

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



In February, Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D) walked the Cinderbed Bikeway route with the Friends of Accotink Creek.



Deforestation and the magnolia bog were topics on the walk.

Group Opposes Cinder Bed Road Bikeway

Forest cover and a rare magnolia bog could be damaged by path to Franconia-Springfield Metro.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

In a semi-industrial area where Newington Road intersects with Cinder Bed Road in southern Fairfax County, there is a \$14 million project on the books to extend the existing bike/pedestrian trail north to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station. It would mean construction in a heavily wooded area that would impact the dwindling tree cover in the county, and a lesser known rare magnolia bog, that's growing in this wooded corridor.

Long Branch creek goes through this area, which links to several creeks in this part of the county. Friends of Accotink Creek

are against the bikeway. County district-wise, the path of the bikeway starts in the Mount Vernon

District and extends into Lee District, so in February, Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D) walked through the area with some of the Friends members to discuss the plan.

The bikeway plan was presented to the public May 10, 2021. In the presentation, one of the purposes of the project is connectivity. FCDOT received a Federal Grant for a pedestrian/ bicycle connection from Franconia/Springfield Metro/VRE station to Fort Belvoir. Accessing Fort Belvoir from the Cinder Bed-Newington Road intersection would still take some creative cycling. It's far from a straight shot.

Nonetheless the county is moving forward with the trail.

According to Lusk's office this project was

approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2014 and approved for funding in 2015 so there's no change in plans.

"As is true with any project, we are thoroughly responding to public feedback regarding the design in order to minimize concerns," Lusk said.

Philip Latasa was one of the Friends group that walked with Lusk, and he feels there is an alternative to cutting down trees and installing a lighting system here.

"There are many existing options already in place on neighboring roads and trails that already provide routes to Metro," Latasa said. "No sacrifice of natural habitat or citizens' environmental goals is required to enhance these routes. We simply do not have enough forests and streams to provide an alternate transportation system."

Latasa cited the county's "Complete Streets," program in the ActiveFairfax section of the county's transportation objectives. The Cinder Bed Road Bikeway does

not adhere to the plan, he said.

He named a number of existing trails that are facing maintenance needs, and he would like to see the money and effort go towards that instead of building a new trail.

Lusk said they made some changes to the plan in response to some of the environmental concerns and it meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act which is required for some funding.

"We continue to work through concerns that environmental advocates have brought to us about the project during our walk-through," he said. Pavement, tree cutting and lighting are still part of the plan although the county does typically plant additional greenery with a project like this.

To Latasa, there's even a global implication with the bikeway plan. "If we cannot forego trees-to-asphalt conversions in instances like these, we lose our moral standing to lecture Brazil and Indonesia about deforestation," he said.

Alarm.com Expands Technology R&D

Alarm.com will expand its technology research and development division at its Fairfax County headquarters, investing \$2.6 million and creating 180 jobs.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin made the announcement at Alarm.com headquarters in the Tysons area of Fairfax County at an event attended by state and local political and business leaders. This was the first economic development announcement

event for the governor, who took office Jan. 15.

Alarm.com delivers innovative and unified services for millions of homes and businesses. The company's platform integrates with a growing variety of IoT (Internet of Things) devices through its apps and interfaces.

"For more than 20 years, Alarm.com has been a leader in Virginia and continued to

SEE ALARM.COM, PAGE 10



From left, Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay; Gov. Glenn Youngkin; Steve Trundle, president and CEO of Alarm.com; Caren Merrick, state secretary of commerce and trade; Victor Hoskins, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority; and Anne Ferguson, vice president of marketing at Alarm.com.

Climate Change Study Warns of Coastal Flooding in 2050

County program called “Resilient Fairfax,” would provide prevention steps.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Climate Projections Report was recently released by Fairfax County, and the look ahead to the extreme heat, heavy precipitation and inland flooding was part of a potentially bleak future. Rising sea levels would impact the parts of the county right along the Potomac River, and the Mount Vernon District might be the first to experience this.

According to the report, there could be a water level rise by 2050, and by 2085, the higher scenario suggests that most days of the summer will reach temperatures of or above 90 degrees.

