



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 – May 19, 2026

Next Meeting: June 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, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Dave Lincoln, Katy Johnson, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting. Also joining the meeting were guests Joe Do and Suliman Kamyar.

AGENDA



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- *Represent FACC:*

- *Annandale High School Yard Sale, May 2, 2026* Dave said that he and Brian represented FACC with assistance from a couple Boy Scouts from Troop 829 (and Troop 150). Since the school is nearby, we tried to stir interest in the issues of Americana Drive.

We were invited to attend the Yard Sale by Joe Do, of [Annandale Rotary](#) and a frequent collaborator on Americana Drive. Joe said that he has also reached out to the Green Atoms environmental club at the school to encourage collaboration. He has formed [East Fairfax Chamber of Commerce](#) which he invites us to join.

Joe said that he will be meeting with the Green Atoms this Thursday in their garden at the school at 3:30. He feels FACC would be a good organizational fit for the students to participate or manage projects. The Chamber may sponsor environmental projects at the school that FACC could be a part of.

Philip said that given that the school is so near Americana Drive, we hope the Green Atoms, and possibly other clubs, might take interest. As far as picking up trash, we know how to do that, but we seem to have no knack for effective community engagement. Picking up after illegal dumpers and chronic litterbugs is a fruitless enterprise. We need to reach the residents and instill some sense of responsibility for maintaining their own community in a livable condition.

- *Vienna Green Expo:* Philip said he staffed a table for FACC on April 23. He tried to emphasize the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway issues. There was some interest, but not much clear result.
- *Mount Vernon Summer Palooza, June 6, 2026:* Dave said that we will be tabling at Mount Vernon District's [2nd annual Summer Palooza](#), Accotink Gorge and the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway will be issues we will focus on. He has another event that day, so Sandy will cover it, possibly with help from Avril.
- *CareFirst Equity Week, July 15, 2026:* Philip said that we will join with [Lands & Waters](#) in hosting volunteers from CareFirst to work in the outdoor classrooms of Daniels Run Elementary School. We usually receive a donation afterwards, of which we've shared 60% with Lands and Waters.
- *Accotink Gorge:* Avril said that we had two workdays in the Gorge, with Immanuel Christian School on May 1st and Angelus Academy May 6th. Since it is better to cut wisteria in the fall, we had the students concentrate on garlic mustard and mile-a-minute. They did a good job of eliminating both species in our work area.

Philip said that Fort Belvoir has not responded to our latest email requests to discuss the Gorge. He may try making a cold call on Kevin Walter, base Natural Resource Specialist.

- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:* Dave said that we biked some of the main alternate routes, recording for a video that used the occasion of Bike to Work Day to illustrate the redundancy of the Bikeway.

Philip said a small group of us held a little informational protest outside the Government Center while Chairman McKay's Spring Social event was going on inside. We engaged persons entering and leaving and gave out flyers.

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A few of us staffed a table at the Amberleigh Homeowner's Association Yard Sale. The display was entirely devoted to the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway. The hope was to finally stir up some interest among the Amberleigh residents. Dave indicated almost everyone he spoke to was aware of the Bikeway and opposed it.

Philip also said that the first of our [nature walks](#) in the Cinder Bed Woods was May 17th. There will be another on June 7th. The intent is to make people concerned enough about damage to the area that they will take action.

- *Canterbury Woods Elementary School:* Dave said he will be working with Girl Scouts, students, and the science teacher to do an invasives removal project at Canterbury Woods Elementary School on June 6th.

Philip said that last month, we discussed the productive discussions during the Long Branch cleanup that touched on these plans:

- o Supervisor Sizemore Heizer would like to attend.
- o The rain gardens installed at the school could be a focus of the work.
- o The Willow Woods section of the [Long Branch central Project](#) is adjacent to the school. The project manager expressed interest in involving the school.
- o Supervisor Sizemore Heizer wants to promote public outreach for the Long Branch central project, possibly as an event at Canterbury Woods Elementary.
- o Public outreach is something we have long urged the project management to do more of, so this direct interest by the supervisor is a good opportunity.

- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip said that our next cleanup on Americana Drive will be June 6th. Everyone is welcome to join. For the past few years, we have done a June cleanup as part of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Clean the Bay Day. However, after 30 years of holding Clean the Bay Day in June, the Foundation changed the date to May. That was too much of a conflict with our spring stream cleanups, so we stuck with June and saved the aggravation of registering with CBF. Now we are calling the date Clean Americana Day.

- [Lake Accotink Dredging](#): Philip said that a dredging open house will be on June 6th from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the King Glenn Elementary School. He will be finishing the Americana Drive cleanup, so may have trouble getting to this event so hopefully others can attend. As always, we need to defend the freshwater mussels.

- [Potomac Watershed Cleanup](#): Philip said that we finished our spring stream cleanups on May 16th. Our spring stream cleanups concluded last Saturday. We had 209 volunteers who removed 242 bags of trash, 16 tires, and junk ranging from a bowling ball to half a piano. The cleanup included a race with shopping carts and a kiddie car removed from the creek.



Racing with rubbish - shopping carts vs. toy electric car (video)

- **VDOT Draft Landscaping Guidance** : Philip said that VDOT is taking public comments on a landscaping guidance document. Avoiding the use of invasives will be one area we need to express ourselves on. The document may or may not cover other topics like wildlife corridors and stormwater control, but we should say something anyway. Comments are due by June 7th.
- **Chesapeake Bay TMDL Comments**: Philip said that another plan is currently soliciting public comments. TMDL actions are at the heart of all we do, so we should get organized enough to put together comments by May 29th.
- **Fairfax County Invasive Species Game Plan**: Philip said that Fairfax County is putting together a comprehensive invasive species management strategy. He responded to a survey asking if we are interested in joining a charrette on June 2nd. This would be the first in a series of stakeholder meetings on June 2, 2026 charrette (10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Fairfax County Government Center campus).
- **Active Fairfax Comments**: Philip said that on May 5th the Board of Supervisors approved the ActiveFairfax plan. We have submitted comments several times during the plan development, hoping to direct asphalt out of our forests. The plan does make some concessions in that direction, but we could have hoped they had been stronger. He submitted additional comments, which are linked to the Bulletin.
- **Kris Unger Memorial**: Sue said that Mike Hayslett is working again on a written plan for the vernal pool that has been requested by Fairfax City. We have no timeline on how soon the plan will be ready.
- **Website Updates**: Philip asked what others felt about the proposed color scheme changes. Overall people liked the old version better.
- **Donations**: Philip said that we received donations of:
 - \$3000.00 from Vivian Morgan Mendez and Fernando Mendez
 - \$51.52 from Jonathan York
 - \$51.52 from Gustavo La Torre. It is now confirmed to be a recurring gift. \$600 per year makes Gustavo one of our biggest donors.
 - \$40.00 from Patricia Yu
 - \$17.00 from anonymous

Avril said while working solo in the invasives site in Southside Park a week ago, she looked in her tool bucket and found \$17 dollars. She realized it was a donation from someone walking on the trail. She used the funds to buy insect repellent for volunteers.



Vivian Morgan-Mendez

Philip,

FACC does an amazing
job of protecting our
most precious resource:
the environment.

Cheers,

Vivian Morgan-Mendez
Fernando Mendez



“Drop in the bucket” donation

- [Whither FACC:](#)
 - o *Annual Newsletter:* Philip said that we should all be writing very brief reports of our own activities and observations with photos suitable for inclusion in the annual Newsletter.
 - o Philip introduced Suliman Kaymar who we met at one of the Leadership conferences. Suliman spoke about his background and how he felt he may be of assistance to FACC. He was asked to write out ideas or a proposal focusing on Accotink Gorge invasives control or Americana Drive cleanup.