



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.

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

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – December 16, 2025

Next Meeting: January 20 (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, Allen Porter, Katy Johnson, Dave Lincoln, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting.

**AGENDA**





- Represent FACC:

- [Fairfax City FACC Proclamation](#), December 9, 2025 Katy stated that six members of FACC appeared in person to receive the commendation proclamation from the City at a regular meeting of the Fairfax City Council. After the Mayor's reading of the proclamation, Sandy offered brief remarks in appreciation. It was gracious of the Mayor to issue the proclamation despite the friction we have had over the years regarding trails and development. Sue Kuiler authored the actual text.



**Presentation of the Proclamation**

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Philip said that he met Supervisor Storck by chance and took the opportunity to discuss Accotink Gorge issues. He also followed up with an email recap of what was discussed. Basically, he reminded him of our hopes for support of broader wisteria control in the Gorge and suggested he limit his ideas for improved park access to mowing the existing path.

- *Lake Accotink IMA Site*: Gary stated that he and Philip are continuing to maintain coverage of this site on Thursday mornings. We continue to have hope for one of the regular Thursday volunteers who is interested in becoming the site leader. We had a promising new volunteer last week who operates his own [landscaping company](#) and is interested in pro bono work. Allen joined our meeting but had audio difficulties.

- *George Snyder Trail*: Sue said that we are still working with lawyers to clearly establish that there is no requirement for repayment if the project is cancelled. After its initial interest, the Chesapeake Legal Alliance has not yet taken any material step toward taking up the cause.

The fate of the George Snyder Trail will be decided at a City Council meeting on January 13th. We are hoping to mobilize a full room of speakers and to fill the Council's email boxes. A memo on what is happening and how we should respond went out with the meeting reminder. With the bids having come in much higher than expected, the wavering Councilmembers may have the justification needed to halt the project.

#### [Action Memo](#)

- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway*: Philip stated that nothing new has occurred, but wanted to discuss the possibility of protest trail construction signs at the opening of the new Franconia Government Center whenever it occurs. Several expressed interest in possibly participating.

- *Fairfax Elections*: Philip said that the December 9<sup>th</sup> Braddock Supervisor special election was won by the Democratic candidate, Rachna Sizemore Heizer. Voter turnout was only 18% of registered voters.

Longtime environmentally-minded Virginia Delegate David Bulova, has accepted appointment as [Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources](#) by the incoming Governor. This will cause yet another special election in our watershed. Today, only one week after the announcement of the upcoming vacancy, the Democrats held a [firehouse primary](#). The official election date will be January 13, 2026. This is District 11, including Fairfax City & adjacent areas.

- *PFAS Lawsuit*: The Potomac Riverkeepers and Wild Virginia have filed suit against the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for failure to include control of PFAS chemicals when renewing Fort Belvoir's MS4 permit. Philip asked them about how we might support the lawsuit, but we don't have an answer yet.

- *Lake Accotink Dredging*: Philip said that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has withdrawn the \$60.5 million loan for dredging. The withdrawal does not prevent the County from applying again in the future. Meanwhile, studies continue to drag on, with completion expected in 2027.

At the same time, a member of the [Lake Accotink Citizen Task Force](#) produced a report with new perspectives on the challenge. Some of the points covered by the report include:

- It is premature to give up the option of a full 55-acre Lake Accotink
- Sheet steel cofferdam use would make a dry dredge feasible
- Dry dredging would eliminate the need for off-site dewatering of dredge spoils
- All neighborhoods benefiting from Lake Accotink should share the nuisance of trucking out spoils
- A smaller lake receiving the same amount of incoming sediment will simply fill up faster

#### [Report Slideshow](#)

#### [Full Mechanical Dredge Framework](#)



**“Perhaps next time they should not hire Rip Van Winkle” – citizen comment on lost funding**

- **Watershed Sign Replacement:** Philip said that responding to our comments on the first design, the Park Authority has produced an updated version of the Accotink Watershed Sign. They hope to have full-scale drafts within the next month.

