

# Alum Creek



Volume 5, Issue 1

March - May 2004

## Sheets

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



### **FACT & Westerville Join Forces to Focus on Spring Run**



Playground along Spring Run in Blendon Township

Spring Run is a relatively large stream as far as Alum Creek tributaries go. It follows a seven mile course through southern Delaware County (Genoa Township), Westerville, and Blendon Township in Franklin County before entering Alum Creek near State Route 161.

Although the stream maintains some natural areas along its course, through Inniswood Metro Gardens and Westerville North High School property, for example, a recent Ohio EPA report shows that the stream is in trouble.

The suburban development that surrounds it delivers pollutants when rain washes off of streets and lawns, creating “urban runoff” pollution. This can include fertilizers, car fluids, and pet waste. Increases in the amount of runoff, due to fewer natural landscapes to soak up precipitation, has also led to higher flood levels and banks eroding into back yards.

Motivated by these problems, FACT and the City of Westerville Public Service Department have entered a new partnership to rehabilitate Spring Run. FACT has highlighted the stream in its Watershed Plan for Alum Creek, which will be published this summer. Westerville must also comply with new federal rules which require the city to limit urban run-off pollution collected in municipal stormwater systems.

While the campaign will include some long term projects, events this spring will serve to kick-off the new programs. FACT and Westerville will be hosting an event focusing on lawn care in March, and will be visiting Spring Run at Inniswood Metro Gardens in May (see below).

Long term plans include physically surveying the stream and eventually creating restoration projects to restore habitat for fish and stabilize eroding banks. Westerville will also be receiving assistance from FACT to create a water quality monitoring program to help pinpoint sources of pollution, and developing policies that allow problems to be fixed once they are found.

You can help! Volunteers and concerned citizens are needed – contact the Westerville Service Department at 901-6740, or FACT at 409-0511.

### **Lawn Care the Natural Way** *FACT Speaker and Outing Series - March 11th*

Looking for some practical advice on what YOU can do to reduce water pollution? FACT and the City of Westerville will present guest speaker John Stock of the Watershed Organic Lawn Care Company to tell you how on Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup> as part of the



[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**

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Margaret Ann Samuels, Co-Treasurer  
Jan Tague, Co-Treasurer  
Barbara Logan, Secretary  
Harold Highland, River Corridor Committee Chair

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Joe Bonnell, Ohio State University Extension  
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Dick Lorenz, Westerville Division of Water  
Vince Mazeika, OEPA Division of Surface Water  
Stephen McClary, Columbus Planning Division  
Jerry Wager, Columbus resident

#### **Staff**

Heather Doherty, FACT Watershed Coordinator

#### **Contact Us**

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*"Lawn Care" continued from page 1*

FACT bimonthly Speaker and Outing Series. Join us to learn how nutrients from conventional fertilizers are polluting Alum Creek and Spring Run, about new FACT and Westerville programs to combat these issues, and natural lawn care alternatives from our guest speaker.

#### **Win a year of organic lawn treatment!**

FACT will be raffling this prize during the March 11<sup>th</sup> program. Purchase a raffle ticket at the meeting, or in advance by calling 409-0511. And don't miss FACT's next Speaker and Outing Series event - join us to explore Spring Run at Inniswood Metro Gardens on May 13<sup>th</sup> (see calendar on page 5).



## **FACT Asked - You Listened!**

In the December 2003 issue of *FACT Sheets*, we told you about FACT's expanded membership campaign for 2004. After making a big push in 2003 to set program priorities and expand networks within the watershed community through action planning, we were ready to devote some energy to growing in terms of volunteers and finances.

So when we asked you to join or renew your membership, you listened! In a matter of two months, FACT received a record 70 memberships, and we still have 9 months to go before we stop counting for the year! You also elected to increase the size of your gift or become a supporting member, helping FACT yield net profits so far of over \$1500.

Your membership contributions will be used in the next year to help support the staffing, publicity, and administration of the organization that is essential to reaching goals of cleaner water and increased recreational opportunities to Alum Creek. Your response has also helped energize all those working behind the scenes. FACT would like to say thank you! Now it's time for the next step - let us know how you'd like to volunteer by calling 409-0511.

## River Corridor Committee Gears up for 2004

By Harold Highland

Hi. I'm Harold Highland, new chairperson of the River Corridor Committee. We have an exciting year coming up for FACT. Creek cleanups and implementation of action plan projects are among our goals for the year.

The action plan contains a tremendous amount of information regarding Alum Creek (available on the web at [www.friendsofalumcreek.org](http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org)). We are looking forward to working on river corridor related activities such as developing access to Alum Creek for canoeing, fishing, and recreational access.

