



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.

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Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – June 17, 2025

Next Meeting: July 15 (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: Gary Bangs, Philip Latasa, Susan Kuiler, Katy Johnson. Sue Kovach Shuman, Suzy Foster, Brian Slawski, Jonathan West, Beverley Rivera, Yolande Miller Grandvaux , all via on-line meeting.

AGENDA

- *Represent FACC:*

- o [Braddock Road Design Public Meeting: June 2, 2025](#) Philip said that he attended the meeting and the good news is there is no change to the Danbury Forest Drive alignment, i.e., no intrusion into the floodplain.

Some other items of note are:

- Sight line expansion on the 495 outer loop ramp will cut into Wakefield Park.
- The number of stormwater ponds will be 10, vs. the 21 at one time considered.
- There will be 16 retaining walls, adding up to 4100 linear feet.
- Estimated tree loss is 9.3 acres.
- Construction should begin in fall 2030 and continue for 1 to 3 years.
- VDOT is pleading insufficient funds for street tree planting. Instead, it is asking civic associations to take responsibility for planting and maintenance.

Attendance seemed to be about 300 persons. Public speakers were mostly concerned with traffic issues, but three or four spoke against the excess tree loss required by shared use paths on both sides.

Unintended symbolism may be too accurate at the Braddock Road public meeting.



Environmental pointed to the trash can? Stormwater management missing in action?

- o [Mount Vernon Summer Palooza](#): June 7, 2025 Philip provided a summary of the meeting which he had received from Dave. Neither Dave or Sandy were able to attend tonight's meeting. There were good crowds. Despite the previous rainy day, the weather turned sunny & muggy. One visitor, with an interior design business, got excited about the invasive vines displayed, thinking they might be of interest for decorating. There were discussions with some of the district staff members.



Friends of Accotink Creek at Mount Vernon District Summer Palooza

- o [Urban Forest Master Plan: June 11, 2025](#) Katy and Philip provided details about this meeting. Fairfax City is seeking citizen input for its first-ever Urban Forest Master Plan. There will be future meetings and comments may currently be submitted online. The term “urban forest” loosely includes every tree in the City. When voting on options and commenting, please speak up for native species and for preservation of the last bits of actual forest habitat that remain. It may be worth mentioning that preservation of forest habitat should include scaling back overly ambitious stream reengineering plans.
- o [Draper Drive Park Mural Ribbon Cutting](#): Philip reported on the upcoming event. Fairfax City has installed a new mural in Draper Drive Park and will have a ribbon-cutting on June 25th. It’s not anything of particular importance, but he found it impressive, fascinating, and mystifying. The mural depicts a variety of wildlife species, almost all of them eating items of trash.

The City’s [bid solicitation](#) offers an explanation, saying, “The goal of the mural is to raise awareness and inspire action towards environmental cleanup, waste reduction, and pollution and litter mitigation”, but that seems unlikely to be understood by viewers.



New Draper Drive Park mural - Magnificent Nature, but why is everyone munching on trash?

- o [Lake Accotink Dredging Open House](#): Philip said that there will be a dredging open house July 19th at Glen Park Elementary School. There doesn’t seem to be any reason to expect much news to be revealed. Event is from 3-5 pm and visitors can come anytime during that period to look at display boards indicating “progress.”
- o [Board & Brew](#): Philip said that we have attended two Board & Brew events sponsored by Leadership Fairfax without result. Upcoming event will be October 22. These events are intended to bring together experienced leaders looking to serve on a nonprofit board that need them.

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Philip reminded all that we haven't taken any steps since last month to fix dates for fall wisteria control. Katy said that she has had some followup from naturalists who would like to get involved if dates get set.
- [Americana Drive Cleanup](#): Philip said that we had our Clean the Bay Day cleanup on Americana Drive on June 7th. We had 53 volunteers who collected 137 bags of trash (including 47 bags left for us by [Operation Stream Shield](#) , which had been there the prior week.) We also collected an estimated $\frac{3}{4}$ ton of miscellaneous debris. Items found included the usual construction dumping, but there was very little dumped lumber and only two tires. Along with the inevitable toilet, we found a Samsung mobile phone, snow chains, Guatemalan coins, and most unusual of all, a [keychain amulet of money, abundance, luck and prosperity](#).



