

# Alum Creek



## Sheets

Volume 3, Issue 1

March 2002

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



### FACT Increases Capacity With New Committees

FACT experienced a “growth spurt” late in 2001 after acquiring energetic new members and officers and hiring a full time watershed coordinator. So, in February of 2002, the Board met to restructure. Out of an intense planning session came new committees:

- § **Education/Outreach** – This committee organizes community events, FACT publications and website, streamside owner education, speakers, storm drain labeling, etc. Contact Joel Rosenfield, committee chair and FACT Secretary, at 492-6418.
- § **Watershed Watch** – Monitoring construction sites, wetlands mitigation, and stormwater management are among the issues focused on by the Watershed Watch Committee. Contact co-chairs Margaret Ann Samuels (former FACT Chair) at 231-9134 and Carol Elder (current FACT Chair) at 895-1430.
- § **River Corridor** – This committee coordinates cleanup and tree planting activities along the creek, as well as conducting creek surveys, supporting corridor legislation, and promoting trails and access. The chair is David Hohmann, current Vice-Chair of FACT, and can be reached at 246-0931.
- § **Fundraising** – The name of the committee says it all. FACT Board members are facilitating this committee.
- § **Watershed Action Plan** – Our watershed coordinator, Heather Doherty, heads up this committee. As part of grant which allowed us to hire Heather, she will be compiling a watershed inventory of existing data on the creek and working with watershed stakeholders to develop a community-based watershed action plan. Heather can be reached at 485-0584.

The only thing missing from our committees is *you!* If any of these interest you, feel free to contact the chair for information on how to get involved.

### National River Cleanup Week Comes to Alum Creek on May 11th

Looking for a way to make a tangible difference in your community? Come join the Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT) as we take part in *Central Ohio River Pride Week* with a creek cleanup! The event will be held on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> (with a rain date of May 18<sup>th</sup>) from 9 AM to 3 PM, starting at Academy Park on Nelson Road. FACT will be joining forces with volunteers across the region and the nation, as Columbus initiates its own version of National River Cleanup Week.

FACT will be clearing garbage and debris and celebrating with a cook-out from 12:30 to 1:30. Whether for one hour or several, your hands can make a difference in removing garbage that is sometimes harmful and always a nuisance to our creek and to us. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and bring work gloves if you have them. For more info call David at 728-3885.

### Earth Day 2002 Celebrated in Westerville

A new partnership of local organizations, including the Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries, Westerville Parks and Recreation Department, Westerville Sunrise Rotary Club, and Otterbein College will be working together to bring Westerville and the greater Columbus area an opportunity to celebrate Earth Day on Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, by enhancing the Alum Creek river corridor. Planting trees and maintaining bird habitat at

Westerville's Cherrington Park, as well as clearing the creek and adjacent Otterbein Lake of garbage will be among the day's activities.

Cherrington Park, home to many bird species and nesting pairs of red-tailed hawks and great horned owls, can thank a local group of citizens and the Westerville Parks and Recreation Department for informally initiating the site as bird habitat four years ago. Nestled on the banks of the Alum Creek, it provides a good example of the potential for urban parks to provide recreation, important refuge for wildlife, and river conservation through preserving natural areas adjacent to the river. Earth Day activities will expand upon the neighborhood group's earlier efforts to reestablish the area with forest and bird habitat.

The day will also bring focus to Otterbein Lake, which lies on the west side of Alum Creek south of Main Street. Currently used for research and field studies by Otterbein College students, the Parks and Recreation Department will be developing the area as a new park site.

Join us for these events on Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, from 12-3pm, to be followed by a potluck dinner at Cherrington Park. Participants will be meeting at the Rike Center on the Otterbein College campus at 12 pm. Be sure to wear pants and sturdy shoes. To get involved, contact Heather at 485-0584.

**Directions:**

Otterbein College Rike Center: From Columbus, north on Route 3 (State St) towards Westerville. Left on West Main Street. Right on Center Street, which dead-ends into the Rike Center. Cherrington Park: From Columbus, north on Route 3 (State St) towards Westerville. Left on Hiawatha Road, which dead-ends into Cherrington Park.

