

# Friends of Accotink Creek

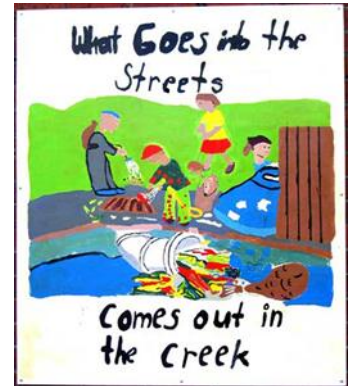
“Now is the time for all good people to come to the aid of their watershed.”

## Summary of cleanup instructions:

- Walk out first, then walk back collecting, so as your bags get heavy, you are closer to the drop-off point
- Look for trash near the stream or in the woods where it has been washed out by flooding
- Bring bags to the starting point or, if too heavy, leave them along the trail and let us know where
- Meet back at the starting point at finish time

☹ **Issue: Trash in streams**, not because it is thrown into streams, but because it is thrown on streets and parking lots and washed down storm drains which go to streams untreated.

☺ **Solutions:** Continue the cleanup of our watershed year-round by gently reminding others to dispose of their own trash responsibly. Spread an ethic of personal responsibility among individuals, property owners, and government by actions like storm drain marking, plastic bag laws, bottle deposit laws, street sweeping, grating of storm drains, and hedges and fences around parking lots to limit wind-blown trash and dumping. Encourage manufacturers to stop opposing anti-litter laws and include a message of responsible disposal prominently in their packaging and advertising.



☹ **Issue: Invasive species** are rampant in our stream valleys. We brought them here and we are spreading them on our feet, recreational and construction equipment, by dumping yard waste in parks, and by continuing to plant invasive species. Invasive animal species like the Emerald Ash Borer, Asiatic Clam, Rusty Crayfish, Chinese Mitten Crab, Snakehead, Chinese Mystery Snail, and Zebra Mussel are also threats.

☺ **Solutions:** Be aware of common invasives. Feel free to trample them while avoiding trampling native wildflowers. After the cleanup remove all soil from your shoes. Share the experience and spread the message. Join invasive control efforts. Plant only natives/non-invasives at your home, church, school, business, civic association. Ask for non-invasives at your garden center. Let legislators know VDOT & VDGIF should cease planting and encouraging planting of invasives.

## Common invasive plant species that volunteers may encounter in fall



☹ **Issue: Water quality in our streams** is threatened, causing a decline in aquatic life, but when you live underwater, no one can hear you scream.

☺ **Solution:** Join volunteers who monitor water quality in our streams. The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District provides all training and equipment and mentoring by experienced monitors. Volunteers assess ecological conditions based on the diversity of aquatic invertebrates. County and state officials will use the data you collect to assess the overall condition of our streams and help determine watershed management initiatives.



☹ **Issue: Our streams are drowning.** Even during routine rainstorms, runoff from roads, roofs, and parking lots gushes directly down storm drains into local streams, scouring away their banks and carrying trash, fertilizer, and oil. Natural surfaces with tree cover and sponge-like layers of leaf litter and humus used to allow much of this rainwater to evaporate or seep into groundwater. Now overwhelmed streams act as extensions of storm drains, resulting in destructive erosion of streambeds, silt washed to the bay, creeping habitat degradation, and unnecessary flooding of man-made structures.

Observe the steeply-cut banks of Accotink Creek resulting from this excessive runoff. The fine sediment dumped on the streambed smothers many of the aquatic invertebrates that form the base of the food chain.

And what happens after the rain? The water that once would have seeped slowly into the stream has already washed out to the bay. Many streams shrink to a trickle, a fraction of their historic steady flows.

Inadequate erosion controls during construction allow silt and mud to flow offsite, contributing to the sediment load in streams.

😊 **Solutions:** Throw a life preserver to a drowning stream. Preserve natural cover! Become a “Mudbuster”, reporting construction erosion violations. Get involved in watershed planning solutions in our homes, civic associations, businesses, and places of worship and via public and corporate advocacy. Rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, pervious paving, Bayscaping, tree preservation and planting, swales, stream buffers, stream bank restoration, stormwater pond upgrades, and storm drain filters all add up to healthier streams.

Construction sediment in creek ☹



Eroding Streambed ☹



Pervious Paving Solution 😊



☹ **Issue: Accotink Creek cannot speak or vote**

😊 **Solution:** We must speak and vote on its behalf. BECOME A VOICE FOR YOUR WATERSHED! BE HEARD!

The Bay starts here!



**Friends of Accotink Creek**  
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**Find just one other person who cares.**

[www.accotink.org](http://www.accotink.org)



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