

Our meeting notes serve as bulletins of our activities, interests, and discussions, supplemented by your submissions.

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – January 21, 2025 Next Meeting: February 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: Susan Kuiler, Dave Lincoln, Gary Bangs, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Brian Slawski, Kim Schauer, Sandy Collins, Joshua Goodman, and Peter Clark all via on-line meeting.

• [Farewell Kris Unger](#):



“Be like the plants – grow to the light and never give up”



**In memory of Kris Unger, Primary Conservator of Friends of Accotink Creek
 January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019, and always a friend of the Earth.**

It was back in April 2020 when FACC bid its earlier, [happier, farewell](#) to this dedicated leader upon his move back to Canada. Here is our [online tribute page](#) for Kris. Many of those who knew Kris have expressed the wish to honor his memory in some meaningful way.

Jeanette Stewart of Lands & Waters plans to plant a tree in a ceremony at Yorktowne Square, where Kris was her neighbor and habitat restoration collaborator for many years. Jeanette is also planning a memorial invasives removal workday in spring at Daniels Run Elementary School, where Kris collaborated for years on the outdoor classrooms project. All will be invited when dates are set.

Beverley has also suggested a planting at Lake Accotink Park. We can certainly have multiple tree plantings.

As far as some sort of scholarship or educational donation, that might most simply be accomplished by a donation to [DC Inspiring Connections Outdoors](#). This might also be the most appropriate, since Kris frequently led these outings, including at Lake Accotink Park, as seen in his [online photos](#). Kim said she is talking with them about this.

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- *Website Changes*: Philip said that he is looking into possible changes. [Jay Kapoor](#), a student at the Landon School in Bethesda, got in touch with us to suggest ways we might make some changes and improvements to our website. He will be working with Philip. Everyone's suggestions are welcome.

- *Represent FACC*:

- *Fairfax PRISM Interest Meeting, January 9, 2025*: Gary said although he missed the meeting, he did review the summary email. Most of the meeting was Blue Ridge Prism describing how they became organized. Small groups are being formed to explore further.

Philip stated that his skepticism about this effort has been somewhat tempered by hearing from Vivian Morgan-Mendez of Friends of Nottoway Park that she endorses a strategy like that of [Blue Ridge PRISM](#).

The [Virginia Invasive Plant Coalition](#) may be an alternative to forming a new group.

- *Conservation Lobby Day, January 22, 2025*: Avril joined the meeting from Richmond where she is talking with legislators on bills of interest to FACC. She visited each legislator's office, 140 in all and provided each with a handout of bills on our [legislation webpage](#). The flyers went down very well, the photo of the tires made an impact. It was a good way of drawing attention to our bills. The cartoon of the leaf blowers too.

The cost for the handouts given to legislators' offices was approved for reimbursement.



West End Rugby Team on Americana Drive – 👍 Liked by Legislators 👍

- *Mount Vernon District Town Meeting*: Dave said that FACC will be tabling again at the Mount Vernon District Town Meeting, on February 8th, as we do every year. He welcomes help from others that day.

- o *FACC Meeting Guest*: Philip said that newly elected Fairfax City Councilmember Anthony Amos had planned to join us tonight, but City business intervened. February 18th, the date of our next meeting, is currently open, but could get filled.
- o *[Restoring Mussels to the Potomac](#)*: Philip reminded all that on February 23, 2024, Friends of Dyke Marsh will host a talk by Potomac Riverkeepers on their [50 Million Mussel](#) project to restore Potomac mussel populations. We have signed on as a cosponsor, and given our interest in mussels, we should be there.

The talk begins at 3:00 PM, preceded by a social hour at 2:00. The location is Mount Vernon Government Center.

- *[Accotink Gorge](#)*: Dave and Philip did not have much new to report. Waiting on cost estimate from the county, and no date on herbicide training for volunteers has been set.

Philip will be meeting Ronell Chatmon, Community Engagement aide, for Congressman Connolly, January 28th 10 AM near the Gorge, to discuss how we can advance the project. Others interested in going should ask Philip for meeting location.

- *[Americana Drive Cleanup](#)*: Philip said that we will have our next cleanup on Americana Drive on President's Day, February 17th. Everyone is invited to join and spread the word. More importantly we are constantly in search of ways to effectively communicate the need for dumpers to change their ways.

