



Friends of Lake Accotink Park Newsletter

April 2022

NOTES FROM THE FLAP BOARD

By Mary Keeser, FLAP President

It continues to be my honor to serve as FLAP president and to work with our dedicated board and committee volunteer members. Our partnership with FCPA and its stakeholders is an extensive organization; Chris Goldbecker, FCPA managed parks, section manager, continues to provide guidance and mentorship. Although our Lake Accotink Park (LAP) endured a revolving door for the four acting LAP managers, we were and are very fortunate to have welcomed Dan Grulke as our permanent park manager. Together, LAP and FLAP continue our steadfast commitment to ensuring we accomplish our partnership commitments and our mission: "Protect, restore, preserve, and educate all concerning the natural, historical, and cultural resources of Lake Accotink Park." It has only been through their mentorship, patience, commitment, and selflessness that we have developed, initiated, executed, and continued (or completed) several important projects, activities, programs, and efforts.

We are all privileged to meet and work with our amazing FLAP volunteers and members through the seasons, rolling up our sleeves and working side-by-side to accomplish our missions. Thank you again for supporting FLAP efforts to take care of our Lake Accotink Park and to educate others to do the same. Our community volunteer members selflessly give of their time and talents to improve the park and the overall quality of life for those who use it. These legions of volunteers eagerly secure their boots, gloves, safety vests, trash tools, bags, and positive can-do attitudes monthly to make a positive impact. Many of our volunteers have found themselves recruiting classmates, schools, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and even strangers to join our monthly Lake Accotink Park clean-ups and Pollinator Garden care and classes. Together, as a community, our ability to ensure positive impacts is endless; read more under the "Our Impact" section of this newsletter.

We accomplish this through educating the community concerning the harmful impacts of trash and pollutants, along with the many positive impacts of clean waterways, land, and pollinator gardens. This is all done through encouraging outreach and educating our community volunteers. To take that extra step through our Young FLAPer program to engage local high schools and our community youth to attend our many volunteer activities, competitions, and classes.

We could not have accomplished the magnitude of these impacts without our partnership with FCPA, Lake Accotink Park, and our community of dedicated volunteers and donors. Thanks—see you on the trail!

OUR IMPACT

Our Mission: Protect, restore, preserve, and educate all concerning the natural, historical, and cultural resources of Lake Accotink Park. Mission-focused impacts are only possible through grass roots community volunteers, our partnerships, and dedicated donors—thank you!

Monthly Clean-Ups: The Lake Accotink Park (lake shore/streams/trails—the entire park, not just the trail) Clean-Ups are our monthly FLAP clean-ups. We average 120 bags a month or 1,440 annually + 5,000 lbs of items/tires, bumpers, shoes, metal pipes, trash cans, fence sections, garden furniture, etc. and approximately 90+ volunteers (we supply the safety vests, gloves, tools, and trash bags). During these events our volunteers additionally remove harmful vines from the trees along the trail. The overall impact is over 100,000 lbs of trash and other ecosystem and environmental harmful items removed.

Our Young FLAPers program has initiated the quarterly FCPS High School Trash Challenge. High schools register their teams and compete to determine who has collected the most trash during this single event.

Dog Waste Stations: We now have secured 10 dog waste stations (working on the 11th) located around the trail and have purchased and dispensed over 120,000 dog waste bags in the last year (removing the dog waste improves the quality of the Accotink and Chesapeake Bay watersheds but also the overall health of the environment). Our dedicated community volunteers refill, repair, and maintain these stations. The stations were procured by, and all supplies are provided by, FLAP.

Margaret Kinder Education and Pollinator Garden: April 2022 marks six years since the initial conception of this educational pollinator garden at Lake Accotink Park. Our pollinator garden consists of over 880 plants and 14 varieties. FLAP funded and volunteers cleared the land, planted, installed, and continue to care and maintain the garden. Our certified experts conduct the pollinator garden classes (started May 2021), which have been attended thus far by approximately 80 eager learners (adults to youngsters). Monthly we provide educational classes, brochures, packs of seeds (native plants), and other items to help the attendees get their own garden started. We also hold monthly volunteer care sessions for the garden.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Earth Day at Kings Glen Elementary School

WHEN: April 23, 4–6 p.m.

WHERE: Kings Glen Elementary (5401 Danbury Forest Drive, Springfield, VA 22152). Stop by the FLAP tent to receive free pollinator gardening tips and more.

FLAP Trash Off: A High School Showdown

WHEN: April 24, 12–2 p.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Park Marina

FLAP 2nd Qtr General Membership Meeting

WHEN: June 9, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Park—Large pavilion adjacent to the marina.