On Page 30 of the report, there is a map with colors representing surface temperatures from 2013-2021.

In the Mount Vernon area, for example, the path of Richmond Highway is dark orange where the daytime summer average surface temperature is 126.95 degrees. They call that an urban heat island. “This suggests those areas currently experiencing hotter temperatures are at particular risk over the coming century,” the report says. On the other end of the spectrum, the lower surface temperatures are in blue. On the map, the areas in Mount Vernon that are blue are the Huntley Meadows Park and Fort Belvoir area that are somewhat forested.

A county program called “Resilient Fairfax,” is geared toward climate change, and bouncing back. That effort is spearheaded by Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) who is embracing Fairfax Green Initiatives. “I directed the county to create a resiliency plan to address all resiliency issues in the county, to include water levels rising on the Potomac River and the many streams and creeks in our area. This Climate Projections report is part of that process,” he said.

Residents near the water and throughout the district have already taken steps to safeguard their properties. “Some residents have begun installing natural shorelines and bulkheads to preserve their properties, but more will need to be done and the Resilient Fairfax plan is anticipated to make specific recommendations for future actions. In addition, the county is now requiring any new construction in New Alexandria to



At a past environmental expo in Mount Vernon, there are alternatives to the plastic bag.



Supervisor Storck discusses an exhibit with local scouts at a past environmental expo in Mount Vernon.



Figure 3. (Left) Tropical Storm Lee flooded Reston Park and Ride facility in Fairfax County (Source: weather.gov, courtesy of NBC Washington). (Right) Tropical Storm Lee damaged Lorton Road in Fairfax County (Source: Virginia Department of Transportation).

Recent rains have caused flooding problems.

be elevated,” Storck said.

Study Cites Particulars

One section of the county study called “Coastal Flooding,” and on their map, it is projected by 2050 some parts of Mount Vernon could be impacted, such as the Little Hunting Creek area and Dogue Creek. Communities in that area that are part of the maps highlighted areas include River Village and the Mount Vernon Yacht Club near Dogue Creek, and the communities along Stockton Parkway, Stratford Lane and Wagon Wheel Road. Further north, the Dyke Marsh and Belle Haven Marina could be in trouble.

It’s a concern in other jurisdictions in Fairfax County as well. The Fairfax County Office of Environmental & Energy Coordination, is working to address both the cause and the effects of climate change

by reducing contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions that collectively feed into climate change. Emissions reductions are a global group project, but the county is working to do its part, OEEC said. These efforts are detailed in the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) which includes recommendations such as transitioning to renewable energy and cleaner transportation.

In the report, they looked at four extreme events between 2010 to 2019 that were destructive and had big county-wide financial impacts:

- ❖ The North American Blizzard (2010) resulted in a \$2 million loss
- ❖ Tropical Storm Lee (2011) cost the county \$10 million in repairs to bridges and roads
- ❖ Hurricane Sandy (2012) cost the county more than \$1.5 million

❖ The July 2019 rainfall/flooding event led to costs of \$14.8 million, of which \$2 million were damages to Fairfax County Government property

Developing and implementing a plan allows the county to avoid economic, social, and environmental risks associated with climate change, the county said.

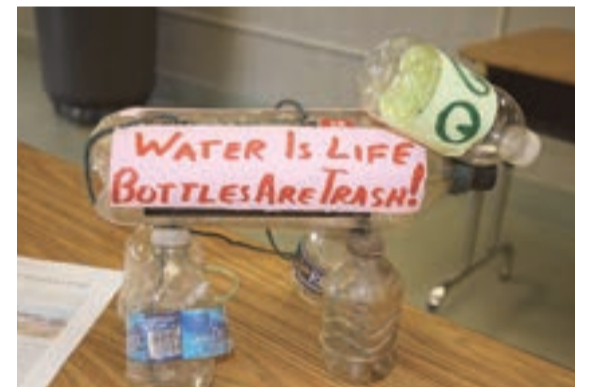
Fighting Climate Change at Home

According to the EPA, there are steps that residents can take to fight climate change, but some seem to have a dollar figure attached which are additional expenses to the daily budget. The EPA’s recommendations include Energy Star appliances, sealing windows, upgrading heating and cooling systems, including simple measures like smart thermostats,

the EPA said. For low-cost solutions, the EPA recommends adjusting thermostats and turning off lights when space is unoccupied, unplugging electronics when not in use, using Energy Star LED light bulbs, adjusting window shades to reduce heating and cooling requirements, and installing programmable thermostats.

