



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 – July 21, 2026

Next Meeting: August 18 (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: Philip Latasa, Gary Bangs, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Dave Lincoln, Katy Johnson, Peter Clark, Brian Slawski, Suzy Foster, Victoria Arellanos Pappas, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting. Matt Mullin, Mantua Civic Association also joined as a special guest.



AGENDA

• Represent FACC:

- *CareFirst Equity Week:* Philip said the Carefirst event for July 15 was cancelled due to high heat. They will likely reschedule in the fall.
- [VolunteerFest](#), Philip reported that this is an event organized by Volunteer Fairfax, the place where we usually post our volunteer events. It will be at NOVA Community College Annandale on September 18. Attendees will participate in a meal packing service project designed to

deliver 100,000 meals to local food pantries. Our role would be as an exhibitor staffing a display table. We are looking for someone to staff the table.

- [*Mantua Community Association*](#): Matt Mullin, Mantua Civic Association President, said that MCA has publicized cleanups by Friends of Accotink Creek in their newsletter before.

He went on to say that he had a great conversation with the folks at the Urban and Community Forestry Division, and are thinking of having them come speak in the Fall about invasive species removal. It may be nice to have someone from Friends of Accotink Creek on hand to answer questions from the audience as well. He will look into attending our Friday morning IMA site with Avril.

He further discussed issues about too much salt on roads and sidewalks in winter, and he will followup with Gary this fall on possible activities to address that under SaltWatch program.

We will try to have a representative for the Urban Forester invasive species presentation.

- *International Coastal Cleanup*: Philip said he had sent out a schedule for stream cleanups. There were no objections, so he will publicize them.

Victoria Arellanos-Pappas said that she is a neighbor from the Great Oaks neighborhood in Fairfax City and has just adopted Lion Run, a small street in front of Fairfax High School for cleanups under the City's Adopt-A-Spot program. She has offered to lead some of our cleanups in the fall and do additional cleanups during the year.

Philip said that we have received a request from VDOT that all Adopt-a-Highway groups conduct a cleanup from July 25th through August 29th. For us, that would mean our Americana Drive location. It's a real bother for VDOT to ask this out of our usual schedule, but we can try to think of options for a smaller-scale cleanup than the one we plan for November 11th.

- [*Cinder Bed Road Bikeway*](#): Philip stated that the Amberleigh HOA is pursuing "friendly condemnation" with a lawyer working on contingency for a part of any settlement. Amberleigh cannot afford the hundreds of thousands needed to fight all the way with the aim of stopping the Bikeway project.

In effect, the County forces associations to face financial ruin in order to oppose the taking of their community property. That same choice led all the individual businesses on the Cinder Bed Road portion of the project to cave in to the pressure earlier.

The others in the group of the concerned have been focusing on the eminent domain hearing that must take place if the Bikeway goes forward. With the change in Amberleigh's approach, that hearing will be uncontested, so anything we have to say during the hearing will be inconsequential. Nothing we have done so far has had much impact. Alternate ideas are welcome.

It is worth noting all the supervisors will be up for election next year. An alternate candidate to oppose supervisors could generate the attention we need.

- *Deerlick Park Invasives Donation*: Dave described how [Fairfax PRISM](#) appealed for donations to support a wisteria control project in [Deerlick Park](#). The location is outside our watershed, but an email exchange among FACC board members decided that supporting Fairfax PRISM would be of general benefit to us.

We donated \$1000 of the \$5512 goal for the first year of commercial control. We have heard back that our donation has prompted others up to \$3000 so far.

- [EarthWellRX Donation](#): Avril spoke about in another email exchange, the FACC board authorized reimbursement for purchase of 500 mosquito dunks in support of a campaign to limit mosquito spraying. EarthWellRX, a new Vienna-based group is setting up various places for outreach to citizens. They received a grant for handout materials only. The cost should be about \$550. Since part of Vienna is in the Accotink Creek watershed, the campaign will benefit Accotink Creek. EarthWellRX is also leading an invasive removal project in Morefield Park, adjacent to Nottoway Park.

- [Park Authority Outstanding Volunteers](#): Philip said the 2026 Park Authority awards recognized four volunteers working within the Accotink Creek watershed:

Avril Garland, IMA Site Leader

Bryan Campbell, Long Branch Stream Valley Park, Park Volunteer Team

Vivian Morgan-Mendez, Nottoway Park, Volunteer Program Coordinator

Carol Tretkoff, Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Resource Naturalist

Avril thanked everyone but pointed out she would much prefer Park Authority recognize volunteers by funding the programs, not events such as that.

- *IMA Leaders Apprentice Program*: Gary spoke of an apprentice program within IMA which was highlighted on [Annandale Today](#). Avril stated that she has participated already by qualifying Tree Rescuers.

- *Stream Monitoring Changes*: Philip said following up on recent information about changes to the recommended stream monitoring seasonal protocol, we will no longer be doing winter or summer monitoring. We will still monitor four times per year, but will do two of the monitoring sessions in Wakefield Park, at a [location](#) that was monitored in the past by Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District. The first session there will be September 12th.

- [Fairfax Elections](#): Sue said that there are 11 candidates for the six at-large seats on the Fairfax City Council. Three candidates are incumbents. Two of those have been solid environmental allies. One is more of a fence sitter. Another ally on the City Council is a candidate for Mayor.

- [Gateway Park Project](#): Philip said that for years, we have been anticipating the [Gateway Park](#) project, with the stated objective of restoring wetlands where there is now a soggy mowed lawn. It has begun, but seems to be following the usual principle of “*first cut down all the trees to make room for the machines*”. Right now, it could just as easily be mistaken for a building construction site. We can only hope the final result will be something appealing.

Our [Facebook post](#) on this topic prompted a commenter to share his [master's thesis](#) from 2011 that dealt with Gateway Park and the surrounding Fairfax Circle area.



Daunting view of the first stage of Gateway Park project

- *Nottoway Park Education Project*: Philip said that the Friends of Nottoway Park has funds available and would like to do an environmental educational project focused on the stormwater ponds in a high visibility central location in the park. Invasives removal, replanting, and educational signage would be a part of the project. Input and participation from FACC is being invited. [Nottoway Park](#) is in our watershed and the Friends of Nottoway have been active for years in invasives control and general park advocacy. We certainly would want to support the idea.
- *Foam Food Container Ban*: Philip reminded all that a few years back, the General Assembly passed a ban on foam food containers. On July 1st, the second phase came into effect, affecting all food vendors. In response to our Facebook post noting the date, a commenter asked how the ban is enforced. The DEQ website says local jurisdictions are in charge, while the County website seems to say nothing. We have written to Supervisor Palchik, Board of Supervisors environmental Committee Chair, asking for clarification.



- [Kris Unger Memorial](#): Sue said that she heard from Mike and he plans to get the plan to Fairfax City soon. That would be a huge step forward.
- *Website Updates*: Philip said that there are no new changes this month, but he hopes everyone will keep an eye on the website to comment on upgrades as they happen or anything that needs fixing.
- *Donations*: Philip said that we received donations of:
 \$49.47 from Kurt Doehnert, a regular donor who lives in Crestwood neighborhood of Springfield
 \$51.52 from Victoria Arellano-Pappas, the neighbor mentioned under the International Coastal Cleanup.

- [Whither FACC:](#)
 - *Annual Newsletter:* Philip asked if we should have an annual newsletter? If so, someone is going to have to take charge of it.