



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 – October 17 , 2023

Next Meeting: November 21, 2023 (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, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Dave Lincoln, Sandy Collins, Nancy Hall, and Peter Clark all via on-line meeting.

- *Represent FACC*

- o *Community Garden in Annandale, Sept. 30, 2023:* Gary attended at the request of Joe Nam Do, Annandale Rotary Club, who partners with FACC on the Americana Drive cleanups. The location is at the [Annandale Civic Space](#) (Renamed Eileen Garnett Civic Space). The garden will be for vegetables and provide demonstrations on growing, cooking, as well as other public information sessions. Although slightly outside Accotink Creek watershed, many of the targeted residents would live in the watershed. Some possible involvement for FACC may include native plantings, invasive plant education and removal, and litter prevention. Gary will keep in touch with the coordinators [Hands on Harvest](#).
- o *Earth Sangha Plant Sale, Oct. 1, 2023:* Sandy and Avril attended and setup an information table. Sandy said there were several different organizations attending. Most of the attendees were focused on getting plants, but some information was given out. It was a good opportunity to support Earth Sangha who does a lot of work in the Accotink watershed planting natives and removing invasives.
- o *[VolunteerFest at Daniels Run](#), October 21, 2023:* Philip stated that our sister group, Lands and Waters , will be leading an invasives removal and garden cleanup event on October 21st at Daniels Run Elementary School. Everyone is welcome to join as a volunteer or as a leader.
- o *Fairfax Circle Small Area Plan, November 2, 2023:* Philip stated that Fairfax City is planning for the future of the Fairfax Circle area. The southern boundary of this area is Accotink Creek and in some places the pavement is right up to the banks. It also borders the area where the pointless [Pickett Road Connector Trail](#) is proposed. We've already submitted a number of suggestions on the [interactive map](#). We need to promote the interests of Accotink Creek at the meeting.

- [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#): Philip said that the group of the interested met with Supervisor Lusk, his staff, and Fairfax County Department of Transportation staff on October 12th. Not much came of the meeting, but a few highlights were:

- The project is grinding forward on inertia.
- Supervisor Lusk was noncommittal on use of eminent domain.
- FCDOT seemed unconcerned with the recent expanded area of acidic seepage swamps mapped by Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, since no specific penalty is attached to violating that area.
- Supervisor Lusk talked of avoiding this situation in the future, but was vague on what aspect he hoped would be avoided.
- The railroad is claiming its right of way is larger than County maps show. This would seem to force the path of the Bikeway further into the sensitive wetlands.

- [George Snyder Trail](#): Philip stated that on September 26th and October 10th, the Fairfax City Council postponed votes on land rights acquisition for the George Snyder Trail extension. At both meetings a couple dozen members of the public spoke against the trail, while three spoke in favor. A number of those against the trail were primarily concerned with limiting access to their own neighborhood. Presumably the topic will again be on the Council agenda October 24th.

- [Plant Rescue](#): Philip said that despite having drawn negligible public participation, native plant rescues ahead of the Stafford Drive Stream restoration are continuing through the winter. Although the progress continues in clearing an area in Kutner Park to receive the rescued plants, we need to schedule a replanting date when the weather turns cold and watering is no longer needed. We are looking at early November, but no dates have been set. The City will have a public meeting regarding progress on the stream restoration planning on November 15th.

- [International Coastal Cleanup](#): Philip said that we concluded our fall cleanup season on October 14th. For the season, we had 100 volunteers who removed 143 bags of trash, 8 tires, and unusual items ranging from a Tesla hubcap to a firehose to a hobby horse.

The City of Fairfax will still have its [Community Cleanup](#) October 29th. Philip encouraged the organizer to direct attention to the part of Accotink Creek between Blenheim Blvd and Pickett Road, where we found conditions to be especially bad. The conditions there are not entirely attributable to the homeless persons living in the woods there, but that is part of the issue. Dave asked how this compared to previous years, to which Philip replied it was comparable.

- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip said another location with terrible trash problems is Americana Drive. We will have our next cleanup there on Veterans Day, November 11th. Philip said that he had not checked lately, but reports are that the conditions are as deplorable as ever. We are looking for a few volunteers with pickup trucks to help move trash to the dumpsters Public Works will provide. Of course, we are also looking for as many cleanup participants as possible and anyone with brilliant ideas on how to stop the problem at the source.

- [Accotink Gorge:](#)

- o *Workday with Accenture Oct. 9th, 2023*

Philip said that on October 9th, 14 volunteers from [Accenture](#) expanded the area we have cleared of large wisteria vines. They managed to free several trees, large and small. The Park Authority will follow up in spring with herbicide treatment on any resprouting foliage.

He also said that Costco has now purchased the area where we usually access the park. Having forgotten to advise Costco in advance, we were approached by security. There was no difficulty, except that perhaps we made a second mistake of asking the security officer to contact the tire shop about taking the dozen tires we found dumped and getting a negative response. The tire shop has always taken them in the past. We also need to be concerned that Costco may extend the fence around their store to include this area. I've asked the Park Authority to work out access issues with Costco.

- o *Moving ahead*

Plant NOVA Natives has obtained a rough estimate from the Park Authority of \$2500 per acre for professional treatment of wisteria. Philip has been asked to provide some refined estimates of the area needing treatment and who owns each area, which he is working on.

Once that is done, we will be expected to begin approaching businesses for donations.



Accenture volunteers hold aloft their trophy

- [Lake Accotink Dredging:](#) Sandy provided that the four subcommittees continue to meet and are supposed to have their draft reports ready November 6th. This is followed by the entire task force report available in the beginning of December. They have been talking with and asking for input from the recently hired contractor Limnotech. The report will provide findings to the Board of Supervisors who ultimately makes the decision going forward.

Philip provided that the newspaper Connection requested answers from the candidates for Soil and Water Conservation District Board. The [responses](#) of the candidates are worth a look. The silence of two candidates probably speaks for itself. Oddly, none of the candidates mentioned the one area which the board has control of, programs under [VCAP and CAP](#).

- [Vernal Pool Contamination](#): Philip said that while Lake Accotink filling with sediment may be an insoluble problem, the nearby vernal pool suffering the same situation in miniature in full view of everyone just yards from the dam is one that should have been solved four years ago, yet still continues to fester. He said that Gary's recently collected video evidence of the failure of the latest temporary fix is posted on the webpage. Also we brought this to the attention of the Franconia supervisor's office and the enforcement section of Land Development Services, but received only the most tepid response summarized as "we are aware and working with the landlord."
- [Woods and Field](#): Avril stated that Brian has arranged for the presentation of the poem at two libraries. Oakton Library on October 30 @ 7pm and Fairfax City library December 2nd @ 2pm. More dates will likely follow.
- [Donations](#): Philip said that we received donations of \$40.00 each from Elizabeth Train and James Galligan.
- [Whither FACC](#): Philip said that the FACC elections will take place at our December meeting for Purser and Conservator-at-Large. Both Beverley and Julie have reached their limit of three terms. The Conservator-at-Large position involves no actual duties. Purser, however, needs to keep track of our accounts and disburse occasional checks. We will be looking to see who would be interested in fulfilling those duties for the next two years, or more likely six.

Philip stated that he helped weeding the FLAP pollinator garden and saw their impressive new custom awning cover. Perhaps FACC needs better media presence at events?



New Friends of Lake Accotink Park awning cover

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