Questions? Contact@flapaccotink.org

60th Anniversary of Lake Accotink Park

WHEN: Aug 27, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

WHERE: All around Lake Accotink marina

Compete against rival high school teams to win a pizza party. [Register here.](#)

Annual Watershed Clean Up

WHEN: May 8, 9–11 a.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Marina

Register at nature.org/fairfaxcleanup.

NOTE: The FLAP monthly clean up is held at the same time; report to FLAP table to sign in and pick up your equipment.

Full day of FREE educational/interactive /fun displays, events, activities, speakers, and more. Contact@flapaccotink.org.



Caring For & Exploring the Pollinator Garden

WHEN: 2nd Sunday of every month

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Park
Margaret Kinder Pollinator Garden—Adjacent to the Marina

Our experts will guide you through the pollinators and pollinator plants, and starting and maintaining your own pollinator garden. Work alongside the experts as they care for the plants, water, and clean up. We'll provide the tools and gloves, or you can bring your own.

Sign Up



Monthly FLAP Lake Accotink Park Clean Up

WHEN: 2nd Sunday of every month

TIME: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

WHERE: Sign in at Lake Accotink Marina

Pick up debris carelessly dumped, check and refill bags in dog waste stations, trim vines, and more. We'll provide gloves, FLAP information, clean-up bags, tools, maps, and more. You will also be loaned a FLAP safety vest. Volunteer 4 times and receive your very own safety vest to personalize!

Sign Up

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK STAFF NOTES

By Dan Grulke, Manager of Lake Accotink Park

We thank the community for its continued support and usage of Lake Accotink Park during 2021 and look forward to serving you

once again in 2022.

You May Have Missed This:

Lake Accotink has hired a new Naturalist and Assistant Naturalist to help improve our program offerings at Lake Accotink Park, in 2022 and future years. Please welcome Alex Marstall and Matt Rine.



In the Cue: The planned raised trail below the dam has gone out to bid, and bids have been received. More to come on this exciting project.

In the Works: As many of you have noticed, the storm water retention work on private property on Accotink Park road has begun. The property owner, the contractor, and Stormwater Management have worked together to correct this issue. The first corrective measures failed, and they are in the process of implementing the new plan that was approved. They are waiting on materials.

Just So You Know: Park staff is dedicated to being present and visible during operating hours. The park manager and/or the manager-on-duty will be in the marina office during business hours. We aim to staff this area first, so look for us there first during marina/amusement operational hours.

2022 Operational Hours

Amusement Operations

April 2-May 22	Weekends Only	11 a.m.-7 p.m.
May 28-Sept. 5	Weekdays and Weekends	11 a.m.-7 p.m.
June 4-Sept. 4	Weekends	9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sept. 10-Sept. 25	Weekends Only	11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Oct. 1-Oct. 30	Weekends Only	11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Marina Operations

May 31-Sept. 6	Weekdays (Kayaks only)	11:00 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Last rental 5:30 p.m.)
May 29-Sept. 6	Weekends (Pedal boats and kayaks)	11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Last rental 5:30 p.m.)

Help Us Out: Staff cannot always be everywhere all the time. If you notice safety issues during park hours, call us first: 703-569-3464. If you cannot reach us, call the non-emergency police: 703-691-2131. If you notice suspicious behavior either before or after official park hours, call non-emergency police. Need to report damage or maintenance concerns? Call the visitor center, 703-569-3464.

Help Wanted: We are still actively hiring marina staff and camp staff. Please note that camp staff must be 18 years or older since they are supervising minors. Please contact Dan.Grulke@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-569-3464.

A Note From Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw

Dear Friends at FLAP,

I hope that you are enjoying the first weeks of Spring, even if the weather hasn't been feeling quite Spring-like! As the temperatures finally start to warm up, thousands of our neighbors will make their way to Lake Accotink Park to enjoy the lake, the marina, the trails, the carousel, and more. Thanks to the work of FLAP and our dedicated FCPA staff, they will have a beautiful park to enjoy!

I'm excited to announce that we're bringing some sensational community events to Lake Accotink Park this summer. First, we'll be holding the first annual Braddock Bark event in June. Braddock Bark is a pet-focused and pet-friendly event with free giveaways from local businesses, presentations from the FCPD K-9 unit, adoption opportunities, and more. More details will be available soon, and we'll share them in our weekly email updates.

We'll also be bringing Braddock Nights, our free summer concert series, back to Lake Accotink Park this year after a Covid-related hiatus. I hope you'll join us on Friday nights for family-friendly concerts! More details will be available soon, and we'll share them in our weekly email updates.

