

# Alum Creek

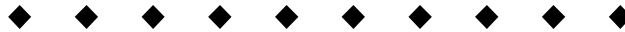


Volume 4, Issue IV

December 2003

## Sheets

~ A publication of the Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries ~



### State Agencies Review Alum Creek Watershed Action Plan

The action plan for the Alum Creek watershed that has been over a year in the making will be submitted to the Ohio EPA and Ohio DNR near the beginning of 2004. The state agencies have provided the majority of the funding for the project, and will be evaluating the document with criteria established for plans being produced across the state. Plans that meet the criteria receive an official “endorsement,” which also qualifies them for further state funding.

Meanwhile, general public comment on the plan will be invited during the month of January. (This is a revision to the November date published in the September edition of *Alum Creek FACT Sheets*.) See the next article for an opportunity to hear more about the plan on January 8<sup>th</sup>!

*Boaters enjoy a warm fall day on Alum Creek near Mock Park*



The goal of the plan is to comprehensively address water quality problems in Alum Creek, protect areas that are currently in good ecological health, and incorporate the community’s vision for increasing the creek’s value as a local amenity. Creating boat access to facilitate trips like the one pictured below is just one example of a project that will increase the creek’s recreational use. Other projects will address sources of urban runoff pollution, physical impairments to stream habitat, and building awareness of the creek and pollution issues.



### Plan Unveiling on January 8<sup>th</sup> Tell Us What You Think!

All watershed residents are invited to join FACT on Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup> to hear the highlights of the draft plan, provide written comment, and pick up a copy of the document. The presentation will take place during a regularly scheduled FACT meeting at:

Ohio Dominican University  
Neighborhood Center  
1229 Sunbury Road  
6:30 PM

Please call 409-0511 to RSVP, and see directions on page 5. Your feedback is welcomed even if you can’t attend – give FACT a call or check out the draft document on the FACT website in January, at:

**[www.friendsofalumcreek.org](http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org)**



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

*The Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries are committed to finding ways to preserve and protect Alum Creek as a natural area while providing citizen access for environmentally responsible recreation, educational opportunities and citizen enjoyment at many levels.*

#### **FACT Steering Committee**

Carol Elder, Chair  
David Hohmann, Vice-Chair  
Margaret Ann Samuels, Co-Treasurer  
Jan Tague, Co-Treasurer  
Barbara Logan, Secretary  
Robby Florstedt, River Corridor Committee Chair

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Joe Bonnell, Ohio State University Extension  
Jeff Cox, Columbus Division of Sewers & Drains  
Keith Dimoff, Ohio Environmental Council  
Carol Elder, Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries  
Michael Hoggarth, Otterbein College  
Dan Lorek, Bexley Development Department  
Dick Lorenz, Westerville Division of Water  
Vince Mazeika, OEPA Division of Surface Water  
Stephen McClary, Columbus Planning Division  
Jerry Wager, ODNR Soil & Water Conservation

#### **Staff**

Heather Doherty, FACT Watershed Coordinator

#### **Contact Us**

*Address* Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries  
2820 Watkins Rd., Columbus, OH 43207  
*Phone* 614-409-0511  
*Email* [Doherty@friendsofalumcreek.org](mailto:Doherty@friendsofalumcreek.org)  
*Web* [www.friendsofalumcreek.org](http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org)

## **Membership Campaign Under Way**

With two years spent expanding programs, strategies, and relationships with local decision makers to continue preserving and protecting Alum Creek, FACT is ready to recharge our batteries!

What does this mean for a small non-profit organization? It means ensuring that the organization will continue to have the internal strength and staying power to meet its goals. Strategic development of the human and financial resources that keeps the organization ticking is crucial. This need is especially urgent as FACT loses a major source of funding in 2004.

Membership is one key element of the organization, creating both revenue and a direct connection with people who share an interest in Alum Creek. FACT initiated an expanded annual membership campaign in November with a new "Supporting Member" program. With all the new projects defined in the action plan, we're also ready to expand our search for leadership from within the community. Call 409-0511 to learn more about the many ways that you can volunteer.

#### **Are YOU a FACT member?**

It only takes a minute to help make a difference by filling out the form on page 6. Tell a friend!

## **FACT Accepts Advisory Roles in Local Policy Development**

Many municipalities in the watershed are launching new programs that will reduce pollution in Alum Creek, but they aren't doing so alone. They're asking for the help of local residents and organizations, and FACT is happy to be among them.

The City of Columbus's Division of Sewerage and Drainage is currently developing two key policies that will reduce overflows from sanitary sewers and combines sewers (which carry sanitary *and* storm water) into local waterways. A total of nine sewer overflows currently exist along Alum Creek and tributary streams.

All the municipalities in the watershed (Columbus, Bexley, and Westerville) and townships in southern

Delaware County are also required by Ohio EPA to develop plans that will reduce urban runoff pollution in stormwater. Pollutants such as lawn fertilizers and car fluids can be picked up in rainwater as it's collected off city streets and discharged into waterways. An increase in the volume of stormwater, resulting from land development and reduction of natural areas that can absorb precipitation, can also degrade stream habitats and cause severe erosion.