Please review the [new mockup](#) vs. the [old mockup](#) and provide your own ideas. Please use the link to the feedback form [here](#) to offer suggestions.

**Accotink Creek Watershed**  
**Fairfax's Crucial Connection to the Bay**

The **Accotink Creek Watershed** is the **fourth largest** in Fairfax County. A watershed is where water collects and drains toward one waterbody. Here, water eventually flows to the Chesapeake Bay. This connection makes Accotink one of the most important natural areas in Fairfax County. So, by keeping our watershed clean, you are protecting the region as a whole.

**But what does our watershed need protection from?**

Pollution is a big problem! When it rains, water runs over hard surfaces, picking up anything in its path. This is called **runoff!**

**Your actions make a difference:**

- Using **rain barrels** and **rain gardens** to catch runoff
- Plant **native plants** in your gardens
- Scoop the poop and use less salt on roads
- **Volunteer** with your local environmental group

**Scan Below to Watch the Green Grow**

### Accotink Creek Watershed Sign Second Mockup



### Accotink Creek Watershed Sign First Mockup

- **Data Centers:** Philip said that on December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Supervisors declined the recommendations of the Planning Commission and of County staff to enact stricter zoning requirements for electrical substations built to support data centers. The motivation seems to be the dismal fiscal outlook, which Supervisors seemed to think could be improved by taxes from data centers.

We haven't been much involved in data center issues, but some of our collaborating groups, like Friends of Holmes Run and Nature Forward have been urging action. Philip had drafted a letter to supervisors critical of their latest action. The drafted letter will be amended to suggest rerouting the [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#) as a better way to reduce the budget shortfall and send it to all Supervisors.

- **Franconia Springfield Study:** Philip said that the County has been doing the Franconia Springfield Study to decide the direction of future redevelopment. This is already a densely developed commercial area, but it does have some remaining natural areas, mostly on the eastern edge. The planning area also intersects with plans for the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway, so we need to make our input clear. He added some [comments](#) to the online survey on behalf of FACC.

- **Virginia Legislation:** Philip reminded all that Avril generally travels to Richmond to address environmental concerns and asked about covering her expenses again this year. She was traveling at this time but will no doubt give updates in the future. He also asked if anyone else would like to try to keep track of proposed legislation to ensure FACC provides comment and potentially travel to Richmond during the session. The Virginia General Assembly session begins January 14<sup>th</sup>. We usually promote selected legislation we would like to see enacted.

- **Waters of the United States Rule:** Gary indicated that the EPA has a proposed rulemaking which would significantly restrict Clean Water Act jurisdiction over wetlands and other areas. They report this as an

outcome of the Supreme Court decision *Sackett v. EPA* (2023) and wish to better clarify jurisdiction beyond the previous administration. [Comments may be given before January 5th.](#)

- [Kris Unger Memorial](#): Sue and Katy provided some updated information on what may be needed with the City to move forward. Our next step is to put the plan in front of the department's arborist. After that, we will see what other approvals he thinks may be needed. Since this is the holiday season and many people take off work at the end of the year, it is doubtful anything will happen until January.

- [Whither FACC](#):

- *FACC Board Elections*: By acclamation, Dave and Brian were reelected as Purser and Conservator at-Large.
- *Annual Newsletter*: Beverley was unable to attend this meeting. Philip said he had talked with her and she was still working on the newsletter. She had indicated that she found the amount of material that our activities produced this year to be a challenge to reduce down to a few pages. The newsletter is expected to be ready to send out with our January meeting reminder.
- *FACC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*: Sue Kuiler and Katy indicated that they are still looking for a possible venue. They also were asking what to expect as to the size of attendance. Philip indicated to judge by the last gathering and how many people we can generally get to attend online meetings. Generally ten or less participate regularly. This generated some discussion as to days or weekends which may get more interest, as well as possible City of Fairfax persons who probably would attend if in the City. They will continue to work on trying to put something together.

