



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.

DONATE
Our many projects to make the creek healthier depend on your support!

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – January 20, 2025

Next Meeting: February 17 (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, Peter Clark, Kim Schauer, Avril Garland, Suzy Foster, Sue Kovach Shuman, Beverley Rivera, Katy Johnson, Dave Lincoln, and Sue Kuiler, all via on-line meeting.

AGENDA



- *Represent FACC:*

- o [Community Associations Institute Expo](#): Dave said that he is planning to attend on February 27 & 28. He is communicating with Margaret Fisher on a plan to collaborate on displaying various initiatives from Plant NOVA Natives and Fairfax PRISM, along with FACC, at the Washington area CAI Expo. With PRISM off and running, we can collaborate to cover overall suburban habitat restoration themes. He anticipates that we will have a no-cost table like the past couple of years.

- [George Snyder Trail](#): Sue Kuiler provided an update on the trail. In a breathtaking series of ups and downs over the past several months:

- The George Snyder Trail was sent out for bids
- The lowest bid came in \$4.6 million over budget
- VDOT made the extra funds available to the City from the I-66 Concessionaire Fund
- On January 13, 2026, City Council voted 3 – 3 not to take the money and 4 – 2 to cancel the George Snyder Trail

Thank you to everyone who came to the meetings, wrote emails, or provided comments with facts, passion, and heartfelt concerns.

Let's give the council members our thanks for protecting the forest.

The City is now left to deal with the aftermath of this project. Our pro bono lawyers say there is no obligation to repay the \$3.7 million already spent, but there may be terms and conditions to be met.

City Council and Mayoral elections take place November 3rd. We already see the beginnings of a highly negative campaign centered on this issue. The political blowback started about 4 am the morning after the vote. We should tell all who will listen that councilmembers Rachel McQuillen, Stacy Hall, and Tom Peterson voted for the good of the city and to preserve and protect the environment for us all and for future generations.

Philip said that as a 501(c)3 group, we need to be careful of advocating for particular political candidates. However, we can try to ensure in November voters remember who stood with the forest.

We can sympathize with the disappointment of the supporters of the trail. Making this connection to the Cross County Trail has a powerful logic. Proponents are not happy, and this may not be the last chapter for the George Snyder Trail.

Philip also said he had the thought that we could discourage further attempts to revive the trail through the woods by making the alternate route a reality along the streets. Most of it is in place already and just needs signs.





“Beautiful sunrise over the forest today” - a supporter’s reaction to the GST cancellation

- [Accotink Gorge](#): Avril said that the IMA recommended season for herbicide use ends after February, so we’ve set up some new workdays:

- o January 28th with the [Angelus Academy](#)
- o January 14th and 21st, open to all

We could use help with managing students on January 28th, and with extra herbicide applicators all three days.

- *Lake Accotink IMA Site*: Gary said that this Thursday we may have a Channel 16 video crew at the Lake Accotink IMA site to record an information message about not disposing of invasives in yard waste. If you’d like to help us have a good turnout for the crew, everyone is welcome.

- *PRISM Extravaganza*: Dave said that [Fairfax PRISM](#) will be having a Spring Extravaganza March 21st -April 12th and is looking for partners to host invasives events in that period. Since we already have 13 of our weekly workdays scheduled in that period, we don’t have to do much except maybe share some pictures.

- *Daventry Invasives Herbicide*: Dave said that he has run into a litigiphobic reaction from the Daventry HOA board against volunteer application of herbicide on common property. He thought allowing volunteers to make use of Park Authority training for best practices had been approved for work on the 30 acres of neglected forest property. He will keep looking for any examples of other HOAs that may have overcome their reluctance.

- *Cinder Bed Road Bikeway*: Philip mentioned that we talked last month about showing up at the new Franconia District office grand opening with signs protesting the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway. That opening has experienced further delay and won’t happen until the end of February at least. So consideration was given to going to the current office first. Dave indicated he would be interested.