FACT has been invited to participate in advisory groups for the development of these programs. They present an important step towards the implementation of the Alum Creek action plan, which focuses on collaborative efforts such as these to find water quality solutions.



## Delaware County Friends of the Trail Gets Moving

The Delaware County Friends of the Trail formed as a non-profit organization three years ago. Their initial mission described a dedication to the health and safety of the citizens and visitors of the county through the promotion, planning, and building of multipurpose trails for recreation and transportation.

Their first large project is still ongoing; the group is working hard to complete a trail along the 3C Highway from Westerville through Sunbury that will form part of the statewide Ohio to Erie Trail. The group would like to branch out and help other areas develop trails as well. A trail extending up Alum Creek from Polaris has been discussed with Westerville and Orange Township, and the group is currently discussing connecting the City of Delaware to the Ohio to Erie Trail.

Delaware County Friends of the Trail conducts trail clean up days where volunteers clean out trash and brush to make way for trail building. They've also hosted a bike/run/walk event to raise money for such efforts. Meetings take place on the 4th Wednesday of the month and are currently being held in Delaware (see page 5). Interested people can contact Randy Bennett at 614-818-9544.

## ~ River Voices ~



*"River Voices" contributing writer Randy Bennett joins us as the chair of the Delaware County Friends of the Trail. See the article on this page to learn more.*



Growing up in Westerville gave me many opportunities to learn from Alum Creek. In the summer I would walk or ride my bike to the city park almost every day and play at the log cabin and in the band shell. My first solo fishing experience was in Alum Creek by the then enormous dam. I remember the tiny blue gill I caught and took home in a bucket. In high school, I dated a girl from Olentangy who lived on the other side of the Creek and I would ride my bike or drive the old VW through the valley and saw the construction of the big dam.

Now, as a member of the Delaware County Friends of the Trail, I participate in the creation of recreational trails that give thousands of people the opportunity to enjoy the land I grew up on. It is a privilege that one cannot take lightly. If we wish for our grandchildren to consider us to be responsible, then we need to act now to preserve what we have. In the DCFT, we concentrate on the politics of the various townships, municipalities and at the county, state and federal levels, getting our message out and getting in the papers as much as possible.

Our connections with the Ohio to Erie Trail Fund and Preservation Parks of Delaware County are invaluable to us as vehicles to our goals. The rapid growth of southern Delaware County is a curse we have to deal with, and soon. This means owning. Money is always the factor, but it costs the same to build one freeway interchange as it would to complete the Ohio to Erie Trail. What is a river worth? Ask my future grandkids.

Few will ever doubt that it is a good idea to preserve watersheds and provide trails. The work it takes to accomplish it is not something that most are willing to do however. The Friends of Alum Creek are to be commended for their efforts and the other Friends send a big Attaboy!

## Watershed Watch



*By Margaret Ann Samuels and Carol Elder*

*The following is an update of projects and development activities that FACT is currently monitoring. Call 409-0511 to let FACT know about activities in your neighborhood or to get involved with Watershed Watch.*

### **Polaris Parkway at Sancus Drive**

The Continental Development Company is building an office and retail complex on this site. A small ditched tributary that runs through the site will be moved to make room for the buildings and parking lot. The majority of the stream will be redesigned on-site to emulate a natural stream, while a short portion will be culverted and a small wetland filled. FACT submitted comments on the proposal and suggested mitigation of the wetland in Alum Creek watershed.

### **Bexley Tree Nursery**

A hearing was held for public comment on two proposals for the northwest Bexley site on October 16<sup>th</sup>. The two options presented were converting the property to a park or an upscale condominium complex. FACT presented comments regarding the need for protection of Alum Creek, which borders the property. The City of Bexley decided to sell the property to the developer proposing condominiums. Several city committees will now consider the proposal, which may be modified. FACT will continue to give input recommending a natural riparian corridor be created and maintained.

### **Northwest corner of Morse and Sunbury Roads**

– A Car Maxx was proposed for this site, located on the west edge of the Easton Town Center shopping complex, a few years ago. While the Car Maxx proposal was turned down, HH Gregg is now proposing to purchase the lot to build a store. The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department has received a state grant to buy a portion of the property that backs up to Alum Creek in order to preserve some natural riparian buffer.

### **Northeast corner of Cleveland Avenue and Polaris Parkway**

– This site is located in Westerville and is bisected by the Alum Creek tributary Indian Run. A mixed-use retail and residential development has informally been proposed for the site, and currently includes artificially straightening a meander bend in the tributary. FACT will continue to monitor this development activity.

### **Bexley Southwest Master Plan**

After a public hearing held on November 25<sup>th</sup>, Bexley City Council has adopted the master plan for the area that borders Alum Creek south of Main Street. The plan calls for riparian protection zoning. FACT has supported implementation of such zoning in the draft Alum Creek watershed action plan, and will continue to work with Bexley on this issue.



