

2009 Year in Review: FACT made a big difference!

RESTORING ALUM CREEK HABITAT

Two miles of river formerly "impaired" by two lowhead dams may finally attain Ohio's clean water standards this year. The dams were removed by FACT in late 2008. FACT collaboratively planted over 800 native trees, shrubs, and perennials in Academy Park, Wolfe Park, Nelson Park, Pumphouse Park, Casto Park, Strawberry Farms Park, and Westerville's Heritage Park. These should provide shade, habitat, and climate protection enhancements for all to enjoy for years and decades to come. We've continued visible eradication efforts in 2009 against the invasive eurasian honeysuckle in sensitive riverside area

EDUCATING LOCAL RESIDENTS ON HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Over 20 news stories featuring FACT carried within local media (newspapers, TV, email, websites, mailers) in 2009 have reached several hundred thousand people in and around central Ohio. A new perennial rain garden grows beside the greenway trail at Casto Park now as an example of what is possible with new ways of handling runoff water. A vernal pool workshop, presentations to community, student groups, business leaders and many hours staffing tables at community events have allowed us to reach hundreds more with our message. New composter bins - now being distributed through FACT workshops - are helping to increase good backyard conservation practices.

CLEANING UP SENSITIVE AREAS

including our adopted Nelson Road/Academy Park with over 2,000 hours of volunteer labor. FACT and our partners were represented well in 2009 on Earth Day, National Public Lands Day, River Sweep, Make a Difference Day, and many other local days of action. Our 20 service events at 11 different locations this year have involved over 600 volunteers, setting yet another new record! Over 100 tires, 243 bags of trash and 100 other oversize debris items have been removed and properly recycled & disposed through these activities - all just during 2009.

Advocacy

FACT continues to advocate as necessary for appropriate safeguards of sensitive wetlands and headwater streams and streambank protection zones along our waterways. Everyone living in the watershed has something important to share: our actions affect the quality of our rivers and streams.

New relationships & ventures & firsts with:

- Westerville School District
- Casto Park - Columbus
- Strawberry Farms Park - Columbus
- Columbus Jewish Federation - center's campus
- Columbus/Israeli High School Partners (canoe)
- Heritage Park - Westerville
- Composting workshops - Westerville & Bexley
- Rain garden - Columbus (Casto Park)
- Some selected no mow zones with CRPD.
- Ohio American Water Company grant
- Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO) grant
- Further public recognition by City of Columbus
- Increased number of donor members over 2008!

Possible hopes & dreams for 2010

- CRPD wetland preserve acquisition
- No mow zones with Westerville in selected sensitive areas.
- Otterbein College wetland/vernal preserves.
- Restore Cooper Park - 2 areas.
- Expand Casto Park - 2 areas.
- Added plantings - Strawberry Farms Park.
- AC Greenway Trail - Innis <> Mock Parks
- Bexley development policy.
- Westerville S & N High School preserves.
- Bexley Pumphouse Park - creek access.
- More work along Spring Run-Westerville.
- Blendon Township community plan-policies
- Ohio American Water conservation property

The mission of Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT) is to preserve and protect the quality and beauty of the Alum Creek watershed and promote environmentally responsible recreation, educational opportunities, and citizen participation at many levels.