

Alum Creek

Volume VIII, Issue III
the July – Sept 2007



A quarterly publication of
Friends of Alum Creek
and Tributaries

FACT Sheets

Traveling the Alum Creek Corridor

By Kimberly L. Williams

This newsletter is covering different themes such as the Alum Creek Greenway Trail and invasive plant species. What binds these two different topics together is the geographic feature known as the “stream corridor”. When one hears the word “corridor”, it can be readily understood as a passageway very similar to a highway linking different cities and small towns. In the case of a stream corridor, the connections are between different habitats such as forest and grassland. Today, stream corridors are important thruways for animals and plants to travel through an environment heavily split up by roads and houses (yes, plants can travel -- via wind, water or animals).

What has been described thus far is what happens along the length of the stream corridor. Taking a cross section across the creek, the corridor can be split into three habitats: the 1) stream channel 2) the floodplain and 3) the outer fringe of the upland or where the ground is high enough to be out of reach of the high flood water level. Between these three different habitats, the corridor is a place of dynamic interaction. For example, the leaves from the trees bordering the creek provide important food to aquatic insects which in turn are eaten by fish. The floodplain and the upland streamside forests are important in filtering out nutrients and sediments. The sediment that does enter the creek helps form the curvy structure of the

stream as it meanders into riffles and pools. Thus switching between the linear and cross section views, one can see that stream corridors are shaped from water, rock and plants interacting to produce a dynamic feature on the landscape that is vital to our daily lives.

As I travel along the Alum Creek Greenway Trail, I know that I am participating in an ageless movement of Nature from one place to another. However, I also see that invasive plant species, such as the bush honeysuckle, are choking Alum Creek’s banks and therefore impacting what species can reside within the stream corridor. Nature will still move, but perhaps not at the same level of diversity.

For more on Alum Creek Greenway Trail and FACT activities please check out the Committee Reports. Also, please read “Ohio’s Alien Plant Species,” by Melissa Moser, Ecologist for ODNR Division of Natural Areas & Preserves, for how you can stop the spread of invasive plants.



Invasive Amur honeysuckle

Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries

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

www.friendsofalumcreek.org

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Kimberly Williams.....Watershed Coordinator

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

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 FACT, 2820 Watkins Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43207.**

Choose a Membership Category:

- Student/Senior \$10
- Individual \$20-100
- Family \$30-100
- Supporting Member \$100-500
- Organization/Business \$100-500
- Supporting Business \$500+
- Lifetime Member \$500+

Name(s) _____

Organization/Business _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email* _____

* Please provide your email address to help FACT save resources.

FACT is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer community based organization

FACT General Meetings - open to public 6:30 PM on 2nd Thursday of every month

Join us for our monthly public meeting to discuss FACT's accomplishments to date, review ongoing watershed issues, hear committee reports, special guest environmental presentations and civic speakers, work on and plan future activities & community based events. We want to hear your needs and desire your activism.

Note NEW location with Ohio Dominican University campus - Spangler Library, Room 115.

(The Neighborhood Center building is being removed).

Spangler Library is across the street from ODU Neighborhood Center, on the south edge of campus.

Park behind the Gym, because there is no parking on the library side of campus. Cross at the light.

When you enter Spangler, you are entering on the Third Floor, so you would go down two flights to first floor.

There is an elevator on that side of the building will open right across the hallway from this room.

<http://www.ohiodominican.edu/about/directions/images/102421ODUMap.pdf>

Ohio's Alien Plant Species

Melissa Moser, Ecologist, ODNR Division of Natural Areas & Preserves

Hikers may notice bush honeysuckle shoving its way into their favorite hiking paths. Boaters and anglers may have trouble navigating through thick aquatic vegetation. Hunters may be hindered by prickly multiflora rose. Those who enjoy a colorful array of spring wildflowers may notice them being replaced by a monoculture of garlic mustard. These non-native invasive species are just a few of the plants affecting all Ohioans.

Did you know that there are more than 500 non-native plant species in Ohio? These species, not recorded prior to European settlement, have been introduced for a variety of reasons including erosion control, horticulture, forage crops, medicinal use, wildlife food or simply by accident. Of these introduced species, nearly 100 are considered to be invasive, meaning they displace native plants in woodlands, wetlands, prairies and other natural areas.