Waste disposal is another area the EPA says will contribute to reducing global warming. Reducing food waste by shopping smart, plus reusing or repurposing items may reduce an individual’s impact, the EPA said.

In the transportation field, the EPA says to use greener transportation such as biking, walking, carpooling, and public transportation. “Cutting your shower time by even a minute can help save gallons of water,” the EPA said.



Environmentalists target plastic water bottles.

Paralyzed Cyclist Gains Freedom for Near Normal Life

After a broken neck sustained in a mountain bike crash, Mark Gottlieb uses an electronic device and therapy to walk again.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Since his house was close to the off-road bike trail at Fountainhead Park, mountain bike enthusiast Mark Gottlieb rode the trail a bunch of times in recent years until one day when he had a crash on the trail and broke his neck. He was paralyzed from the neck down and there was a question whether he'd ever walk again. But he credits extensive physical therapy, determination, and the help of an innovative piece of technology called the "L300," to help him get up and around again.

The Bioventus L300 is a functional electrical stimulation system capable of producing measurable mobility improvements for patients with foot drop and/or knee instability caused by an upper motor neuron disease or injury such as a bike accident. It is made by BionessRehab, and uses electrical impulses to send signals to certain muscles, they said.

It looks like a modified Ace bandage with a computer attached. "It zaps the muscles in my left leg," said Gottlieb, and this enables the leg to raise just a bit when walking so that it clears the floor and he won't trip. "This thing helps it go from barely clearing the ground to clearing the ground," he said, and that little bit makes a difference.

Every night he hooks it up to the computer so it recharges, similar to a cellphone, and it has an app which was downloaded beforehand. "I feel a jolt every time my leg moves," he said. Gottlieb can now get around his house and even drive, which is a big change from when he first had the accident. It didn't happen overnight though.

It took a little of everything to get him walking though and he also credits therapy from Advanced Physical Therapy in Tysons for his recovery and the determination of



While in Kenya in 2019, Mark Gottlieb saw a family of lions among other animals.

therapist Valerie Gibson who he still sees once a week. "That's the most advanced therapy place around," he said. They have an exoskeleton which goes around the whole body to help paralyzed individuals walk again.

The L300 is something he uses on a daily basis. "It is a really great alternative to an ankle and foot orthosis device, as it allows for individuals to have far more mobility and way less rigidity and pain," said Sara von Remus of Next Step, a company in the medical field that works with ankle and foot orthosis devices. "Basically, it allows you to use and train your motor function instead of just controlling spasticity and preventing the 'foot drop' that is commonly associated with neurological injuries and diagnoses," she said. Ankle and foot orthosis devices are so inexpensive and technically a "solution" for foot drop, she added. Gottlieb agreed. "It gives you a little edge to walk better, every little bit helps," he said.

The L300 was so successful, Gottlieb has gotten back into the rhythm of his daily life and most hobbies except for biking. He got



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE
Mark Gottlieb and the L300.

rid of the bicycle but still has his bike helmet that was cracked open in the accident. Gottlieb remembers that day back on the mountain bike trail.

"I've had lots of scrapes and bruises on that trail through the years, but this time nothing moved and I couldn't breath either," he said, "I just laid there." Someone came along and found him, and the rescue squad sent an ambulance and helicopter, but there was no place for the helicopter to land so they took him out on a stretcher.

He was taken to Inova Fairfax where he remained for 40 days and a few operations putting rods in various places where bones were broken. His right side started moving after about two weeks, but the left side was not as healthy, and it took longer.

"I believe I'm getting there," he said.

One of his big hobbies is photography, and in March he took a trip to Africa. He's taken some exotic trips around the world and captured each with photos and video and put together a series of books he has in his living room. "In the fall, my son and I are going to the Amazon," he said.