*Alum Creek at Cherrington Park*



**Factoid!**

Alum Creek is believed to be the home of some 89 aquatic species, including 37 species of fish, 3 types of clams and 16 kinds of mussels. The Giant Floater mussel [Pyganodon (=Anodonta) grandis], also known as the papershell, hogshell or slobucket, likes to live in muddy pool areas. Keep your eyes open for this beauty, which can measure 5-10 inches across!

**Alum Creek Trail Update**

The Alum Creek Greenway Trail project is making good progress, according to Trail Projects Coordinator Brad Westall of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Commission. Newly constructed segments of the trail are soon to be complete in the Westerville area from Easton north to Route 161 and on to I-270. FACT members will participate in planting about 85 tree seedlings along a trail segment in Westerville on Earth Day - April 21, 2002.

Trail segments in the central Columbus area, from Nelson Park to Academy Park in the Holtzman-Main Business District, have been open for a while now. FACT and Capital University volunteers helped to enhance that stretch by planting 6 Liberty Elm trees along the trail last fall. A trail segment from Main Street to Livingston Avenue will be completed by this summer, and an I-70 underpass also finished.

Engineering planners are under contract to sketch out other connecting segments. Property acquisition negotiations by Columbus Recreation and Parks continue to tie in the final connecting links along the route. Current plans call for the trail to be completed at a distance of about 20 miles, from Westerville to The Creeks Park near Obetz, by 2005.

FACT expects the greenway trail will enhance the ability of local community members to access and enjoy our special river. Biking, walking and rollerblading along the trail should be popular with watershed residents and even some lucky commuters. FACT hopes to see installation of educational signs along the trail to link participants with the special values of our local environment. For more information or to help with FACT's greenways-related and service activities, contact David at 728-3885.

## Investigating Our Environment Education Workshops



The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District would like to invite you to join us as we explore our precious waterways. Each session is a complete workshop including: introduction to the program, instructor led activities, participant driven learning, dispersal of materials, evaluation, and door prizes. All curricular materials are adaptable for many age groups. A continental breakfast and beverages will be provided; participants need to bring their own lunch. For more information or to register please call Linda Pettit at the Franklin SWCD, (614) 801-9450, extension 15.

### *Streams, Watersheds and Stewardship:*

April 13, 2002 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Learn how our land uses affect our streams. Receive training to assess a stream's health through biological, chemical, turbidity and habitat monitoring. Discover your watershed address and use maps and models to learn about water and its movement. Take home equipment and training to be a watershed steward in your own school and neighborhood. Grades K-12, adult. Highbanks Metro Park. \$8.



### *Wonders of Wetlands:*

May 4, 2002 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Explore a wetland and engage in activities that will help you encourage students to wade right in to investigate Ohio's endangered spaces. Learn how to identify wetlands and understand their characteristics and value. Grades K-12, adult. Stratford Ecological Center \$20.



## FACT Builds Community Links to Find Water Quality Solutions

Since the 1970's brought us the Clean Water Act, the quality of our nation's waters has improved dramatically. At a time when rivers in Ohio literally caught fire due to pollution, this legislation brought focus to industrial and municipal facilities that released wastewater to rivers and lakes through pipes. This type of discrete, or "end of pipe" pollution is known as "point source" pollution.

Once these point sources had largely been improved, it became obvious that many of the nation's waters (including Alum Creek) were still not clean enough to meet the goals of the Clean Water Act. Major pollution sources that had previously been less obvious, such as stormwater washing off of roadways, lawns, construction sites, and agricultural fields were yet to be addressed. This form of non-discrete (or runoff) pollution has become known as "non-point source" pollution, and has proven to be much more complicated to curbe.

