



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.

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – March 16, 2021

Next Meeting: April 20, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice)

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Present: Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Beverly Rivera, Kim Schauer
Guest: Tom Short

All via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions

Upcoming events of interest

- [Friends of Trees Award](#): The Tree Commission will be presenting an awards video at their next meeting (March 18th) includes our Friends of Trees award.
- Audubon Naturalist Society's [Community Action 101 workshop](#) at NoVA Annandale Campus, May 14 (\$20 registration)
- Our next [wisteria expedition in the Accotink Gorge is April 5th 1 -4 PM.](#)

FACC Subjects Discussed –

Opportunities to represent FACC:

- *Tree Campaign Kickoff*: Philip noted that Virginia Native Plant Society is planning a five year campaign to increase the number of trees and shrubs in Northern Virginia and they are looking for people to help with publicity & outreach. Email plantnovanatives@gmail.com. The kickoff organizational meeting was on March 18. Beverly is looking for schools who might want to join the effort.
- *Blake Lane Park*: The Board of Supervisors will hold a public Hearing on April 13, 2021 beginning at 3 p.m. to hear comments regarding the proposed conveyance of Blake Lane Park to the Park Authority. There is every expectation that the transfer will be approved, but we will send supporting comments to the Accotink supervisors. The next concern for the park is that the Park Authority will turn it all into paved parking lots and sports facilities.

Other Activities and Issues of Interest:

Vernal Pools: Virginia vernal pool expert [Mike Hayslett](#) surveyed selected vernal pools in the Accotink Creek watershed March 13th through 15th. Mike will be writing reports on the pools he examined and providing recommendations on enhancing the preservation and function of those pools that need our attention.



[Mike being interviewed by video crew](#)

While it was a bit early in the Spring for many of the obligate species to show up in the

pools, the highlight of the tour was a pool in Eakin Park, where we found masses of [Wood Frog](#) eggs and abundant vernal pool invertebrates, including [Isopods](#), [Scuds](#), and [Pea Clams](#). Two Pickerel frogs showed themselves at a pool near the carousel at Lake Accotink Park.



[Wood frog tadpole](#)



[Eakin Park Vernal Pool](#)

One disappointment of the visit was that the wetland restoration project idea at Beverley's invasive management site behind the carousel proved to be unfeasible. Mike took soil samples and determined the amount of fill that had been used to level the site in the 1960's erased any practical hope of restoration. However, Mike will include in his report ideas for preserving the existing adjacent pools and wetlands during the second phase of the Flag Run stream restoration project.

The tour attracted a crowd that averaged about 15 people over the three days, including several local officials: Supervisor James Walkinshaw, Braddock District; John Burke, Fairfax County Parks Authority Natural Resources Branch Manager; and Susanne Foster, Landscape Architect with Watershed Planning and Implementation Branch of the Stormwater Planning Division, Department of Public Works & Environmental Services. Mr. Burke's office oversees the program called "Helping Our Land Heal," with several sites where wetlands have been restored. Examples: [Elk Lick Natural Area Preserve](#) and [Old Colchester Park and Preserve](#). Ms. Foster's office manages [Stormwater Improvement Projects](#) such as [Flag Run](#), where the group explored resulting pools. She was on hand to explain the features of the project and trees chosen to restore shade, a key requirement for productive vernal pools.

Beverley is writing a story like last time for Supervisor Walkinshaw's newsletter and other community outlets. Kim provided many photos. Beverley had recruited an experienced volunteer video crew of Virginia Master Naturalists to document Mike's visit and produce educational videos for use by schools and others. Fairfax County Park Authority also provided support for the video project. The education aspect enabled us to apply our \$2000 [Virginia Lakes and Watersheds Association](#) grant to fund the visit.

Bamboo Initiative: Staff from the county's bamboo working group met with Supervisors Storck and Alcorn, and staff from Supervisor Walkinshaw's office. The working group will consider developing a larger strategy to address invasive species as a whole, possibly including bans on the sale of invasive species, enacting ordinances, and education.

Legislation:

Several bills have passed through the legislature on which FACC has already sent messages in support, with the exception of SB 1164:

- [SB 1164](#) "Advanced Recycling": This bill would loosen regulation of plastic waste plants. Passed the House and Senate. The governor's action deadline is March 31st. Philip will send a message to the Governor asking for his veto.
- [HB 1902](#) Expanded Polystyrene: Bans "Styrofoam" use by food vendors by 2025. Passed the House and Senate.
- [HJR 527](#) / [SB 1100 Item 373 #4s](#) Invasives Study : This amendment directs the creation of a stakeholder workgroup to assess the sale and use of invasive plant species in the retail, landscape, greenhouse, and nursery industries and consider measures to reduce or eliminate the sale and use of invasive plant species in the Commonwealth and promote the sale and use of native plants. Passed the House and Senate.
- [HB 2030](#) Neonicotinoid pesticides: Limits uses of neonicotinoid insecticides and permits localities to ban them. Passed the House and Senate.
- [HB2042](#) Tree Replacement: Permits localities to strengthen their tree replacement standards, especially for stormwater control. Signed by the Governor.

