

Alum Creek



Volume VII, Issue IV
January-March 2007

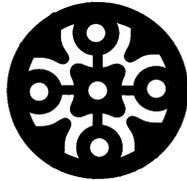
A quarterly publication of the
Friends of Alum Creek and
Tributaries

FACT Sheets

Springing into Action

By Kimberly L. Williams

This past December, FACT began a strategic planning process to review and prioritize our goals with the help of a grant from



ComFest's Hopewell Logo

Community Festival (ComFest). The visioning and planning process allowed us to focus our efforts on actions that need to be taken to protect Alum Creek and to foster connection between the public and this vital resource. After several meetings, new committees were formed and old ones created to help FACT achieve its mission.

For more on our strategic planning efforts:

- "Strategic Planning or Why I Love late Night Meetings" (pg. 1) is a light hearted review of the creative process.
- "FACT Committees: Something New, Something Borrowed" (pg. 3) provides an overview of committees goals and plans for 2007.

Of course, FACT's ability to be effective is dependent on the help of volunteers. Please see "Volunteer Opportunities"(pg. 4) for how you can help protect and preserve Alum Creek.

In addition to strategic planning, FACT strengthened its organization by adding two new Board members, David Roseman and Jerry Holloway. They are featured in our "River Voice" (pg. 7) section of the newsletter.

I chose the title "Springing into Action" not only because we are going to enact our goals set

forward in the strategic plan, but we also hope to begin the process of removing two lowhead dams that are negatively impacting water quality. For more on lowhead dam removal, see "Implementing the Watershed Action Plan" (pg 5). 2007 promises to be a busy year. Please join us in our efforts to protect Alum Creek.

Finally, **Thank you ComFest** for funding FACT's strategic planning sessions.

Strategic Planning or Why I Love late Night Meetings

By Jerry Holloway

One of the first questions addressed in a strategic planning session is "does this group want to do a few things well or do many things poorly"? Strategic planning sessions are laborious and tedious but are necessary to help any organization identify goals and priorities. If we are going to ask individuals and groups of people and business to give us financial assistance and sweat labor, we must be able to clearly express what we would like to accomplish and how we will go about the business of protecting and enhancing the Alum Creek environment.

A bad thing about strategic planning with bright articulate people is you get hundreds of good ideas and important meaningful projects and a potentially huge workload. A good thing about strategic planning is once you have scored, sorted, prioritized, filtered and identified the 'final four' top contenders, you can feel confident that the substantial effort that goes into this exercise produces a comprehensive topic list from which emerges a pretty clear picture of what we can

Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries

2820 Watkins Road, Columbus, Ohio 43207 ~ (614) 409-0511 ~ kwilliams@friendsofalumcreek.org

www.friendsofalumcreek.org

Board of Directors:

Barbara Logan	Chair
Joe Bonnell	Vice-Chair, Fundraising and Membership Development
Leslie Fowler	Treasurer
Carol Elder	Secretary
Margaret Ann Samuels	Watershed Watch Committee
David Hohmann	Service Committee
Brian Wilke	Recreation Committee
David Roseman	Communication Committee
Jerry Holloway	Education Events



Mission: FACT is 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.

Staff

Kimberly Williams, Watershed Coordinator

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) _____

() Student/Senior \$10 Organization/Business _____

() Individual/Family \$15-50 Address _____

() Organization \$50-200 Phone _____ Email* _____

() Business Sponsor \$100-500

() River Steward \$500-900

() Watershed Protection \$1000+ Partner ** Please provide your email address to help FACT save resources.*

() Supporting Member! \$100+

Anyone can become a supporting member with a donation of \$100 or more

Thank You!



The Arrival of Spring:
Alum Creek jumps its bank at Three Creeks Park from spring rains (left)
Spring flowers (right).

(Pictures provided by Kim Williams)



Strategic Planning (cont. pg. 1)
and can't do and some strong indicators of what we should be doing.