Our own Alum Creek has seen both of these trends: it is cleaner than it was in 1970 due to improvements in point-source facilities, but it continues to be degraded by urban runoff. The later has become an even bigger issue as the watershed continues to be developed. As more land area is converted from agriculture or forest to residential or commercial uses, less of it can absorb rain water. Rain is instead shunted off of roof tops or parking lots, where it picks up automobile fluids (for example) and heads for a street drain and to the creek. Not only are more pollutants entering waterways, but the *volume* of stormwater has also increased, which correlates with flash flooding and bank erosion.

How can such seemingly uncontainable forms of pollution be prevented? A new strategy is emerging across the state and the nation. It has required a major shift in how traditional regulatory agencies such as the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) operate. Realizing that they lack the tools to address issues such as urban runoff, they are empowering community organizations to build public support for local action.

FACT is one recipient of an OEPA grant fund that is intended to help communities produce a *watershed action plan*. FACT will draw on as many community partners as possible to help determine problems, priorities, and actions to improve water quality and community health.

FACT hopes to involve all those who might be affected by the plan, such as local businesses, industries,

## New FACT Website Coming Soon!

A new website is being constructed for FACT at <http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org>, replacing the old site at <http://www.westerville.k12.oh.us/North/slcalum/>. You will see information appearing on the new site by end of March. The site will provide information to the public about Alum Creek, and the goals and activities of FACT. If you have good digital photographs of Alum Creek, or ideas about what the website should contain, please contact Luanne Hendricks at 614-895-7639 or [lhendric@columbus.rr.com](mailto:lhendric@columbus.rr.com).

educational institutions, landowners, residents, and government agencies. The effort will not only address Alum Creek's current status of not meeting state water quality standards, but will also help build community links that benefit residents in their neighborhoods and daily lives.

Starting in April, members of FACT will begin meeting with a steering committee to get started in this process, with the goal of producing a plan in the fall of 2003. Look for updates in upcoming newsletters, or call 485-0584 for more information and to find out how you can help.

### Riverfest 2002 Photo Contest

Taken any good photographs of the Alum Creek lately? The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) is giving you a chance to show them off in the *Franklin County Greenways Photo Contest*. Franklin County Greenways, a MORPC program, is sponsoring the event to help kick-off its annual Riverfest season. Riverfest is a celebration of the Clean Water Act, which will be meeting its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and is hosted by watershed groups in the Franklin County area throughout the summer. It's also intended to raise awareness of river, water quality, and watershed issues. (Be on the lookout for FACT's Riverfest event this Fall!)

The entry deadline for the contest is **April 29<sup>th</sup>** at noon. A reception for participants and awards will be held on May 17<sup>th</sup>, and the top 60 entries will be displayed at MORPC through an "Art in the Halls" program. Images that reflect the beauty, importance, and/or destruction of our Central Ohio streams and watersheds are sought. Call Andrea at 233-4124 for more information.

*Alum Creek looking west from Route 3, towards Cooper Park*



### Make Earth Day Every Day!



Motivate yourself to start these Earth-friendly activities by focusing on one for each day in April, the month in which we celebrate the Earth!

1. Tune up your car... you'll help to clean up the air
2. Take your own bags to the grocery store
3. Always turn off unused lights
4. Clean out your garage and safely dispose of hazardous waste
5. Carry your lunch in a reusable container
6. Take your shower in 5 minutes or less to save water
7. Air dry dishes in the dishwasher to save energy
8. Write letters urging positive environmental action
9. Pick up litter in your neighborhood
10. Mix vinegar and water to make glass cleaner
11. Vacuum refrigerator coils to ensure better efficiency
12. Start some seeds indoors for a garden
13. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth
14. Wash cars on grass so soapy water doesn't enter drains
15. Think of 5 ways you can produce less trash. Do them!
16. Donate used magazines to hospitals and nursing homes
17. Wrap hot water pipes with insulation to prevent heat loss
18. Clean closets and donate unwanted items to charities
19. Use empty containers to hold nails, pencils, paper clips, etc.
20. Choose products you can reuse – razors, cloth bags, etc.
21. Find out how long your local landfills will be useable
22. **Earth Day!** Work consistently to improve the environment
23. Find out where you can recycle for home and work
24. Run several errands in 1 trip to reduce # of miles driven
25. Buy something cool at a yard sale
26. Keep the lint screen on you clothes dryer clean
27. Buy and install energy efficient light bulbs
28. Learn how energy is generated in your area
29. Prevent erosion by planting and mulching
30. Plant a tree for Arbor Day