Watershed Disasters:

[I-66 Outside the Beltway](#): Philip (5 min)

DEQ issued a Notice of Violation carrying a paltry fine of \$24,375. Philip circulated draft comments to the core group and will submit them to DEQ and the Accotink watershed legislators with the suggested improvements. Anyone who would like to submit individual comments will find information on our I-66 page.

Potomac Watershed Cleanup: Philip has published the schedule for the cleanup sites, starting April 10. The posting includes precautions to stay safe in the time of Covid-19, including the requirement to maintain masking and social distance during the cleanups, and encouraging everyone to bring their own. FACC will make available masks, vinyl gloves, work gloves, sanitizer, and water. One site location April 10 shifted the Franconia Springfield Parkway site to the north end of Hunter Village Drive.

zMod: Philip noted the County's revision of land use planning called zMod, the exact provisions of which are not yet clear. The Board of Supervisors considered zMOD on March 9th. There was a large turnout of

70+ speakers, nearly all opposed in one way or another. The Board put off decisions to a future unspecified date. Philip is drafting an update to FACC's previous letter of concern.

Courthouse Renovation: The Fairfax County courthouse complex is located in Fairfax City but belongs to the County and is in our watershed. The County gave a presentation for Fairfax City residents on the long term plan for renovations. The area is almost entirely developed, so any renovations would likely be improvements in stormwater controls. However, the plan also includes replacing the last little ¾ acre patch of woods and its ephemeral stream with a building. The plans will be put in place over the next twenty years.

Stormwater Management Approach



•Graphic: Future courthouse plans - Vegetated roof replaces actual wooded vegetation

Fairfax Circle: Fairfax City is seeking input on possible reconfiguration of the Fairfax circle area. This probably has little or no watershed impact, but we will watch and see.

4104 Woodlark Drive: The trial was taken off the docket while the developer submits plans for a home that does not encroach in the seaward 50 feet of the Resource Protection Area while still meeting the civic association covenant for a 75' setback from the street. Philip, on FACC's behalf, has previously pointed out to the Chesapeake Bay Exceptions Review Committee that the covenant on which the civic association based its 75' setback is questionable, since it predates any consideration for RPAs, and it includes other antiquated provisions, such as a ban on ownership by people of color.

8211 Little River Turnpike: 8211 Little River Turnpike will go before the Chesapeake Bay preservation Act Exceptions Review Committee May 5th, details to be confirmed. This was a case where the homeowner undertook extensive clearing without permits and without effective erosion controls.

TMDL: Resulting from the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) Stakeholder Advisory Committee work over the past three years, DEQ announced that the [final SaMS Toolkit](#) is available for all to use. The Toolkit has many different recommendations and resources for a variety of audiences, and the [SaMS Summary Document](#) provides an overview of what you'll find in each section of the Toolkit and the target audiences for that content. A [2021 Salt Symposium](#), scheduled for August 3 and 4, providing insight into the latest installment of the salt management program based out of Minnesota, upon which much of DEQ's SaMS Toolkit is based.

7645 Hooes Road: A small development cleared a wooded area along Hooes Road a few years back. We were contacted by a potential buyer of one of the lots, 7645 Hooes Road, who was interested in stream protection. It turns out this is an odd-shaped lot of 2.3 acres with a small buildable section and 1.7 acres running along the creek entirely in Resource Protection Areas adjacent to Park Authority property. The potential buyer never got back to us after our response to his inquiry. If anyone is interested, it may be worth trying to interest the developer in a conservation easement or donation to the Park Authority.



Photo: 7645 Hooes Road - Odd-shaped lot oddly suitable for donation

Accotink Gorge:

Dave reported no progress contacting the developer of a project on the south side of the Accotink. Our [wisteria expedition is April 5th 1 -4 PM.](#)