The board's effort in developing a strategic plan will help direct the focus of our group of volunteers, students and folks who want to continue to have healthy waterways and welcoming natural areas to enjoy.

FACT Committees: Something New, Something Borrowed

By David Hohmann, Kim Williams, Margaret Ann Samuels

During our strategic planning process, some committees were split up and some were created from scratch. All committees will work together to ensure the overarching mission of protecting and restoring Alum Creek is achieved. The following are the committees and the chairpersons that lead them:

SERVICE

Chairperson: David Hohmann

2007-2008 Goals

Our plans for 2007 include hosting over a *dozen* cleanups and restoration projects. FACT service efforts may soon be led by local "captains" in each area.

FACT will continue our close stewardship care of the Academy Park corridor of Alum Creek from East Broad St to Main St. in the center of our urban watershed. Signage along Nelson Road celebrates this public commitment which FACT has upheld since 2002. FACT will hold at least 3 more cleanups here again in 2007, as continued highly visible evidence that people care about Alum Creek.

FACT will also continue to partner with Capital University Service Learning students, and the Whitehall Bexley Rotary to care for Academy Park corridor and other areas of Alum Creek. St. Charles and Bexley school students are poised to pitch in as well. We also anticipate help from Ohio Dominican University volunteers as well as summer high school groups to continue our efforts to clean the Argyle-Woodland Run tributary of trash.

War on Tires. In 2007, for the third straight year, FACT will continue its efforts to eradicate this scourge. We hope to complete cleaning the creek from Strawberry Farms Park below SR 161 to past the Easton ball fields and continue working downstream south from there toward Mock Road.

In addition to cleanups, FACT will also undertake as needed drain labeling and invasive species removal. FACT uses each service opportunity to celebrate our local connections to each other and the natural environment through our rivers and especially our dear Alum Creek.

WATERSHED WATCH

Chairperson: Margaret Ann Samuels

2007-2008 Goals

As in the past, Watershed Watch will continue to monitor developer requests to the US Army Corps of Engineers and Ohio EPA for permits to fill in streams and in the watershed. In addition, FACT will continue to monitor construction sites for compliance and to work with other concerned groups on the issue of cumulative effects. At the same time, the committee will undertake additional responsibilities:

- Stormwater education and outreach workshops
- Researching and gathering information on mitigation sites
- Facilitate wetland and stream monitoring

Advocacy efforts undertaken by FACT for Alum Creek not only helps ensure water quality protection, but also the health of our communities.

FUNDRAISING AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: Joe Bonnell

2007-2008 Goals

The goal of this committee is to keep FACT financially strong so that it can maintain its conservation and outreach efforts. A variety of fundraising strategies will be utilized. For example, FACT held two successful fundraising events, Cocktails for Conservation and the Empty Bowl Event in 2006. FACT is looking to host these events again. In addition, grants, membership mailings and business sponsorships are other methods that FACT will utilize to ensure

its financial stability and to help enact conservation measures with local governments, other conservation organizations and local residents.

RECREATION

Chairperson: Brian Wilke

2007-2008 Goals

The Recreation Committee will enable FACT to offer the community recreational opportunities to enjoy the beauty of the watershed. Also, it will help increase awareness of the importance of Alum Creek in the local community. To accomplish these goals, a variety of events will be held this upcoming year

- Canoe Float
- Bike Ride
- Hike and Picnic

People forming a connection to Alum Creek by participating in the Canoe Float or any other event will be the hoped for results of the Recreation Committee's efforts.