To stay up-to-date on local community news, county resources, and important information, sign up for my newsletter by emailing Braddock@Fairfaxcounty.gov with "Subscribe" in the subject line. You can also follow me on Facebook and Instagram @SupervisorJamesWalkinshaw, or Twitter @JRWalkinshaw. Enjoy this Spring!

Yours in service,
Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK DREDGING UPDATE

By Charles Smith, Branch Chief, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Stormwater Planning Division, Watershed Projects Implementation Branch

The public comment period on the revised alternatives analysis information presented at the February 10 virtual public meeting officially ended on March 11, but county staff took additional comments after that date. Over 170 comments were received by county staff and about 300 by the Lee District supervisor's office. The information from the February 10 public meeting is posted on the project webpage at fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/lake-accotink-dredging. The same information was shared at the Springfield Civic Association meeting on March 15.

County staff continue to look at alternative spoils processing sites proposed by members of the public in Mason District. We hope to know if any of those sites may be feasible soon. Once we know if there are any additional options, we will update

members of the board of supervisors and wait for direction from them on what additional analysis is requested so that a decision can be made on a spoils processing site, and we can proceed with a concept design.

At this point we are off of the project schedule published on the website, which showed a concept design being finished by June 2022. We will update the website as soon as we have more information. Questions? Contact Charles Smith at Charles.Smith@fairfaxcounty.gov.

YOUNG FLAPers

FCPS Students Compete at the FLAP Trash Off: A High School Showdown!

By Yasmine Marrero, Young FLAPers Director



On January 23rd, six student teams from across the county competed in the ultimate clean-up competition: the FLAP Trash Off: A High School Showdown! FLAP hosted the event for Annandale, Edison, Hayfield, Lewis, West Springfield, and Woodson high school students to collect trash from nearly 500 acres in just two hours.

Clearing Lake Accotink Park of pollution improves the health of the environment, including its incredibly important native flora and fauna. All the wonderful student volunteers deserve a big thank you for helping protect the park! Teams competed to collect the most trash and win a pizza party for first place.

Every team did incredible work, but only one could win the grand prize—congratulations to West Springfield High School for recovering the most trash and winning first place! Enjoy your well-deserved pizza! Woodson High School also received special recognition for collecting the most trash among the smaller teams. Congrats, Woodson students!

Our **next Trash Off** is coming **Sunday, April 24, 12–2 p.m.** We'd love to engage as many students as possible, so if you think your high school students can take on the challenge, email us at youngflappers@flapaccotink.org and mentor@flapaccotink.org. Hopefully we'll see you at the next FLAP Trash Off: A High School Showdown!

Why Cleaning Lake Accotink Is Critical

By Morgan Jordan, Young FLAPers Committee Member



The Lake Accotink Clean Up benefits not only the environment but also Fairfax County Residents by preventing human suffering—specifically health wise and economically. Many people don't know exactly where their water comes from, but here in Fairfax County we know that our water comes from the Occoquan Reservoir and the Potomac River. Every Northern Virginia resident can tell you that the Potomac River is not clean, so imagine their surprise when they find out the water they are drinking has come from it.

By keeping Lake Accotink clean, we also keep the Potomac River clean. Lake Accotink flows into Accotink Creek until it makes its way to Accotink Bay, then to Gunston Cove, until it finally ends in the Potomac River. A clean Potomac River would mean that people wouldn't have to worry as much about debris injuring their legs while swimming and could also increase the number of activities that are held in the Potomac River.

Many families have limited access to water because they simply can't afford it. The machines that process our water so that we can do essential tasks such as drinking and taking showers are not cheap. Cleaning Lake Accotink can minimize and hopefully in the future aid in the removal of certain water processing machines: the one that catches and removes large debris. Being able to minimize the use of this machine or even fully removing it will lower the price of water and allow for more families to have easy access to it.

All Fairfax County residents can continue to do their part to make the water we use every day as clean as possible. Even if you can't come down to Lake Accotink to help pick up trash, clean up trash in and around your neighborhood. You never know where the water you see running down your street can end—maybe in your next bath.

COMMUNITY NEWS

FLAP Attends Annandale HS 'Just World' Festival

By Jim Hickey, FLAP Secretary

In March, Jim Hickey and Suzanne Dorick set up a FLAP table at Annandale High School for the Just World Festival. A variety of students stopped by, some of whom had attended cleanups at the park. We discussed opportunities for service hours, the Young FLAPers trash challenge, and environmental and wildlife protection.

Several middle school groups came by with great enthusiasm. We spoke with their leaders and look forward to seeing them at the park in the future.

Also stopping by to chat were County Supervisors Penny Gross of Mason District and James Walkinshaw from Braddock District.



