



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 – July 20, 2021

Next Meeting: August 17, 2021 (Third Tuesday of each month via on-line meeting: Login info will be posted with the meeting notice)

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Present: Julie Chang, Sandy Collins, Gabrelle Jordon (Welcome!), Philip Latasa, Katie Lau, Edward Lee, Beverly Rivera , all via on-line meeting, due to COVID 19 closures and precautions,

Forthcoming Opportunities to represent FACC:

International Coastal Cleanup:

Philip announced it is time to schedule our fall stream cleanups. The draft schedule went out with the meeting reminder. Absent any suggested modifications, Philip will go ahead and post the schedule. We will also be posting a cleanup on Americana Drive on Veteran's Day.

Cinder Bed Road Bikeway:

A group of allies met online with Supervisor Lusk June 24th and the group plans to meet again August 12th, according to Philip. The June 24th meeting included questions and answers with FCDOT staff. It was disappointing but not surprising to learn there are no studies or data regarding expected ridership or carbon emissions benefits. A meeting with Supervisor Storck is also being set up. Philip shared a [PowerPoint photo study](#) of alternate routes on streets and existing trails. The Bikeway is billed as a connection between the Fairfax County Parkway Trail and Metro, but it turns out the Parkway Trail actually follows Loisdale Road almost all the way to Metro already. Sandy pointed out we need to determine which alternate routes FCDOT considered. Philip passed along Avril's suggestion that one of us attend the Plant NOVA Natives [online meeting](#) July 27th to promote the Bikeway issue and also the Accotink Gorge. The purpose of the meeting is to plan events in communities this fall for the Celebration of Trees. Avril also suggested, "Perhaps a guided tour in the Cinder Bed Woods showcasing the trees, ferns, and other native plants? It may get Cinder Bed Woods on some community event calendar and help us get publicity. We could encourage those on the tour to contact their county supervisors."



Signs already point the way to an on-street option. Let's follow them!

Lake Accotink Dredging:

A Lake Accotink dredging community meeting will take place 7 pm on July 29 at Annandale High School – in person only. There will be a second virtual public meeting with the same content on August 5. DPWES will present alternatives for transporting and dewatering sites and methods, some at much

greater environmental cost than others. Philip opined that knowing now what the costs of keeping the lake are makes the option of the [smaller lake](#) seem more appealing.

The alternatives analysis was to be released to the public on July 16th, which was to begin the public comment period, but as of today, that had not happened. The public comment period was to end August 16th, but presumably will be extended.

According to a recent [Braddock Buzz article](#), Howery Field has been dropped from consideration as a dewatering site. A recent [Annandale Blog article](#) also covered the dredging.

Giveaways for future events:

Avril was unable to join the meeting, but Philip relayed her request to evaluate how useful are giveaways for getting across our message. Reviewing different attempts at recent events, Sandy offered that the native plants and seeds were popular at the Mt Vernon Expo, but we may need to make adjustments with seed packaging. Philip noted that the mosquito dunks were not popular at the Latino Conservation Day, but that may be related to limited attendance or lack of promotional effort on our part.

Accotink Gorge:

Katie explained a few people are discussing forming a committee focused on the gorge. She welcomed anyone interested. Julie stepped forward. Katie mentioned plans to visit the gorge, possibly to delineate some of the different habitats there. She also discussed the possibility of turning the gorge into an Invasive Management Area. Once a date is set, Philip will put the visit on our calendar and Facebook.

Other Activities and Issues of Interest:

[Mount Vernon District Environment Expo](#): Sandy described the June 26 event as being busy. She noted the bee poster got a lot of interest while the giveaway native plants and seeds were conversation starters. Katie agreed she had talked to a lot of people who were definitely asking about bees and the Accotink Gorge. Sandy suggested future displays should include a more prominent map of the watershed and also the location of the gorge.

Philip took the opportunity at the expo to briefly lobby Supervisor Storck's chief of staff on the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway and the Accotink Gorge, to unknown effect.