- o *BOS Public Comments Hearing, February 17, 2025*:

Avril and Philip have signed up to speak in opposition to the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway during the Board of Supervisors public comments period February 17th. Dave indicated he would as well.

- [Fairfax Elections](#): Philip said that the special election for the VA 11 Delegate was won by Gretchen Bulova (D). The special election for the VA 17 district took place today. We can also expect the Democrat, Garret McGuire, to win that one.
- [PFAS Lawsuit](#): Philip mentioned before that the Potomac Riverkeepers and Wild Virginia are suing DEQ over failure to monitor PFAS discharges at Fort Belvoir and how we had asked if FACC could be a part of the lawsuit. They have answered that it would be too late in the process to add us as a party. We could consider filing an independent [amicus curiae](#), but that seems too legally and technically complicated to attempt.
- [Americana Drive](#): Philip said that we will have our next Americana Drive Cleanup on Presidents Day, February 16th. Registrations are rather light so far.
- [EQAC Public Comments Hearing](#): Philip said that he addressed the EQAC annual public comments hearing on January 14th. He focused on the topics of Americana Drive, Cinder Bed Road Bikeway, and the Lake Accotink dredging fiasco as a symptom of the larger issues afflicting our watershed.
- [Virginia Legislation](#): Avril said that she plans to go to Richmond Jan 27th for Virginia Clean Water Lobby Day. Philip stated the FACC website would list bills of environmental interest.
- [Financial Report](#): Dave provided the [2025 FACC Financial Report](#). We had a beginning balance in all accounts of \$33,653.66 and an ending balance of \$34,205.28. We had donation income in 2025 of \$7028.98 versus outlays of \$6497.89.

The outlays in 2025 were higher than normal, owing in large part to:

- o An \$1100 donation in memory of Kris Unger,
- o A \$650 payment to Mike Hayslett for reporting on a Kris Unger memorial vernal pool, and
- o A \$1500 donation to help Fairfax PRISM get started

• [Park Authority Budget](#): Philip stated that the County budget process is rather confusing to follow, but things will start happening in February when the County Executive releases the FY 2027 Advertised Budget Plan. There will be a series of reviews and public hearings through the end of April, followed by budget adoption in May. The County fiscal situation is not great, so we should be prepared to defend the Park Authority Natural Resources funding and any other watershed-related programs that seem threatened.

- [Donations](#): Philip said that we received donations of:
 - \$102.53 from Sandy
 - \$102.53 from Sue K.
 - \$102.53 from Susan Yenyo, a CareFirst volunteer
 - \$100.00 from our longtime friends Mike Perel and Jeanne Kadet
 - \$100.00 from his brother
 - \$50 from Jang Han, a friend of his daughter

Each year, we make a donation to Free Conference Call. However, they seem to have moved on from their former non-profit nature. Last year we donated \$80, but now they offer a paid service for just \$40 per year which we will change to.

- [*Kris Unger Memorial*](#): Sue Kuiler stated that Mike Hayslett was in town a couple weeks ago and suggested meeting with City personnel at Kutner Park. While that did not work out, Mike did go to the park on his own and flagged the area of proposed vernal pool expansion. We are still trying to arrange a meeting with the Parks arborist to take the next steps.

Philip said that he met with Satoshi Eto, stormwater engineer with the City Public Works to show him the flagged area. Some data from the visit:

- The area of enlargement is under 2500 sq. ft., so no Public Works permit is needed.
 - Public Works has funds to pay for the educational sign
 - 16 shrubs or small trees have blue flags indicating removal
 - The largest tree with a blue flag is 2" diameter
 - [Video view of the flagged area](#)
- [*Whither FACC*](#):
 - o *FACC 20th Anniversary*:
Sue Kuiler stated that she had been ill for a while and was not making much progress. Discussion involved whether we should just wait until later to do something since December anniversary has now passed. Philip said that we might want to choose to commemorate our first organized activity, [storm drain marking](#) on March 18, 2006, but no decisions were made.