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 – October 21, 2025
Next Meeting: November 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: Gary Bangs, Philip Latasa, Sandy Collins, Avril Garland, Katy Johnson, Beverley Rivera, Brian Slawski, Suzie Foster, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting.

AGENDA:

- *Represent FACC:*
  - *Annual Climate Action Conference, October 18, 2025*: Sandy said overall it was a good conference to attend. There were quite a few people and they were interested in our mission and programs. FACC shared a table with Friends of Holmes Run at this event. Brian said that

the focus of the conference was the impact of climate change on water and improving stormwater runoff.

We took advantage of the theme to emphasize protecting water by protecting forest, specifically naming the case of the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway. Congressman Walkinshaw and Supervisor Jimenez attended.

- *"Ocean" Film Screening, October 27, 2025*: Philip said that this is a screening and panel discussion of the documentary "Ocean" narrated by David Attenborough at the Cinema Arts Theatre in Fairfax City. The panel will be persons we know and have worked with over the years, Shannon Curtis of Stormwater Planning Division, Whitney Redding of Friends of Holmes Run, and Dean Naujoks of Potomac Riverkeepers. Katy said that these films have pretty good attendance but normally you can find seating for late arrivals who had not registered.

  This screening is part of the Climate Action NOW Monthly Monday Eco Flicks series.

• *Accotink Gorge*: Avril said that we began our series of fall wisteria workdays in the Gorge on October 18th. This was our first workday since the Park Authority authorized volunteer leaders to use herbicide. We divided volunteers into three teams – one to make each section accessible by cutting and removing most of the length of each vine, one to make a fresh cut on each vine to receive the herbicide, and one to apply herbicide to the cut with a sponge applicator.

We had hoped to be conducting these workdays in partnership with Fairfax Master Naturalists, but it seems that arrangement needed a bit more work.

We have additional workdays scheduled October 25th, October 29th with Angelus Academy, and November 8th as part of the Fairfax PRISM launch.

• *Fairfax PRISM Launch*: Avril indicated that as part of their launch, Fairfax PRISM is coordinating a series of invasives control events November 8th to 16th, inviting elected officials.

Events in our watershed:

- Oct. 26th – Van Dyck Park, Fairfax City
- Nov. 7th – Hunters Branch, Providence District
- Nov. 8th -
  - Accotink Gorge, Mount Vernon District
  - Annandale Park, Mason District
  - Daventry, Franconia District
- Nov. 10th – Southside Park, Hunter Mill District and Town of Vienna
- Nov. 17th – Southside Park

Avril indicated that the events at Hunters Branch and Southside Park are her regular weekly invasives workdays. Invitations have gone out to Supervisors Palchik and Alcorn, Delegate Siebold, and the Vienna Town Council.

Katy discussed that on October 26th PRISM is piggybacking on an event previously scheduled by Fairfax City.

- *Vienna Invasives*:
  - *Vienna Water Tower Park*
    Avril said that the Town of Vienna has approved a project to plant 7 or so native trees in the informal pocket park at the water tower on Tapawingo Street. It will be volunteer run and volunteer maintained. There is a small grove of native trees where she has been removing invasive species.

  - *Vienna Herbicide Authorization*
    The Vienna Parks department has agreed to allow volunteer use of herbicide by invasives volunteers but specifics are yet to be worked out.

- *International Coastal Cleanup:* Philip said that *w*e finished our International Coastal Cleanup season October 11th. For the season, we had 198 volunteers, who collected 230 bags of trash, 5 tires, 4 shopping carts, and oddities including a rubber duck, a fire extinguisher, a rosary, a child's scooter, and an electric rental scooter.

The divine confronts the demonic at our October 4th cleanups

• *George Snyder Trail*: Sue said that the big news was the bids came in much higher than anticipated. So now the city is faced with deciding how to proceed. It will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

A news article went out in the Fairfax Independent newspaper September edition laying out how the contract terms between the City and VDOT do not require repayment of funds if the project is cancelled. Several of us spoke before the City Council to reemphasize the point.

• *Accotink Gravity Sewer*: Philip said that we received the 100% drawings and specifications from the project manager weeks ago, but he has not had time to thoroughly go through them.

• *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway*: Philip said that well known regional botanist Rod Simmons sent a letter to DEQ providing a critique of the latest delineation of the acidic seepage swamp habitat. He also pointed out deficiencies in permit applications. The Northern Virginia Bird Alliance submitted a letter in support of Rod's, and I signed on for FACC.

On September 25th, FCDOT met with the Amberleigh homeowners' association. Philip said that he had gotten as far into the video recording of the meeting as one jarring admission from the FCDOT presenter that he was unfamiliar with the term Dark Sky Lighting. Philip has been trying to prepare a transcript of the video of the meeting..

• *Franconia to Lorton Third Track*: Philip said that he received some documentation from the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority regarding their projects between Franconia and Lorton. He is still evaluating it.

Meeting Display maps 20250911
Property Takings
NEPA Revaluation
Wetlands & Stream Impacts

• *Fort Belvoir PFAS Hearing*: Philip said that DEQ did the expected thing and renewed the Fort Belvoir MS4 permit without requiring any monitoring or control of PFAS. This was despite urging from environmental groups during and before the September 15th permit hearing,

Belvoir MS4 Permit
Belvoir MS4 Fact Sheet

The language of the permit fact sheet included references to two TMDL's that we may have been unaware of – a bacteria TMDL and a PCB TMDL, both affecting Lower Accotink Creek.