Lake Accotink Has an Explosive Past

By Jim Hickey, FLAP Secretary

Yes, there was an explosion many years ago on property now part of the park—August 7, 1900, to be exact. News reports state it happened at the Jovite Powder Works at Ditchly.

The Lee family had previously owned the land, and Ditchly was their ancestral home in England. The exact location of the factory remains a mystery, but it is thought to have been close to the Ditchly Station on the railroad tracks.

Jovite was an explosive used in tunnel construction in New York. The military was also interested in it, as it could be used in artillery shells without blowing up the artillery pieces. A young Army officer did a study and concluded that jovite was resistant to heat, cold, water, and concussion, making it ideal for the military. That officer was lieutenant Douglas MacArthur.

Jovite Powder Works had been operational since 1885, employing a number of neighborhood men. A large quantity of the explosive was being prepared for shipment when it was set off. Along with the factory, two storage buildings were demolished. The cause was never determined. Several men were injured, one seriously. Two doctors came all the way from Alexandria to treat them.

These days the park can be pretty noisy—what with summer camps, birthday parties, and family gatherings. But I'll bet it's nothing like the jovite explosion over a

LAKE ACCOTINK WILDLIFE CORNER

Spring Baby Boom: Keep Young Wildlife Healthy and Wild



*By Katherine E. Edwards, Ph.D.,
Certified Wildlife Biologist, Fairfax
County Police Department Wildlife
Management Specialist*

Springtime is here, and with the warming temperatures we see a boom in baby wildlife. Our Animal Protection Police officers and Wildlife Management office receive many calls this time of year from residents who are seeking help for young wildlife that appear to be orphaned or abandoned.

While these actions are well-intended, it is important to realize intervention may be unnecessary and can be detrimental to wildlife. Many baby animals that are brought to wildlife professionals are in no need of help from humans. Baby animals left alone are not necessarily orphaned or abandoned; many species of wildlife will hide their young for safety, leaving them alone for extended periods of time.

Common wildlife frequently found and “rescued” in Fairfax County include squirrels, red foxes, raccoons, rabbits, skunks, opossums, and songbirds. If you come across a baby animal and feel the need to intervene, we offer guidelines below to determine if the animal needs help. If an animal is displaying these signs, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, veterinarian, or our Animal Protection Police for further assistance and instruction.

Signs that an animal needs help include:

- Shows signs of flies, worms, or maggots, which look like grains of rice
- Was caught by a cat or dog
- Is bleeding; has an open wound; or shows signs of trauma, such as swelling
- If the parents are known to be dead or separated and cannot be reunited
- Is very cold, thin, or weak
- Is on the ground unable to move
- Is not fully furred or feathered

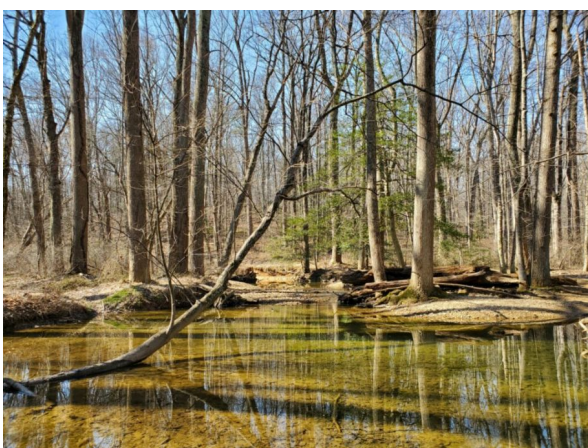
Do not attempt to treat or raise wildlife yourself. Please **do not handle** any baby wild animal, and **do not attempt to offer food or water** unless instructed to do so by a professional. Many young animals require special diets, and inappropriate food or feeding technique can lead to sickness or death. Wild animals can also cause injury or carry parasites and disease, even at a young age. Human handling may cause unnecessary stress or result in trauma to the animal and could increase the risk of disease exposure to humans, including rabies from mammals. As a safety measure and for the welfare of the animal, contact a professional before intervening.

A young animal's best chance for survival is to receive natural care from its parents and remain wild. Before intervening, please learn more about which wildlife species and situations you are most likely to encounter and ways to determine whether an animal needs help at:

- dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured
- wildlifecenter.org/healthy-young-wildlife
- wildliferescueleague.org/animals/does-this-animal-need-help

If you have questions about whether an animal needs help or to locate a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, you may contact the Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline toll-free at 1-855-571-9003. This helpline is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our Animal Protection Police can be reached through the police non-emergency number at 703-691-2131.