Non-native invasive plants pose a real threat to the biological integrity of Ohio's natural areas. Because these species are characterized by fast growth rates, high fruit production, rapid vegetative spread and highly efficient seed dispersal and germination, they often out-compete native plants. In many cases, they can significantly reduce or eliminate native plant species and alter the ecology of a site, often leading to severe impacts on animal species.

The Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

spends a significant amount of time and effort controlling invasive plants within state nature preserves. A variety of management techniques are used to combat the aggressive nature of the plants. Plants can be pulled, cut and treated, foliar sprayed, mowed, or burned. A single site often needs to be treated multiple times before the invasive has been eliminated. Successful control of these plants frequently requires a variety of management techniques and overall persistence from the land manager. It is best to act quickly before an infestation gets out of control.

There are many ways you can help stop the spread of non-native invasive plants:

- Educate yourself about non-native invasive plants in your area
- Remove them from your property
- Plant only native or non-invasive plants and encourage your local nursery to stock these alternatives
- Volunteer with a local land managing agency to remove these species (parks, nature preserves, etc.)
- Tell others about the threats of invasive plants and the benefits provided by native plant communities

In addition to land management in our state nature preserves, the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves has produced educational materials to help educate Ohioans about the threats of non-native invasive species. Handouts, brochures, factsheets and a poster are available. For more information, call 614/265-6453 or visit our website at: www.ohiodnr.com/dnap.



Garlic
Mustard
First year



Garlic
Mustard
Second
year

Factoid (Webtoid) !

- Information about upcoming events is posted on our website at www.friendsofalumcreek.org. Just click on the word "calendar" and then, on the bottom left, choose the month.
- Photos from events and past activities may also be found on the website by clicking on the "photo gallery" link on the right side of the home page.
- Thanks Carol Ray, our Web Guru.

Committee Reports

RECREATION

Chair: Brian Wilke

Annual free family bike ride & picnic: The Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries (FACT) will lead a free family bike ride leisurely touring the newest segment of the Alum Creek greenway trail, followed by a picnic, on **Sunday, September 9**, from **1-5 PM**. Bikers will depart **Pumphouse Park** near Bexley (2025 E. Main St. - SE corner of Alum Creek Dr.) at approximately 1:30 PM and travel the paved path for about 4 miles to the northern perimeter of Three Creeks Park (near SR 104/Performance Way) and back.

The scenic recreational route follows the Alum Creek river corridor, passing through forests, meadowlands, several ponds, and has only two at-grade road crossings. Riders are encouraged to wear regulation bicycle helmets, observe all rules of the road, and follow safe riding practices.

Complimentary BBQ picnic will be held upon return at Pumphouse Park shelter. Free bike bottles will be provided courtesy of COTA Bike 'n Bus. Donations are encouraged to help offset costs and benefit FACT. Vehicle parking available at adjacent Laborers Intl. Union building lot (620 Alum Creek Drive). For more details on this recreational event, contact our Recreational Event Leader Brian Wilke at 614-899-0708, or Kim Williams.

FUNDRAISING AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Chair: Joe Bonnell

Welcome and thank you to all new FACT members! The Board has approved a recommendation by this committee to raise the membership rates for 2008. FACT's membership rates have remained at their low amount for many years and it was time to update them to go with our increasingly significant tasks. The new rates are on the form on page 2 and go into effect in October.

Fact is raffling off a coaster (one speed) bike. Tickets are being offered for \$5 a chance; when 100 have been sold, the winner will be drawn.

Contact Joe Bonnell (bonnell.8@osu.edu) to learn about the many ways you can get involved.

SERVICE

Chair: David Hohmann

Cleanup Coming Soon: Academy Park area on **Saturday, September 29** from **9 AM to 1 PM**
Volunteers and groups are needed to help us clean up the Alum Creek river banks, roadside, trail, and park areas near Nelson Road between E. Broad and E. Main Street. Participants meet at Academy Park's north parking lot at 250 S. Nelson Road, one-fourth mile south of E. Broad Street. This event is in conjunction with the 14th annual National Public Lands Day.