• *Daniels Run Elementary School*:

- *CareFirst /Accenture Day of Service*: Philip said on October 13th, we collaborated with Lands & Waters to host 23 corporate volunteers at Daniels Run Elementary for the CareFirst /Accenture Day of Service. One of the tasks was cleaning the outdoor educational signs.

  We had earlier been concerned that new cumbersome volunteer screening procedures by the school system would prevent the event happening. A delay in implementation of the rules saved us this time, but this may be an obstacle in the future.

We have a nice little video on Facebook showing the results.

CareFirst / Accenture volunteers got things clean

• *4104 Woodlark Drive*: Philip said that this lot, near NVCC, lies entirely in the floodplain and Resource Protection Area of an unnamed tributary of Accotink Creek. A proposal to build on the lot was the subject of a contentious dispute in 2018 – 2019. The proposal was rejected by every level of appeal, including unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors. A lawsuit against the Board also failed.

Now, the building proposal has risen again like a zombie in darkness, with all permits being approved by Land Development Services without seeing fit at any point in the renewed process to advise the Braddock District office. Although the plans have been adjusted further away from the stream to meet minimal legal requirements, this is an affront to the well being of our watershed and to the primacy of elected officials.

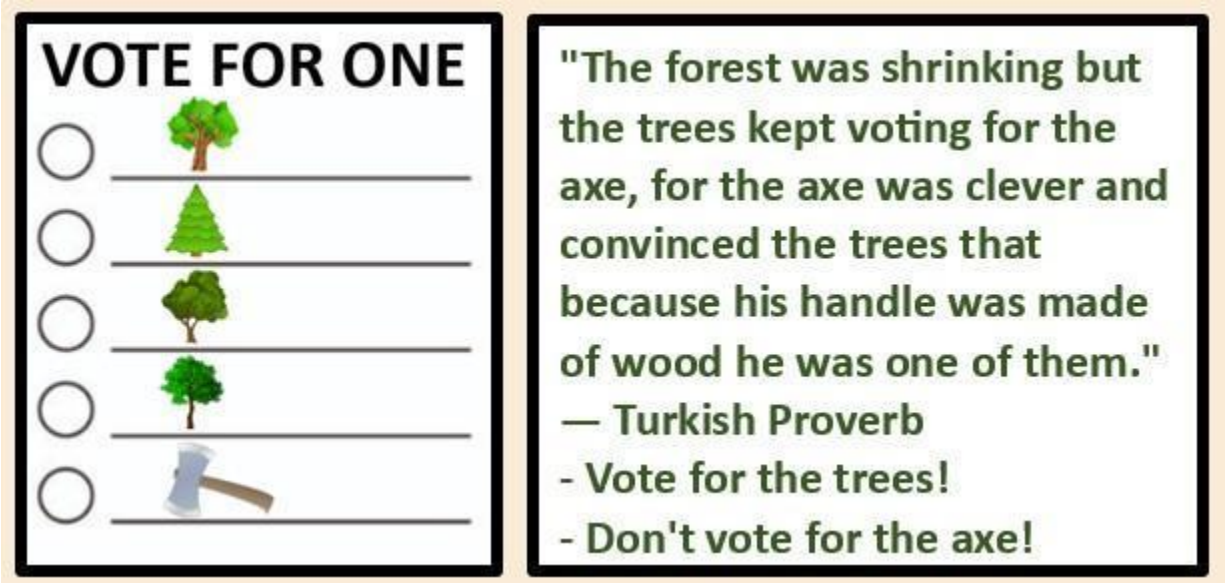
This may be the subject of a hearing by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exception Review Committee in November.

• *VDOT TMDL*: Philip stated that the Accotink Creek TMDL's for sediment and chloride were finalized in 2017, yet action (or the promise of action) must await the renewal of the MS4 permit for each jurisdiction. A draft of VDOT's action plan is to be released November 21st for public comment.

Sample Action Plan - TMDL Action Plan for the James, Potomac, Rappahannock, and York River

• *Fairfax Elections*: Philip stated that he has brought our elections page more or less up to date. We received the watershed questionnaire responses from Braddock District Supervisor candidate Ken Balbuena.

The Braddock Supervisor candidates forum may also be useful



• *Donations*: Philip said that this month we received:
$1,000 from Betsy Martin, our friend and ally from Friends of Little Hunting Creek

Through the Riggs Cove Foundation:
$1.000 donated by The Scott and Marya Lundgren Family
$500 donated by Mr. and Mrs. Aldus and Esther Chapin

$500 from American President Lines, which participated in our fall stream cleanups.

• *Kris Unger Memorial*: Avril said that she will try to line up a virtual meeting to discuss next steps on memorial.

• *Whither FACC*:
- *FACC 20th Anniversary*: Sue said she would try to get something planned on this soon.
- *FACC Board Elections*: Philip said that at our December meeting, we will have elections for two board members, Purser and Conservator at-Large. The incumbents, Dave and Brian are eligible for reelection.