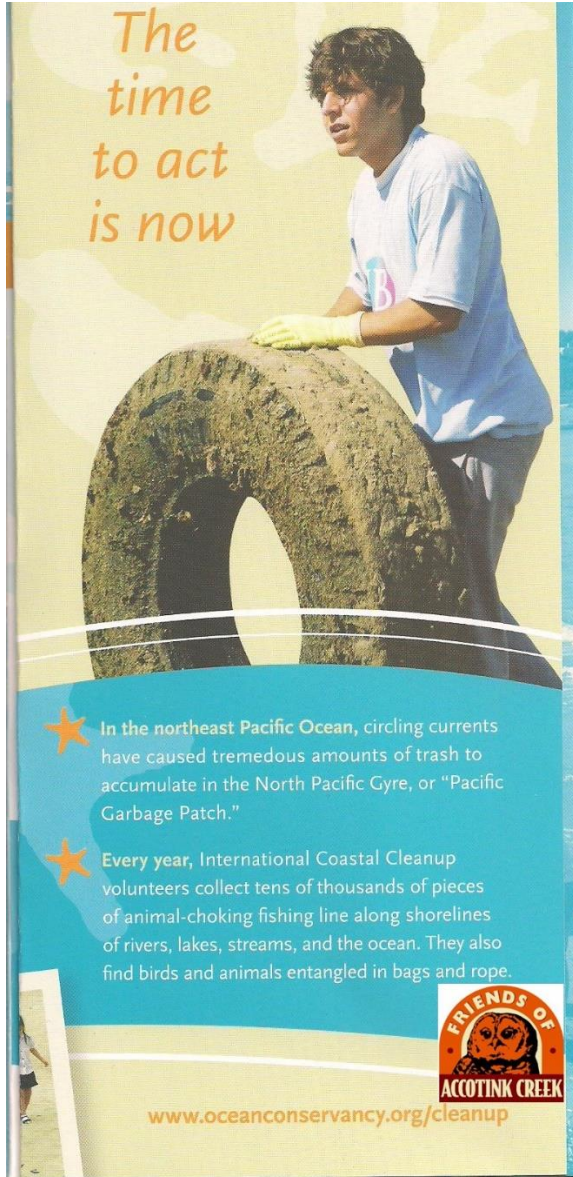
Donations: Philip reported we received donations this month of:

- \$167.62, the proceeds of Gwen Latasa’s Facebook fundraiser.
- As it turned out, the \$250 we received last month was from Sandy’s employer’s matching donation.
- \$17.19 from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile purchases between October 1 and December 31, 2020.

Whither FACC? (Business and Outreach):


- Bank Signatures: Beverly has investigated the question of whether she needs to be added as the second signatory on our bank accounts in lieu of Kris Unger. She reports the bank has her listed already, and she has no problem writing checks.
- Outreach Enhancement: Julie related the establishment of a FACC page on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofaccotinkcreek/>. Philip and Julie will look into linking it with FACC’s Facebook page and web site.
- Meetup Expiration: Philip noted that FACC’s Meetup subscription expired February 26th. It has not been a productive outreach channel. About 15 members switched over to join our email list after Philip sent out a last notification.
- Virtual Meetings: Free Conference Call is asking for donations of about \$7 per month. The attendees agreed on establishing monthly donations, and Philip will look into an automated approach for monthly donations from the bank account.

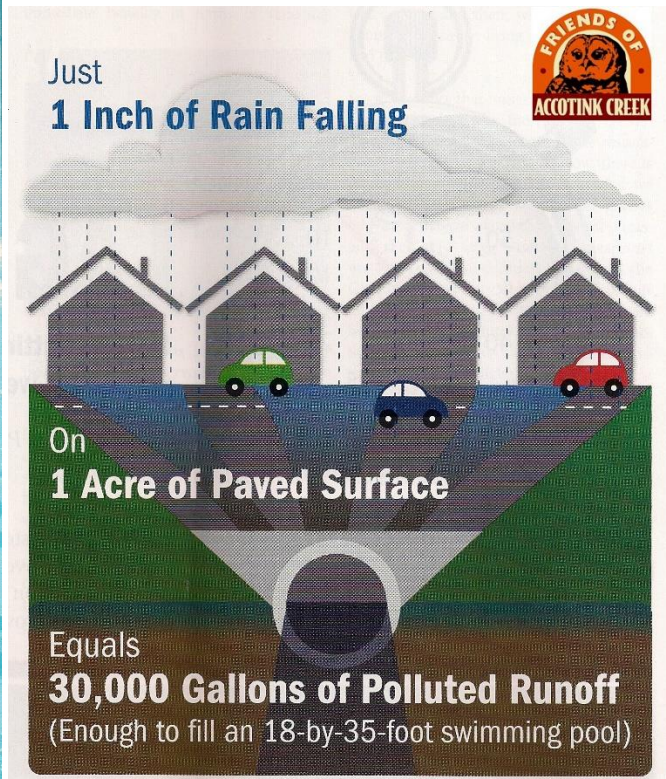
Posters Gallery: From the [poster gallery](#) Philip put together of watershed messages, this month's selection:



The time to act is now

- ★ In the northeast Pacific Ocean, circling currents have caused tremendous amounts of trash to accumulate in the North Pacific Gyre, or "Pacific Garbage Patch."
- ★ Every year, International Coastal Cleanup volunteers collect tens of thousands of pieces of animal-choking fishing line along shorelines of rivers, lakes, streams, and the ocean. They also find birds and animals entangled in bags and rope.


www.oceanconservancy.org/cleanup



Just **1 Inch of Rain Falling**

On **1 Acre of Paved Surface**

Equals **30,000 Gallons of Polluted Runoff**
(Enough to fill an 18-by-35-foot swimming pool)