EDUCATION EVENTS

Chairperson: Jerry Holloway

2007-2008 Goals

Providing opportunities for people to learn about Alum Creek is the responsibility of the Education Events committee. The following workshops and outreach programs will be organized by the committee:

- Lowhead dam removal public participation meetings
- Pollution prevention, erosion control and stormwater outreach
- Backyard Conservation practices

Informing and empowering local people to undertake different conservation measures is the goal of the Education Events Committee. This goal is based on the premise that the health of Alum Creek can be improved by our collective efforts

COMMUNICATION

Chairperson: David Roseman

2007-2008 Goals

The Communication Committee will ensure that FACT is accessible to the public. At the same time, the committee will be responsible for ensuring that the public and decision makers are

aware of issues impacting Alum Creek's health. Also, this committee will work with the other committees to promote FACT events and meetings. Thus, the following forms of media will be utilized to achieve the aforementioned goals:

- Newsletter
- Website
- Press Releases
- Flyers and brochures

By taking on public relations and marketing roles, the Communication Committee will help FACT act as a resource for the local community.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In

- ~ Public Education and Outreach
- ~ Communication
- ~ Service ~ Advocacy ~ Fundraising
- ~ Recreation

We need everyone's help to make a difference right here where we live, work and play. The following questions may help you decide how you would like to contribute.

1. What type of work would be meaningful to you?
2. How much time would you be able to give?

For more information or to share ideas, please
Call (614) 409-0511 or
E-mail kwilliams@friendsofalumcreek.org.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

WATERSHED WATCH

By Margaret Ann Samuels

Some of the most intensive development now underway in the Alum Creek watershed is in southern Delaware County, particularly around the Polaris area. Since NP Limited revealed plans for the Polaris mall with its 93-acre parking lot in 1998, FACT has worked to lessen the damage to Alum Creek and its tributaries. Unfortunately, NP Limited, the consortium that owns large land parcels in the Polaris area, currently has three permit requests for approval of construction that will further damage the water quality in the streams north of Westerville.

The last FACT newsletter described 2 of the projects, the Antares office complex and Colonial Meadows, a hotel/office buildings proposal that would destroy 1457 feet of a class 3 headwater stream and its wooded riparian corridor. FACT members attended OEPA hearings in January and February on these 2 permit requests, asking that the wetlands and streams be preserved to help keep the water quality in Alum Creek from further degradation.

NP Limited now has a third pending permit request, to fill 1714 linear feet of stream channels, plus over 2 acres of open water and 0.68 acres of wetlands in the area where a Costco store and other retail development is planned. The main tributary affected is the same one that flows through the Colonial Meadows site and eventually to Alum Creek. The three developments combined will fill in ~ 4,000 linear feet of perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams and 1 acre of Category 1 and 2 wetlands. As a result, Alum Creek's water quality will be further threatened by excess stormwater and pollutants not being absorbed and filtered.

In regards to water quality, Chad King, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at Ohio Dominican University will be coordinating stream monitoring efforts for FACT. Mark A. Dilley, M.A.D. Scientist LLC, will also contribute his time and expertise to help any future monitoring efforts at Cooper Park, a rare 2 acre site that provides habitat for amphibians in area that is developed.

RECREATION

EXCERPT FROM: *Gateway to our Legacy*: The Alum Creek Rec. Trail & Greenway
by David Roseman and Nick Pedicini.
(For the entire article please see FACT website)

The Alum Creek Greenway Trail is a 10' wide paved dedicated path which primarily follows the Alum Creek river corridor (north & south) through Franklin County. Thanks to collaborative multi-jurisdictional efforts of Cities of Columbus, Westerville, Bexley, Franklin County Metro Parks, MORPC, and Clean Ohio Fund over the past few years significant construction has been moving at apace towards completion. This recreational trail already rivals Olentangy Trail and will eventually be longer.

Last year's additions include the underpass of SR 161, the connector to the I-670 Bike Trail; a realignment of Bexley's Pump House together with the Kroger at Main Street crossing, a spur to Dempsey Road, and a 2-mile long section, currently under construction, from I-70 to Three Creeks Metro Park. In the near future the trail, which now has two disconnected long segments -separated by a gap between Easton and Airport Rd -will eventually run all the way from the northern environs of Westerville to the southern end of Three Creeks Park near Obetz.