A beautiful commemorative poster, suitable for framing, will be offered to the first 50 volunteers. Attendees should dress accordingly with hats and sturdy shoes. Work gloves, beverages, and trash bags are provided. Depending on the weather, wading may be done to retrieve debris or trash from the streambed.

FACT has formally adopted this sensitive and heavily traveled park riverside area through a partnership with Keep Columbus Beautiful. At least three cleanups a year are held here, and this is the last big one planned for 2007. Since 2001, some 24 FACT-sponsored cleanup and restoration service events have been conducted around the Academy Park location. 500 total participants have removed 699 big bags of trash, 117 old tires, and 244 other oversize items from the sensitive urban river area between Broad and Main Streets. At least 25 percent of the materials retrieved here are recycled.

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands that Americans enjoy and depend on. Over 1,100 National Public Lands Day volunteer events are slated nationwide this September.

<http://www.publiclandsday.org> In 2006, about 100,000 volunteers built trails and bridges, planted trees and plants, and removed trash and invasive plants. FACT hosted an NPLD cleanup event in 2006.

For more details on FACT's clean-up events, contact Service Event Chair, Dave Hohmann, or Kim Williams.

WATERSHED WATCH

Chair: Margaret Ann Samuels

FACT is providing information to Bexley City Council to encourage passage of a zoning overlay that would protect the streamside areas next to Alum Creek as new development occurs - yes, there is still potential for affecting the floodplain and riparian areas in Bexley.

Three Canoe Floats Retrieve Mounds of Trash

by David Roseman

FACT led three in-water clean up service events this summer. Many volunteers and newcomers took advantage of the free canoe loaners, provided courtesy of Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, on June 16 to paddle down the river from E. Dublin Granville Rd to Innis Park. Over 30 tires, many bags of trash, and large pieces of debris were removed from the creek during that outing.

On July 22, on a sunny Sunday, two canoes embarked from Innis Park and only managed to travel south about ½ mile to just beyond Agler Road and Bridgeview Golf Course. A few volunteers did their best tackling this virgin cleaning area. Over four hours, 43 tires, including some large tractor sized ones, plus many errant golf balls were extracted. Countless tires remain embedded for the next time we return. FACT has since contacted and requested Columbus State Community College, the golf course owners, for their future assistance.

During a drizzly August 5, three volunteers in their two canoes floated about 4 ½ miles from Academy Park to SR 104, at the northern perimeter of 3 Creeks Park. Amongst the large carp, David "TireMan" Hohmann single handedly removed some 55 tires (a new one time FACT record) plus we pulled over a hundred pounds of aluminum cans. Tons more junk remain for other spirited volunteers.

It was eye opening to experience first hand - while being on the water - the immediate impact of a rain downpour on the river. The resulting massive amount of trash emerging from the river banks, sandbars, tributaries, and storm outlets which the current washed downstream was incredibly sad. If only we had a giant net to capture the garbage while it was near our reach! South of I-70 near the railroad trestle we smelled a heavy paint thinner odor and encountered a large oily residue slick on the water's surface. We immediately called in a complaint to the OEPA spill hotline **800-282-9378**, actually talking to a real person. (Cell phone service via an urban canoe!) Unfortunately by the time an EPA field investigator came to our site the next day, it was too late for them to personally encounter, document or scientifically collect any water samples from our reported events.

To help with more service events and to volunteer your company, school, or organization to cleanup our dirty dozen, contact David Hohmann.

Cocktails for Conservation

The annual Cocktails for Conservation fundraising benefit, held on June 21, was a success with raising over \$1,000 for FACT. Good food, drink, live musical entertainment was enjoyed by the many in attendance at the new Rusty Bucket restaurant in Bexley. Dorothy Pritchard, City of Bexley Public Utilities Director, gave a wonderful presentation about the city's progress on plans to create a greenway along their side of the river.



FACT Board Members & Friends enjoying Cocktails for Conservation

Photo by Mike Elder

Boyer Nature Preserve updates as of August 17, 2007

by Mark A. Dilley

I thought it is high time to provide an update for the Boyer Nature Preserve volunteers and supporters. The fruits of our labor at Boyer are evident by the wetland vegetation which has just exploded at the site, defining the vernal pool areas and providing lush green cover throughout the previously disturbed area. Most visitors would never guess that we had an excavator on site just a bit over a year ago! We're seeing good native plant establishment and no resurgence of honeysuckle or multiflora rose within the area cleared by Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT) and other community volunteers (thank you again, volunteers).