[Latino Conservation Day at Nottoway Park](#)

Reporting on the event on July 10, Philip mentioned we had room for three of our tri-fold displays - general purpose, Accotink Gorge, and "How Bicycles Kill Trees". He also had the opportunity to lobby Supervisor Palchik on the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway and similar projects. Thanks to Juan and Wendy for providing Spanish language skills!

Beverly and Avril purchased mosquito dunks as giveaways, which our board agreed by email exchange to reimburse.



A butterfly decided to spend time on Juan's shoulder at the Latino Conservation Day

[Long Branch Project](#): Sandy noted the project will be trying public walks and other activities, perhaps in July. She is waiting for the next meeting to review the summer field work.

[Frontier Drive Extension](#):

Sandy recalled the May 17th public meeting did not present much useful information. The VDOT response to our comments after that meeting, however, were fairly detailed, particularly regarding sound barriers and stormwater ponds. Philip mentioned that the response indicated a culvert option had been rejected in favor of a less impactful bridge.

A public hearing is to be held later this year or early next year with actual designs and environmental assessments available.

[Litter Legislation](#):

Sandy expressed regret that we've taken no action on this topic since last month. Philip advised that Plastic Bag Tax [draft guidance](#) for localities has come out from the Virginia Department of Taxation. Sandy will work with Sierra Club and 350 Fairfax.

[Park Authority Renewal](#):

On July 13th the Board of Supervisors voted to continue the structure of the Fairfax County Park Authority for 30 years. Philip remarked that we don't know if a change would have made any difference to anything we do.

[Lake Accotink Flyover](#):

The dam flyover project has to restart bidding due to bidder withdrawals. The anticipated start of construction has been pushed back to spring 2022.

[Tree Shelter Grant](#):

Beverley's IMA site won a \$400 grant from Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, to be applied to protective cages for the many trees and shrubs she has planted. Beverley explained this amount will cover a couple rolls of wire, which scouts and other volunteers will form into cages. Many of the trees were made available by a recent Virginia Department of Forestry giveaway.



Newly planted trees at Lake Accotink Park IMA site

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[Agritourism Zoning:](#)

Philip passed along Avril's request that FACC support Audubon Naturalist Society in its opposition to Fairfax County updating the zoning ordinance to allow commercial agritourism activities by right in areas zoned "Residential-Conservation", mainly in the Occoquan watershed. The consensus was to continue the discussion via email.

[Annandale Park/Civic Space:](#)

There are plans to create a new park in Annandale next to the fire station. It is a small park of about an acre and is not currently wooded. About half the area is in the Accotink watershed.

[4104 Woodlark Drive:](#)

4104 Woodlark Drive is on the market again. The asking price in the [listing](#) is nearly double what the investor paid a few years ago. They apparently hope to recoup their expenses incurred in suing the County. There is also an option to purchase the lot with house, at about \$900,000.

Virginia Tech Research:

Philip responded to a request for information from a Virginia Tech graduate researcher studying community education on watershed issues. She was focused specifically on Accotink Creek, but it seems only as an example to use in her paper.

Donations:

The information kiosk at the Woodlark Drive entrance to Wakefield Park was vandalized once again. This same kiosk was vandalized twice in 2020 by breaking the plexiglass window. Philip replaced the plexiglass again at a cost of \$47.69, which we may consider a donation. Philip also renewed our Volunteer Fairfax membership for \$75.00, which we may also consider a donation.

Vernal Pools:

After our vernal pool exploration in March, Philip asked if others would agree it is time to ask the status of our written report from Mike Hayslett & video from the Master Naturalists. The consensus as in favor. Philip will contact Mike and coordinate with Beverley regarding the video.

• [Whither FACC:](#)

○ Outreach Enhancement:

Julie reported finding the proper credentials to link our Facebook and Instagram pages is proving a problem, as it seems the same founder is required for each site. She has reached out to our potential old Facebook points of contact for information. It appears that Facebook itself offers no assistance or guidance that would help us, and we may end up having to "make do" with unlinked accounts.

Julie observed that other friends groups generally stick to Facebook and Twitter, and there is not that much activism on Instagram.

In the meantime, Edward urged all to share any interesting pictures, as the more content the better on Instagram. Philip suggested all our Instagram posts include a link to our website or Facebook page.