of this site. Beverley has said that her health problems are making it too difficult for her to continue with this Lake Accotink IMA site. Gary and Philip can fill in for the time being, but it would be best if a permanent site leader can take over, and Gary is not an approved site leader.

Peter said that he may be able to change his work schedule, but he is interested in getting qualified as site leader. Dave also said he would like information on becoming a site leader.

Philip said that Brayan Pozo has actually been sharing leadership for a few years, but he is only available to do Saturdays during about six months of each year. That might be sufficient except we have the partnership with the Mormon missionaries, who join us regularly on Thursdays. He also said we need to concern ourselves with the upkeep of the pollinator garden, installed at the request of the park manager, specifically to provide milkweeds. The milkweed population in the park has been much reduced with the increased mowing of the dam to meet regulations. The pollinator garden needs more upkeep than an IMA site where the only goal is to control invasives.

Gary said that he and Beverley were going to continue Thursday November 20, but that would be Beverley's last day. The following Thursday is Thanksgiving and no session will occur. He will followup with Anastasia Mejia about December.

- *Brookfield Park Connector Trail Renovation:* Gary reported that FACC had been contacted asking what we knew about renovations to a trail in Brookfield Park. Susan Jewell had seen signs placed within the park recently stating renovations would occur in the first part of November. Susan followed up with FCPA Trail Planner Jim Corcoran and arranged a meeting to discuss. On November 14th, he and Philip met them and discussed plans. Jim said that a current footpath along the western edge of the park will be renovated to accommodate better use by more persons as well as lead to sustainability. This will remain a natural/dirt trail, widened in places to no more than five feet, but will eliminate the current trail path that crosses creekbeds 4 times from Brookfield pond to Accotink Stream Valley Park and CCT.



*George Snyder Trail:* Sue Kuiler said that we have contacted the [Chesapeake Legal Alliance](#) regarding examination of the proper issuing of environmental permits. She has also asked them to look at Cinder Bed Bikeway as well. There have been no changes on GST at this time.

- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:* Philip said that last month he mentioned a September 25<sup>th</sup> meeting between FCDOT and the Amberleigh homeowners' association. He has prepared a [transcript](#) of the [video of the meeting](#).

- [Fairfax Elections](#): Philip said that the special election for Braddock Supervisor will take place December 9<sup>th</sup>. Democratic candidate Rachna Sizemore Heizer sent her campaign manager to our Americana Drive cleanup. Also, we just received her [responses to our watershed questionnaire](#) last Sunday, and placed it on our website along with the previously completed questionnaire from Ken Balbuena.
- [Kiosk Repair](#): Philip said that he and Juan made repairs to two of our signboard kiosks by replacing the acrylic windows. One had been broken by a vandal, while the other had become clouded by weathering. These are in Eakin Park and Americana Park. A third kiosk is located in Wakefield.



#### Clarity Restored – New acrylic improves our poster display

- [Beautify Virginia](#): Philip said that he had always seen the sponsored Beautify Virginia signs along the Beltway and wondered if FACC might have its name on one. Since there are now two vacant signs in our watershed near Little River Turnpike, he checked for information. It turns out there is a \$1500 initial charge, then \$495 per month, far more than we could handle. The program is run by a nationwide contractor which hires crews to clean the roads.
- [Watershed Sign Replacement](#): Philip said that the Park Authority is currently refurbishing and replacing its trailside signs. Please review the [mockup](#) of their proposed Accotink Creek Watershed sign and provide your own ideas. The link to the feedback form was in the meeting reminder and is [linked](#) to this Bulletin.



Accotink Creek Watershed Sign Mockup

- *Donations*: Philip said that we received donations of \$100.00 from his daughter and \$50.00 from his niece.
- *Kris Unger Memorial*: Avril said that on November 3<sup>rd</sup> we held an online meeting that arrived at the consensus of
  - Focusing the project on expanding the existing pool in Kutner Park
  - Incorporating volunteer labor
  - Having the 7<sup>th</sup> graders at the adjacent Johnson Middle School design the sign
  - Making the memorial portion of the sign a simple and discreet bronze plaque

A follow-up call with Mike on November 9<sup>th</sup> gained his agreement, but with the important caution that we must take a hybrid approach incorporating machines for the heavy work, especially compacting the base, while volunteers take on the lighter tasks. Mike suggested the project could be in place by the end of the year.

Sue K. and Katy are in touch with the City to obtain approval and collaboration, hopefully including the loan of machines.

- *Whither FACC*:

- o *FACC Board Elections*:

Philip said that at our December meeting, we will have elections for two board members, Purser and Conservator at-Large. The incumbents, Dave and Brian are eligible for reelection.



*o Annual Newsletter:*

Philip also reminded everyone of the need for photos and material to Beverley to produce our annual newsletter in time to be distributed with the December meeting reminder.

*o FACC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:*

Sue said that at Suzy's suggestion, we will have our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January to avoid the busy holiday season. Her and Katy are still working on arrangements.