Ironic - American flag abandoned on Americana Drive



Mystic symbols of the [amulet of money, abundance, luck and prosperity](#)

- [Accotink Gravity Sewer](#): Sue Kovach Shuman said that on June 6th, Avril, Philip and others met with Supervisor Palchik and staff from Wastewater Management and the Park Authority. They met along the trail where we have been requesting a realignment of the sewer to avoid the wooded wetlands. Unfortunately, in the first few minutes, our hopes were dashed when the project manager announced that the new pipe would not fit beneath the trail and that both existing pipes would remain in service. It seems there is nothing to be done except advocate for the best replacements possible for the vernal pools that will be obliterated.
- [George Snyder Trail](#): Sue Kuiler said the June 10th City Council meeting was a major setback, when a majority of the Council voted to solicit bids for building the entire length of the George Snyder Trail through the forested preserves along Accotink Creek. The main motivation was the daunting prospect of having to pay back as much as \$3.7 million to VDOT if the original plan did not proceed. The battle is not yet over and will not be until the bulldozers begin their dirty work!

We are exploring other options such as finding out if the city is, in fact, required to repay funds already expended; developing an action plan if the bid comes in higher than the estimate; heading off potential action by city staff and the Council to circumvent the Chesapeake Bay Act Ordinance; and grounds for an injunction.

Philip predicted that if this trail is built as planned, we will see major levels of buyer's remorse when the advocates see what is being wrought in their name. "I didn't know it would be like THAT!", is likely to be heard over and over.

- [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#): Philip said that the Virginia Native Plant Society led two nature walks on May 18th and June 1st in the Newington Conservation Site. The walks were also recorded by a professional videographer. A few volunteers went out and searched for the Small whorled pogonia in hopes its discovery might make a difference, but had no luck.

The group of the interested is supposed to meet with Supervisor Lusk on a date yet to be determined in June. There will be another meeting on August 14th that will include FCDOT staff. It is pretty clear all our arguments are being brushed away. I don't know what sort of drastic action would convince the Supervisor and planners to change the route.



[Walk & Talk in the Newington Conservation Site](#)

- [Vernal Pool Sediment Contamination](#): Philip said that we have been informed the last needed permit was approved on April 4, 2025. This is one year after we were assured we were three months away from work beginning. We will have to see if months turn into years once again. This mess has been unresolved since 2019 primarily due to lack of prioritization of an environmental correction by Land and Development Services for permit issuances.

- [Plan Forward](#): Philip said that he won't pretend to understand what Plan Forward is, but he gathered it will bring important changes to the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, moving "from preservation to flexibility".

Philip went ahead and submitted [comments](#) on behalf of FACC and encouraged anyone who thinks they can comprehend this to take a closer look at it.

[Plan Amendment 2022-CW-2CP](#)

- *Countywide Invasives Strategy*: Dave was unable to attend this meeting, but he provided a summary for Philip. Philip said that the Braddock District Supervisor's office let him know the Urban and Community Forestry Division is working on a County invasives control plan. The community will be notified when the County is ready for citizen input.

While tabling at the Mt Vernon Palooza event for Friends of Accotink Creek, and in talking up the need for Invasive Management Area volunteers with District staff (Peyton Smith, Diego Rodriguez Cabrera), they asked whether Volunteer Fairfax is involved with FCPA's IMA and Tree Rescuer programs. It turns out IMA events are already listed there, if one knows where to look.

- *Fort Belvoir PFAS Discharge*: Philip said that on June 2nd, Virginia DEQ had a public hearing on Fort Belvoir's stormwater discharge permit for Accotink Creek. He was not able to be there, but submitted [comments](#) on behalf of FACC, following the [template](#) provided by Wild Virginia. The issue Wild Virginia is pointing out is the known presence of PFAS chemical contamination, but the lack of any inclusion of that problem in the draft permit.

- *FLAP Adopt-a-Highway*: Philip said that the Friends of Lake Accotink Park has adopted the stretch of Braddock Road just outside the Beltway through the [Adopt-A-Highway](#) program. We may see their signs appearing soon. FACC has a sign on Americana Drive.

- *Daniels Run Elementary School*:

- o *Literacy Garden Boat Replacement*

Philip said that we seem to be making headway on this project now. Juan is going to select a boat for sale on line. Then we will set a date to remove the old boat and install the new one. Helping hands will be welcome. In our May meeting we agreed that FACC could finance the boat purchase, although the school may yet come up with the funds. Juan discussed the boat that was available, and FACC board approved the purchase.

- o *CareFirst Equity Week*

Philip said that we are still expecting the CareFirst volunteer group to be at Daniels Run July 16th, as they have done for several years. They usually provide a decent size donation, which we have always given 2/3 to Lands and Waters.

- *Whither FACC*:

- o *FACC 20th Anniversary*:

Philip said that he produced the two graphics you see here to note the 20th Anniversary of Friends of Accotink Creek, coming up this December. They are pretty basic. 'He'd welcome anyone who would like to work out something more impressive. And if someone would like to work on text for an anniversary page, that would be welcome also.

We could use some planning for some sort of event in December.

