



## 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 15, 2024

Next Meeting: November 19 (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, Beverley Rivera, Katy Johnson, and Kim Schauer all via on-line meeting.



#### • Represent FACC:

- *Taste of Annandale:* On September 21 Gary and Dave staffed an information table at the Taste of Annandale. This event was held at the new community gardens and the central location of the planned Annandale Greenway. They reported it was well attended and there was significant interest in planting native plants, removing invasives, as well as what may be happening with Lake Accotink.



- *Latino Conservation Week*: Beverley stated that on September 22 they had an event at the invasive management area at Lake Accotink Park. They mostly did an invasives education walk, a brief period of English ivy removal, followed by a lunch of tacos prepared on the park grill by her husband, Juan. There were approximately 10 participants with participation hampered by the rain that day. Overall it went well, and it satisfied a FCPA requirement for an Hispanic event.
- *CareFirst Equity Week*: Philip said that on October 2 we had 35 volunteers from [CareFirst](#) who cleaned the outdoor classrooms at Daniels Run Elementary School. These spaces were created and maintained by our sister group [Lands & Waters](#). We've done this same event with CareFirst for several years, and each time have received a donation, which we split with Lands & Waters. We should be on the lookout for any deposits that may appear in our accounts.
- *Earth Sangha Open House*: Sandy and Avril said that they staffed a table at the October 6 Open house and plant sale. While there is a large crowd, people are most focused on buying plants and leaving, therefore there isn't much interaction. Still some people did sign up for the mailing list and discuss different activities. Plus Earth Sangha has asked us to attend and they support many of our restoration efforts.
- *Federation of Friends Meeting*: Avril indicated that she could again attend the November 6 meeting, but if it is in person only at Greensprings Gardens Park, that she could not do. Therefore, Dave said he would be able to attend. The Federation of Friends meeting is for groups who are friends of County parks. Topics may include the Park Authority budget, in particular for invasives control, training new invasives control site leaders, and authorizing volunteer use of herbicide. Wednesday, November 6th at 5:30-7:30pm at Green Spring Gardens
- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway*: Philip said that there is little new to report except that the group of the interested got together and again discussed the Op-ed we have considered sending to the Washington Post and other media outlets. Again, we cannot seem to agree to take even this simple action.
- *ActiveFairfax Meetings*  
Related to trails, Philip stated that ActiveFairfax meetings continue with three online meetings scheduled in November. There were also FCDOT presentations to the Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeways Committee on October 9<sup>th</sup> and Joint Planning Commission Transportation Committee & Transportation Advisory Commission on October 10<sup>th</sup>. He attended both and spoke to the Trails Committee.  
  
The FCDOT staff presentation included a very confusing explanation of the map lines in stream valleys being legacy markings that may not be built, but rather left to serve as wildlife corridors. The presentations also contained some telling statements, such as:
  - 'We build trails as transportation projects, but 80% of users are recreational.'
  - 'We have a list of 3000 unfunded sidewalk improvement requests'
 We should all provide input to the [ActiveFairfax](#) planning by December 20th. Let them know we don't need pavement in the [Accotink Gorge](#) or other woods and wetlands.
- *Accotink Gorge*: Avril and Philip stated that we have begun planning for a November 4<sup>th</sup> workday with herbicide support from the Park Authority. There was further discussion as to obtaining Costco permission approval and coordinating with Supervisor Storck's office.

Philip stated that in a chance meeting, Peyton Smith of the Mt. Vernon supervisor's office confirmed that he would be meeting with Aaron Campbell of the Franconia District office to discuss collaboration on the Accotink Gorge project. He also indicated they are making good progress on talks with Costco for financial support of the project, though he provided no specifics.

At the same meeting, Peyton also introduced to Philip to a member of Congressman Connolly's staff who also offered to help with liaison with Fort Belvoir and possibly locating financing.

- [International Coastal Cleanup](#): Philip said that we completed our last cleanup of the season on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Overall, we had 103 volunteers who removed 183 bags of trash and 6 tires. Some unusual finds included a rosary, a child's scooter, and a commercial cafeteria soup serving station.