FACT will be planning another bike ride along the Alum Creek Greenway this year. Check the website for future bike rides.

Implementing the Watershed Action Plan

By Joe Bonnell

Several years ago, FACT convened a series of meetings with government officials, citizens, and agency professionals to develop a plan to protect and restore the chemical and ecological integrity of Alum Creek. The resulting Watershed Action Plan was later endorsed by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) as *the* roadmap to a healthier watershed. One of the key objectives identified in the action plan was the removal of several lowhead dams. These dams, while relatively small (only 3-8 feet tall), create a number of water quality problems, prevent fish from migrating upstream, and create a drowning hazard. Because of their low profile, these dams do not reduce flooding downstream and, in many cases, the dams no longer provide any useful service to the community.



Wolfe Park lowhead dam north of Fair Ave. (picture by Kim Williams)

In 2006, FACT received a \$300,000 grant from OEPA to address several water quality issues in Alum Creek. A primary goal of the grant was the removal of two lowhead dams, one at Nelson Park and another at Wolfe Park. Funding was provided for FACT to hire a consulting firm to remove the dams and restore the stream to a more natural condition. In order to select the best consultant for the job, FACT assembled an advisory committee made up of FACT board members, university faculty, city officials, and conservation professionals. The advisory committee solicited proposals from a number of consulting firms from Ohio and surrounding states. After a careful review of the proposals, the committee recommended the local engineering firm of Burgess and Niple to the FACT board.

In the coming months, FACT, with help from the advisory committee, will be working with representatives of Burgess and Niple to develop a plan for removing both dams and restoring those sections of Alum Creek to a more natural condition. Although many details will need to be worked out, we hope to have both dams removed later this year. For more information about the dam removal project, contact Joe Bonnell (Bonnell.8@osu.edu) or Kimberly Williams (kwilliams@friendsofalumcreek.org).

Bald Eagles on Alum Creek

By Carol Elder

Last year, a pair of bald eagles built a nest in a rapidly developing urban area of northern Westerville, close to Polaris Parkway, right on Alum Creek. Because eagles don't usually build nests this close to cities, the pair was believed to be young eagles building their first nest. But the nest was within an easy "commute" to two good food sources, Alum Creek reservoir and Hoover reservoir. Alas, they did not lay eggs due to their immaturity, but this year they have come back and seem to be interested in nesting again! Maybe this time they will be successful in having a family.

Human activity can scare eagles off a nest, exposing eggs to cold temperatures and causing their death or keeping them from feeding young hatchlings. The City of Westerville is setting up an eagle viewing area at the Westerville

Sports Complex at the southwest corner of County Line Road and Cleveland Avenue, a respectable distance from the nest. Disturbing an eagle and causing it to neglect its eggs or young, or even picking up an eagle feather, is a crime with possible jail time so birdwatchers must be very careful while viewing this magnificent sight.

The work of FACT and local partners like the City of Westerville in preserving and protecting riparian habitat and water quality in the Alum Creek watershed may have been one factor in the eagle's choice of nesting sights. Without this natural swath of land, or "greenway," along Alum Creek, it's doubtful that eagles would be nesting among us.

FACTOID!

By David Hohmann

By the Numbers: Part Two

Pollution and the Lower Alum Creek

- 1997-2001 Combined Sewer Overflows to Alum Creek at E. Main St = over 244.9 million gallons
- Separate Sanitary Sewer Overflows to Alum Creek in 14 months of 2002-2003 = 113 events
- Volume discharged in the only 2 SSO events for which this was measured = over 9 million gallons
- Number of "inland relief" points where SSO discharges begin = 27

Sources of Pollution

- NPDES permitted sewage treatment discharges: Publicly Owned Treatment Works = 2 (together discharge an average of 3 million gallons/day)
- Semi-public & Privately Owned (non septic/leach) sewage dischargers = 306
- Residential septic/leach type systems = 6400 + (about 25% may be failing in a given year*)

Proposed Improvements

- Proposed expenditures by Columbus to reduce sewage overflow problems to local rivers = \$2.4 billion
- Number of years before all the improvements will be completed = 30 to 40

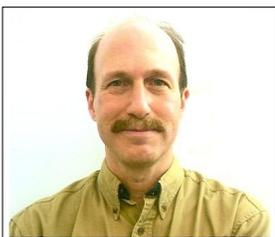
~ River Voices ~

Jerry Holloway and David Roseman have recently joined the FACT Board.