Please note that we will have some

additional volunteer opportunities for wetland/nature enthusiasts in the next two months. We have some maintenance tasks at Boyer as well as a grand planting effort for the Otterbein Lake project - just south of Westerville's Main Street near Alum Creek Park North. I hope you'll be able to participate. If you have any questions or comments (or the names of other potential volunteers!), please let me know. Otherwise, watch for future updates. Thanks & Best Regards!

FACT note: Boyer Preserve is 11.5 acres with a loop trail/boardwalk around a kettle pond. Located at 425 Park Street: dead-end into Orchard Lane, north of Walnut Street - in Westerville. Contact Mark A. Dilley, PWS, of MAD, Scientist & Associates LLC at (614) 818-9156 madilley@earthlink.net.



Successful Events, Festivals, and Presentations

☞ FACT's display table and several Board member volunteers were busy this summer spreading FACT's facts throughout metro Columbus. We met and helped educate the public along with civic leaders while signing up some new members at the Genoa Trail fest in Genoa, Wessiefest at Westerville's Otterbein Lake, Columbus RiverFest in North Bank Park pavilion, Three Creeks Festival in Groveport, and Bexley Farmer's Market.

☞ FACT had the honor of being invited by Alan McKnight, Director of Columbus Recreation & Parks Department (CRPD), to speak about central Ohio watersheds to City Council member Priscilla Tyson as part of CRPD's monthly hearing on Greenways. On July 26th David Hohmann made a great PowerPoint presentation focusing on FACT's mission, accomplishments, challenges, and plans; followed by Margaret Ann Samuels and David Roseman who also spoke. The 90 minute public meeting in City Council Chambers was taped and routinely broadcast throughout August on cable TV government channel 3. (<http://www.columbus.gov/tv/MasterSchedule.htm> for scheduled times). As a result, Councilmember Tyson has requested that FACT give her a tour of the Alum Creek river via canoe. This ride is tentatively scheduled for September 29 at

Academy Park, to coincide with FACT's morning clean-up in that area.

☞ The Clifton Avenue bridge (over the Alum Creek River at Nelson Park) dedication was held on August 22 by the Franklin County Engineer Department. This rebuilt bridge deck features two expanded sidewalks including one that is 12 feet wide on the south side as part of the Alum Creek greenway trail. During Dean Ringle's opening remarks, he publicly recognized many groups including FACT and David Roseman. Dignitaries along with David, Margaret Ann Samuels, and other locals participated in the ceremonial ribbon cutting which was televised the same evening on Channel 6 and 28. This was another wonderful way to keep connected and show our support of Bexley, Columbus, Franklin County, and MORPC officials and key leadership support staff.

☞ August 9- State Representative Jim McGregor, 20th Ohio House District, gave an excellent presentation on "Green Corridors: Providing Water Quality, Recreation, and Bicycle Commuting" at FACT's general membership meeting held at Green View Estates subdivision. Afterwards, Brian Lieburn, Senior Vice President of Sovereign Homes discussed their new green home building concept.

Low-Head Dam Removal Plans Formally Announced to the Public

Over 50 people attended FACT's first low-head dam removal public informational meeting held August 14 from 7 to 8:30 PM at the Wolfe Park shelter house. David Roseman kicked off the session followed by Joe Bonnell and Dave Hohmann. Then Mitch Strain of Burgess & Niple Engineering gave a presentation reviewing various display charts and possible scenarios for river remediation and answered questions.

Elayna Grody of Columbus Recreation & Parks Dept. also provided answers to some audience questions. Though some attendees were anxious to know the specific dam removal details, they were told that more information would be provided in the near future. The final plan will be contingent upon the collected data, scientific analysis, and recommendations by Burgess & Niple. All in all most everyone seemed positive with our overall goals to help restore Alum Creek

to its more natural and healthier state.