Springs Equals a Time of Urgency in the Natural World



By Anthony Bulmer, Fairfax County Police Department Assistant Wildlife Biologist

As we walk the trails of Lake Accotink Park, nature is showing that winter is loosening its grip. Signs of spring are appearing if we look carefully. The season of spring is a race against time to ensure species are successful for the next generation. Wood frogs, birds of prey, and even our native wildflowers are faced with a sense of urgency.

Wood frogs are breeding in vernal pools. Vernal pools are usually small bodies of water that fill with melting snow or rain and, most importantly, they will go completely dry in the summer months. These amphibians must breed, lay eggs, and then go through a complete metamorphosis before there is no more water.

Red-shouldered hawks call from above, already having selected a territory and are incubating their eggs. They must be early, timing it perfectly, so when the eggs hatch in late spring food is most abundant for their large chicks.

Spring wildflowers are in a hurry as well. Flowers like trout lilies and blue bells must flower, be pollinated, and produce fruit before their larger relatives the trees grow leaves and block out the necessary sunlight from reaching the forest floor.

Spring equals a time of urgency for many animals and plants. As we walk the trails, pause and take time to admire the urgency of spring.

Critter of the Quarter

By Jim Hickey, FLAP Secretary

Probably the most visible wildlife species at Lake Accotink Park is the Canada Goose. Also the most audible,



as every visitor knows. The geese are year-round residents, having decided that Fairfax County is a good place to live.

A migratory species, in more temperate areas geese often don't leave, once they have a good water and food source. In the spring and fall, however, many can be seen in their famous "flying V" in the skies.

Some consider them a pest species, due to their aggressiveness, begging for food, excrement, and noise. They can get as big as 14 pounds, with a six-foot wingspan. Eggs are vulnerable to predators, but adult geese have no real threat due to their size and numbers.

Canada geese mate for life and can live as long as a quarter century. If you canoe on Accotink Creek in early spring, the adults will come squawking at you to protect their nests and eggs. In late spring, however, after hatching they may paddle out near you showing off their young family.

You may have noticed that the Wawa chain of gas stations has a goose as their logo. That's because the Objive word for goose is wawa. There is a town named Wawa in Ontario along Lake Superior, and they have a 30 foot tall statue of a goose (see picture above).

What can you do for the Canada geese? DO NOT FEED THEM. There is plenty of food for them in and around the lake. And the next time you head out of town, gas up at Wawa for your migration. Just don't try the flying V on I-95!

MEET THE FLAP COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



Colleen Blessing
Editor

editor@flapaccotink.org

Colleen has lived in the Braddock District for more than 30 years. She



Kevin Joyce
Deputy Communications
Director

communications.deputy@flapaccotink.org

retired from her government job in 2018 after 45 years of service. For most of her career she worked as an economist/writer/editor for the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Currently she is a volunteer editor for James Walkinshaw's Braddock Beacon.

Kevin grew up in Fairfax County and went to K-12 through Fairfax County Public Schools. He attended Virginia Tech, is a finance professional, and was president of the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association for five years. His wife and he live on Lake Accotink with their two little boys and a big Chesapeake Bay Retriever.



Stephanie Kern
Newsletter Publisher

publisher@flapaccotink.org

Stephanie grew up in Northern Virginia, living in Danbury Forest in Springfield from the time she was 13 and attending Lake Braddock Secondary School. She got her master's degree in English from George Mason University and currently works as an editor for a nonprofit trade association. She also occasionally bartends at the American Legion in Annadale.



Nicole Wargel
Communications Director

communications@flapaccotink.org

Nicole has lived in Fairfax County for the past 17 years. She recently finished undergrad at James Madison University and went on to do two years as an AmeriCorps member for City Year DC. She will be volunteering with FLAP's communications for the summer and will be starting law school at Catholic University in August.

Submit your articles with photos for consideration in our next FLAP quarterly newsletter to publisher@flapaccotink.org. Please send by the middle of June/Sept./Dec.

Friends of Lake Accotink Park Board

Position	Name	Email
President	Mary Keeser	president@flapaccotink.org
Vice President	OPEN	vice.president@flapaccotink.org
Secretary	Jim Hickey	secretary@flapaccotink.org
Treasurer	Bob Neilson	treasurer@flapaccotink.org
Member at Large	Dave Gibson	memberAL@flapaccotink.org

We're accepting candidates for board positions, as well as various other committees and special projects. It is your Lake Accotink Park—help make a difference for about an hour a

month! Send an email to contact@flapaccotink.org.



Donate to FLAP

Text FLAP to 22828 to receive monthly updates.

Friends of Lake Accotink Park | FLAP P.O. Box 1203, Springfield, VA 22151

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