JERRY HOLLOWAY

- Born in Texas in an Air Force family.
- Eagle scout, lots of camping and canoeing
- Moved every three years until college.
- Vietnam veteran USAF 4 years Missile Guidance Systems
- Participated in the first earth day April 1970 upon my return from Southeast Asia which solidified my environmental views.
- Supported various environmental groups since then
- Married my college sweetheart 36 years ago.
- BA Sociology, OSU; MA Criminology OSU.
- Professor at Wilmington College, Ohio 3 years
- Management Information Systems and Information Technology Analyst for the Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction 20 years.
- Network Administrator Supervisor for the Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction for the last 7 years.
- Moved from Columbus to Westerville in 2003 and began volunteering with FACT.
- I am a lifetime runner and cyclist and the creek and associated trails were attractive features that brought us to Westerville.
- The creek and watershed need an advocacy partner so FACT is a good fit for me to donate time, resources and effort.



DAVID ROSEMAN

For 20 years I have lived in a modest home in the far Northeast side of Columbus where my sloping backyard turns into a wooded ravine with a beautiful creek. This unnamed creek is one of

many tributaries that supply our Alum Creek. I have always appreciated the diversity of wildlife and serenity which these natural surroundings provide my family and friends.

It is not uncommon for us encounter immediately around our home snakes, fish, turtles, raccoons, groundhogs, possums, bats, occasional deer, and we see many birds from nesting Cooper Hawks, hummingbirds, woodpeckers to migratory warblers. Last year our homemade owl nesting box suddenly turned into a massive beehive.

If it wasn't for this strip of preserved riparian corridor few of these species would be around. Further upstream this creek has long since been turned into sewer pipe running somewhere beneath Columbus Square shopping strip center and E. Dublin Granville Road. While many of those businesses have come and gone - with many empty storefronts these days - after exploiting the surrounding environment by permanently "tearing down paradise to put up a parking lot" my 1/3 acre of solitude has remained.

One of my first local environmental victories occurred in 1991 by working with our local civic association we convinced Columbus City Council and Recreation and Parks Dept. to acquire the last remaining undeveloped 3 acres of wooded land and empty lots on our street from a 'developer.' We preserved this greenway by turning it into a neighborhood park "Northern Woods Park" complete with playground, perennial garden, a half basketball court, and trails. This is a wonderful legacy.

In addition to volunteering for the past few years with FACT on many service projects including creek clean-ups and watershed watch, I serve on the City of Columbus Bikeway Advisory Committee, am a Trustee & Office with the Central Ohio Bicycle Advocacy Coalition, participate with the Northland Community Council, and lead the landscape committee and sit on the Board of Education for our synagogue. During what little other free time is available I enjoy snow skiing, canoeing, SCUBA diving, recreational biking, hiking, and/or bird watching, with my two children, wife and dog (not necessarily in that order).

FACT Events Calendar

Check website <http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org/> for updates or call (614)409-0511 for additional information.

April 12th Membership Meeting at Ohio Dominican University Neighborhood Center.
Starting at 6:30 pm.



April 21st

EARTH DAY CLEANUP EVENTS.

- Cleanup at Academy Park from 9 AM -12:30 PM
- Cleanup along Alum Creek Greenway Trail in Westerville from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm.
 - Meet at Westerville Service Dept. on 350 Park Meadow Rd.



787 Montrose Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43209