The Columbus Dispatch ran a two page story with Illustrations in the morning's Metro section. (Check out FACT's web site, publication section). Prior to the meeting, all four local TV channels broadcast our meeting plans during their 5 - 6 pm news hours, with channel 10's Penny Moore & 4's Marshall McPeck interviewing Joe Bonnell from the swinging bridge. Sean Cueller, reporter for FOX 28/ABC6 WSYX, covered our meeting and interviewed Kim Williams. She broadcast two slightly different, but very nice, reports on the 10 PM FOX news and 11 PM ABC news.

For more information about this project, read FACT's September special edition newsletter (forthcoming) about low-head dams and visit our web site.



Thanks JP Morgan Chase - FACT's newest 'Watershed Protection Partner'

Our sincere thanks to J.P. Morgan Chase who recently donated, via Earth Share of Ohio, \$1,000 to FACT. Earth Share's Board of Directors approved the distribution of the grant allocation on August 23rd and Linda Paul, Development Director, plans to personally present a check to FACT's Board during our monthly Board meeting on September 10. Paul Bingle, Earth Share CEO & Executive Director, informed us, "There are no strings attached." FACT hopes to use some of these funds for greenway plantings along the Alum Creek river corridor. Chase also provided several volunteers for FACT's Cooper Park clean-up and honeysuckle removal efforts on April 28. FACT may become a designated beneficiary organization of Earth Share for future gifts. For more info: www.earthshareofohio.org

**A BIG thank you to all of our new and renewing FACT members!!
We couldn't do it without you.**

WELCOME NEW FACT MEMBERS FOR 2007

Watershed Protection Partners:

J.P. Morgan Chase

Supporting Members (\$100 - \$249):

City of Columbus Utilities Dept., Raymond & Janis Meister, Janet Short- St. Marys of the Springs.

Regular Members:

Lawrence Abramson, Eric & Megan Bell, Carol & Allan Forsythe, Alexandra Fraser, Saira & Al Harris, Bob & Miriam Holmes, Jane Hoopingarner, Greg Hostetler, Peggy Kirsop-Big Walnut Golf Course, Beth Klukoske, Dave & Becca Lawless, , Steve Maiken & Debra Allen, Bill Ogden, Elsie Oppenheimer, Dorothy Pritchard, Jennie Smith-Pariola, Hank Stonerbrook, Janet & Rick Williams.

FACT Events Calendar

Check www.friendsofalumcreek.org for updates or call (614)409-0511 for additional information.

Free Family Bike Ride & Picnic – Sunday, September 9 1:00 to 5 PM.

Leisurely family bike ride touring the newest southern part of the Alum Creek greenway trail, followed by a picnic. Bikers will leave from Bexley's Pumphouse Park (2081 E. Main St. @ Alum Creek Dr.) at approximately 1:30 PM and travel the dedicated paved path for approximately four miles to the northern perimeter of Three Creeks Park (SR 104/Performance Way) and back. Complimentary BBQ picnic will be held back at Pumphouse Park shelter. Free parking available at adjacent Laborers International Union building lot. Donations are welcomed to help defray costs and to benefit FACT. *Riders are encouraged to wear regulation bicycle helmets, observe all rules of the road, and follow safe riding practices.* For more info or to offer assistance, contact Brian Wilke 614-899-0708 or FACT office. (See inside story on page 4 for more).

Academy Park clean-up on Saturday, September 29 9 AM to 1 PM.

Participants meet at Academy Park's north parking lot at 250 S. Nelson Road, one-fourth mile south of East Broad Street. This event is in conjunction with the 14th annual National Public Lands Day. (See page 4).

Empty Bowl Benefit – Saturday, September 29 5:30 to 8:30 PM. *(check your mail for recent paper invite)*

The annual fall outdoor casual dinner event to benefit FACT. Families welcomed. Hearty homemade soups, breads, appetizers, snacks, deserts, & soft drinks; live musical entertainment; silent auction; fire pit to roast marshmallows. BYOB and lawn chairs. Location: 5 South West St., Westerville, OH (SW corner of West & Main Streets - across from Otterbein College). Suggested donation: \$25 Individual or \$45 Couple/Family. Thanks to our hosts, Terry & Brenda Winebrenner. For more information, RSVP, to donate silent auction or food items, and to offer assistance please contact Kim Williams at FACT 614-509-0511, kwilliams@friendsofalumcreek.org.



2820 Watkins Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43207