# Calendar of Events

- Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>*     **Fighting Invasive Plants in Ohio.** Sponsored by the Friends of the Ravines, this community forum will feature a Nature Conservancy slide show about invasive plants and Q&A with Columbus Parks and Recreation. The meeting starts at 7:30 pm at the Northwood High Building, 2231 N. High St, Room 100. Call 267-6293 for more information.
- Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>*     **West Nile Community Summit.** The Columbus Health Dept. is sponsoring this event to help community members learn what they can do to help prevent the West Nile Virus. Many preventative measures can be incorporated into traditional neighborhood spring cleanups. The summit starts at 6:30 – call 645-6758 to RSVP.
- Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>*     **FACT Monthly meeting.** FACT meetings are held every second Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at the Ohio Dominican College Neighborhood Center, 1229 Sunbury Road. Come learn about the issues facing Alum Creek and ways that you can help. Everyone is welcome! Call FACT at 485-0584.
- Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>*     **Cleanup at Ohio Dominican College.** Join Ohio Dominican College students for an Alum Creek tributary cleanup on this scenic campus. Volunteers will meet in front of Erskine Hall at 9:30 AM. (Look for the building in the center of campus with white steeple). Bring work gloves if you have them. Call 262-2602.
- FSWCD Streams, Watersheds, & Stewardship Workshop.** See article pg. 3
- Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>*     **Ohio Trails and Greenways Conference 2002.** Hosted by the Rails to Trails Conservancy in downtown Columbus, this conference will focus on trail funding, marketing, and building. Call 428-4320 for more information.
- Sunday, April 21<sup>nd</sup>*     **Earth Day Celebration and Service Projects in Westerville.** See article pg. 1
- Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>*     **Westerville Earth Day Celebration continues...**Day two of the Earth Day Celebration, hosted by Otterbein College, will hold more glimpses into the natural world around us and ways to get involved in conservation efforts. Canoe floats, tree and wildflower walks, an exhibitor’s hall of environmental organizations (including FACT), and an array of speakers, including naturalist author Ted Steinburg, are some of the day’s events. Call 895-3089.
- Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>*     **“In Search of the Unnatural” at Sharon Woods Metro Park, 9-12 AM.** Come help Sharon Woods area residents, youth, and civic organizations search for “unnatural” garbage that has a way of finding itself in parks and natural areas, including an Alum Creek tributary. Call the Metro Parks Reservations Line by April 12<sup>th</sup> at 508-8111 to register.
- Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>*     **FSWCD Wetlands Workshop.** See article pg. 3
- Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>*     **FACT monthly meeting.** Time and location TBA
- Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>*     **Central Ohio River Pride Week at the Alum Creek.** Nelson area cleanup event (for info, call 728-3885) and storm drain marking project (for info call Heather at 485-0584). .See article pg. 1
- Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>*     **FACT monthly meeting** at the Ohio Dominican College Neighborhood Center, 6:30 PM

.....  
**Become a member of FACT!** Your contribution is tax deductible and enables FACT to pursue its mission of stewardship and citizen enjoyment of Alum Creek. FACT is a chapter of the Columbus Recreation Council with 501(c)(3) status under terms of the Internal Revenue Service.

Choose a Membership Category:

- Student \$5             Individual \$15             Family \$25             Organization \$50  
 Business \$100             Riparian Manager \$200 +

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Unless otherwise indicated, email will be used for delivering meeting announcements and general correspondence.)

**Return To:** FACT, 787 Montrose Ave., Columbus, OH 43209  
.....



787 Montrose Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43209