## Factoid!

### **The Alum Creek Toy Chest**

*By David Hohmann*

FACT volunteers and recreationists in the Alum Creek often find toys in the creek - dropped from Santa's sleigh? These have included plastic bats, balls (tennis, basketball, golf, baseball and softball), a plastic wading pool, bicycle, laptop computer, car stereo, pager, fishing gear, keg taps, Halloween mask, and a rowboat.

All of these "toys" lost from the owners' urban lifestyles in the surrounding neighborhoods, carried off into the river waters... only to surface incongruously as flotsam or unnatural sediment. Cleaning up the Alum Creek means removing and preventing what doesn't belong there naturally (both visible and nonvisible pollution). Elves will be needed throughout the watershed to work on this task every year!

*The FACT River Corridor Committee organizes several Alum Creek cleanups throughout the year. Call 409-0511 to get involved or learn how to organize a cleanup in your neighborhood!*

# Calendar of Events

**December 11<sup>th</sup>** **FACT monthly meeting**, Ohio Dominican University, 6:30 – 8:30 PM  
Open to the public! Meetings are held at the ODU Neighborhood Center, 1229 Sunbury Road.

**December 17<sup>th</sup>** **Delaware County Friends of the Trail meeting**, Preservation Parks of Delaware Co., 7:30PM  
Join DCFT for their brief business meeting and holiday gathering! Directions: I- 71 north to 36/37. West to 3B's & K Rd., north to Howard Rd., west to Hogback Rd. Look for the Hogback Nature Preserve sign on the right at 2656 Hogback Rd. The office is at the back of the drive.



**Happy Holidays!**

**January 8<sup>th</sup>** **FACT monthly meeting and Speaker Series**, Ohio Dominican University, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

**Action Plan Unveiling - Tell Us What You Think!** All watershed residents are invited to come hear the highlights of the draft Alum Creek action plan, provide written comment, and pick up a copy of the document. The presentation will take place during a regularly scheduled FACT meeting - see directions below.

**February 7<sup>th</sup>** **Metro Parks Annual Winter Hike Series, Three Creeks Park**, Bixby Road entrance, 10:00 AM  
Enjoy the beauty of winter as you hike 1-, 3-, or 5.6-miles along the creeks. Soup and hot beverages will be available after the hike. Call 409-9914 for more information.

**February 12<sup>th</sup>** **FACT monthly meeting**, Ohio Dominican University, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

**March 11<sup>th</sup>** **FACT monthly meeting and Speaker Series**, Ohio Dominican University, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

**Natural Lawn Care**, presented by the Watershed Organic Lawn Care Company. Excess nutrients running off of suburban lawns and into Alum Creek are wreaking havoc on biological communities. Learn how you can help prevent nutrient pollution by using natural lawn care.



**Directions to the Ohio Dominican University Neighborhood Center:** From downtown, take I-670 to the 5th Avenue exit. Turn left onto 5th Avenue, and right onto Sunbury Road. After the third traffic light, turn left into large parking lot. The center is on the south end of the lot; use the entrance with the awning.

*Call 409-0511 for details on all events, or visit [www.friendsofalumcreek.org](http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org)*

***Thank You to all new and renewing FACT MEMBERS!***

The following list reflects new and renewing members for 2004; 2003 memberships expire this month (December).

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Randall Bennett                  | Sister Raymunda Brooks       |
| Celia Forker                     | Marie and Jeff Hurt          |
| Jerome Iles family               | Terry Lahm                   |
| Dale Killian                     | Paul Miller                  |
| Eleanor Noltemeyer               | Matthew Perlik               |
| Rosida Porter                    | Brian Wilke                  |
| City of Bexley                   | George Boas/Nancy McCargish  |
| Carol and Mike Elder             | Joseph Daubenmire family     |
| Hugh Crowell/ Julie Cronk family | William and Bertha Brandon   |
| Harold and Annette Highland      | Dan Jax                      |
| Don Kiser                        | Marilyn Logue                |
| Robert Lund                      | Jared Nodelman               |
| Craig and Diane Peterson         | Larry Samuels family         |
| Jeanne Schmitt                   | Don and Barbara Stoever      |
| Jan Tague                        | Rob Thorn/Diana Fowler       |
| Mary Travis                      | Whitehall-Bexley Rotary Club |

**Supporting Members**

- Urban Environments Inc.
- Cindy and William Adams
- Mike and Linda Smith
- Plaza Properties
- Acorn Farms
- DelCo Water Company

*Thank you to David Hohmann for donating November's raffle item*

*This publication was financed through a grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, under the provisions of Section 319 (h) of the Clean Water Act.*

**Help Support the Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries – Become a Member!**

Your contribution is tax deductible and enables FACT to pursue its mission of stewardship and citizen enjoyment of Alum Creek. **Make checks payable to FACT, and return to 787 Montrose Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43209.**

Choose a Membership Category:	Name(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior \$10	Organization/Business _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family \$15-50	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$50-200	Phone _____ Email* _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Sponsor \$100-500	
<input type="checkbox"/> River Steward \$500-900	
<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Protection \$1000+ Partner	

*\*Please help FACT save resource by providing your email address.*

- Supporting Member! \$100+**  
Anyone can become a supporting member with a donation of \$100 or more

**THANK YOU!**



787 Montrose Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43209