The Environmental Quality Advisory Committee [Annual Report](#), released this month, includes a section of focused on dumping issues and prominently featuring Americana Drive. The report's main recommendation regarding dumping is "A collaborative effort including Department of Code Compliance, Public Works, and the Police is needed." That recommendation is expanded in detail in an [EQAC Memorandum](#) of proposed actions sent to the Board of Supervisors.

We need to urge the Board of Supervisors to follow the recommendations. Brian offered to draft a letter of support.

- *[Water Main Breaks](#)*: Philip said that water main breaks are a regular source of sediment in streams. Most of them don't come to our attention, but a report on two, one on Bear Branch and one on Daniels Run, will be linked to the Bulletin.
- *[Springfield Town Center Salt Storage](#)*: Gary reported the large salt pile in the mall parking lot was eventually moved to shelter. Also Dave took sample reading recently at the Byron Park location. The chloride measured 8.6 tabs which is higher than chart calculates. SaltWatch guidance is to enter them as 750 ppm in Clean Water Hub. Normal level for this location is around 50 ppm. Anything over 250 ppm is extremely toxic for invertebrates.
- *[ActiveFairfax](#)*: Philip said that there is not much new to report, but he did want to call attention to the excellent comments submitted by [Northern Virginia Bird Alliance](#), which will be linked to the Bulletin.
- *[10270 Fairfax Blvd](#)*: Philip said that it appears the online auction sale for this property that we discussed last month fell through, according to the listing on [Trulia](#). If it can be put under greater protection by the City or Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, it would complete a string of City-owned

parks and preserves along Accotink Creek from Chain Bridge Road to Pickett Road, continuing there in County parks.

He did address the new City Council last week and brought this to their attention.

- **Donations:** Philip said that we received several donations:

\$100.00 from Philip's brother

\$102.53 from Sue, our new Primary Conservator

\$400 from Kris Butterworth, a neighbor collaborating with Dave for invasives control in the Daventry community, and who has also volunteered at Beverley's invasives site

\$435.00 from Philip's daughter in the first use of our new Venmo donation option

\$1000.00 from CareFirst for hosting a volunteer event for them. As in past years, we have sent 60% to Lands and Waters, who did most of the organizing.

- **Financial Report:** Dave reported that the 2024 [statement of FACC finances](#) will be linked to the Bulletin. For 2024, we had revenue of \$7608.01, outlays of \$2047.52, and an ending balance in all accounts of \$33,653.66.

- **[Whither FACC:](#)**

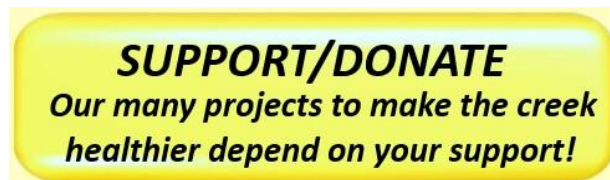
- o Philip said that Michelle Sullivan is a teacher at Mantua Elementary School with whom some of us, especially Beverley, have worked over the years, mostly on the [Meaningful Watershed Experience](#) program. She contacted us recently with a number of suggested changes for our meeting reminder emails:

1. Making them less resemble spam by changing the return address to "Accotink Creek Mail" vs. "mailadmin@accotink.org".
2. Adding a "Contact" button
3. A redesign for a cleaner, brighter look

This month's reminder included all those elements. Feedback is appreciated.

Michelle also requested more advance notification of cleanups so that she can publicize them through various school media. She asked us to create a slide show of just 2 to 3 slides with appealing visuals like clean streams vs. dirty streams. Her quote was, "We then want the kids to go home and tell their parents that they want to / have to (!) do the stream clean-up." Kim will talk with her.

- o **Funding Ideas:** Avril last month suggested changes by us solicitating donations. Philip has done some of that and asked for feedback for improvements. For instance Avril preferred the "[Donate](#)" page was less wordy and the "[More Ways to Support Accotink Creek](#)" had a plain background. Philip will be putting the new "Donate" button on most of our webpages as they are updated.



- o **Display Changes:** Dave is continuing to pursue display updates. It was approved for him to not exceed \$500 at this time.