**Volunteers of the Marriot Fairview Park**

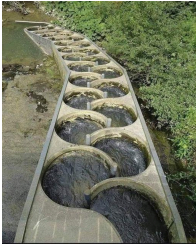
- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip said the next Americana Drive cleanup is Veteran's Day, November 11. He also said they met with Braddock District Supervisor's office and explored possible solutions such as putting up fencing.

- [Accotink Gravity Sewer](#):

- [Accotink Pump Station](#)

Avril and Philip stated that there is no news on the Accotink Gravity Sewer. But Gary learned there is a similar, but shorter project about to begin construction on Fort Belvoir off Rt. 1 to connect an existing pump station to the wastewater treatment plant on Pohick Creek. We had been completely oblivious. This project doesn't seem to involve disruption more than already present, and will be on Ft. Belvoir.

- [Lake Accotink Dredging](#): Philip stated that the lake will be lowered for several weeks in October and November to permit examination of the condition of the dam.
  - [Smaller Lake Survey](#)  
 Additionally, Fairfax County is seeking feedback on how best to preserve a smaller Lake Accotink. Comments are open just a few days longer, until October 30<sup>th</sup>. Everyone should comment to be the voice for the downstream mussel population. Also comment for fish ladders, and for habitat preservation in general.



**Fish ladder at  
Pichoux Gorge, Switzerland**

- [Vernal Pool Contamination](#): Philip stated that six months after hearing we were "3 – 5 months away from construction" under an "expedited review" and 5 ½ years after we first reported the situation, we learned from the Franconia District Office we are still at the point of planning to submit paperwork for construction permits. It is hard to comprehend.

He said that he was listening to CSPAN the other day when a former President Trump campaign speech was aired. One of the points he made emphatically was that anything over one month is too long for regulatory permitting approvals. That may be too short in a case like this, but 6 years is far too long.

Asheville and other locations are hurting right now from the remnants of hurricanes. Our region is overdue for our next taste of the same. When it comes (or even a heavy thunderstorm), let's hope this gully is not still left exposed to finally collapse catastrophically.



**Condition of the slope in September, 2024**

- **October Plantings:**

- *Lake Accotink Park Pollinator Garden*-Beverley indicated that we are waiting to hear from IMA program staff on plant availability.
- *Kutner Park Rescues*: Philip and Katy indicated we will be replanting the native plants rescued from the Stafford Drive Stream Restoration at their new home in Kutner Park. Our workforce will be a group of GMU students, but everyone is welcome to join.

- **Fairfax Elections:** Philip said that early voting is underway. Every resident of Fairfax City should vote for candidates that will favor preservation over pavement particularly in the case of the George Snyder Trail and Pickett Road Connector Trail.

We don't need to be residents of the city to assist as individuals handing out sample ballots to voters at City Hall. It is a daily activity through election day, and is usually busiest at lunchtime and in the late afternoon. This would only be something to be done as individuals, since FACC as a 501(c)3 cannot support candidates. Nor can we suggest here which of the two sample ballots you might wish to help with.



Early Voting is underway at Fairfax City Hall

- **Urban Forest Master Plan:** Philip indicated that the City of Fairfax residents or anyone with connections to the City should complete the Urban Forest Plan Survey by October 25th.
- **Newsletter:** Philip asked if we shall prevail upon Beverley to again prepare a newsletter we can send out with our December meeting reminder? Everyone should contribute stories and photos.
- **Whither FACC:**

*FACC Elections:* Philip reminded everyone that in December, we will have our elections for Primary Conservator, Secondary Conservator, and Chronicler. Sandy is completing her third term as Primary Conservator, so is not eligible for



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reelection. Avril and Gary may each serve one more term. Candidates, begin your fundraising campaigns!

- [Leadership Fairfax](#): Kim indicated that she would represent FAC at the October 22 event. Our hope is that the event will put us in touch with one or more capable and resourceful individuals interested in becoming part of the FACC leadership.