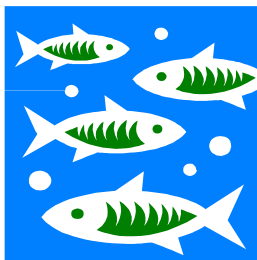
**Our first cleanup takes place on March 13<sup>th</sup>** along Alum Creek between Nelson Road and Bryden Road, our adopted cleanup area. Help FACT and the Whitehall – Bexley Rotary Club celebrate our newly erected “Adopt-An-Area” signage from Keep Columbus Beautiful!

Other cleanups are in the process of being scheduled during the rest of the year. We are working on a major Earth Day cleanup on April 17<sup>th</sup>, which will likely take place along new portions of the Alum Creek trail in southern Westerville and northern Columbus.

The last area of concern regarding litter is Three Creeks Park on the southeast side of Columbus. FACT will be working with Three Creeks Metro Park to plan a cleanup here in September.

We welcome volunteers for all of our projects, as well as ideas to help us develop Alum Creek as an integral part of the recreation activities in our area.

I look forward to working with everyone to develop Alum Creek into a major attraction in Central Ohio. The River Corridor Committee meets regularly - please contact me at 890-4711 to learn how you can get involved!



## ~ River Voices ~



*River Voices contributing writer Phil Durschnitt joins us from the Whitehall – Bexley Rotary Club, pictured left at the FACT Earth Day Cleanup in 2003.*



### Swanboats to Ply the Waters of Alum Creek Once Again?

The Whitehall-Bexley Rotary Club approached the City of Bexley about seven years ago with the idea of saving the old Norwood Amusement Park property, which is basically the Main Street entrance to the City and was quite an eyesore! I asked Mayor David Madison about the property and found that the City was in negotiation with the City of Columbus to lease the property to Bexley so that Bexley could indeed beautify it and possibly use it for playing fields (as was the thought at the time).

I took the idea to the Whitehall-Bexley Rotary Club Board and then asked Pete Halliday to liaison with the City of Bexley to find out what we as a Club could provide to this project. As this project has progressed, the Club has promised \$40,000 to the project, tentatively named "Pumphouse Park." The Club has performed cleanups, the bicycle path has been routed through the area, and the City of Columbus has performed overdue maintenance on the underground reservoir and overflow outlet (which had been in violation of regulations).

As the weather allows, the Club will start cleanups of the area, maintenance, beautification, and plantings with the cooperation of the City of Bexley, Landscape Architect, and other volunteers. Long term goals are many and do include a memorial garden honoring deceased Club members and Rotarians from the City of Bexley. Hopefully we will be able to find some memorabilia from Norwood Amusement Park so people might realize that once there actually were "Swanboats on Alum Creek."

## Watershed Watch



*By Margaret Ann Samuels and Carol Elder*

Watershed watch is a catch-all phrase that FACT uses to describe the monitoring of a variety of activities that have the potential to have a negative impact on Alum Creek or tributary streams. While FACT members have been responding to these issues for over five years, we are now formally convening a Watershed Watch committee, which will meet on March 4<sup>th</sup> in Room 314 of the Otterbein College Science Building, 155 West Main Street.

Alum Creek faces many threats and needs many friends to prevent degradation and sustain all the benefits that it now provides to local residents. Please call 409-0511 for more information and to learn how you can get involved!

Current developments that affect the creek include:

### **The Ravines at McCammon Chase, 3350 East Orange Rd, Orange Township (Delaware County)**

MI Homes plans to build 177 homes on a 100 acre tract in an ecologically vulnerable area. It includes 3 of the last large, undeveloped ravines with tributaries that flow to Alum Creek in the township. FACT provided written comment and oral testimony at the township zoning committee hearing on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

FACT is requesting that buffer areas be maintained along the ravines and that the developer not place fill in the ravines for stream crossings, as well as complying with state standards for stormwater control. Plans for the proposal are on the Orange Township website, [www.orangetownship.org](http://www.orangetownship.org).

**Bexley Tree Nursery property** – The City of Bexley accepted a bid by Rider Brice to purchase the City's 5.5 acre property along Alum Creek at the north edge of Bexley, where it has maintained its tree nursery. The site has a steep slope to the creek, and erosion has been a problem. The purchaser intends to build condominiums and will require site rezoning. FACT has expressed its concerns to the city council regarding protection of the riparian area and the creek, from runoff both during and after construction.

The city declined a rival bid to turn the site into a park. Many questions remain about the project's

details, including sanitary and storm sewer construction as well as other environmental issues.

**Dominion Homes Development near Sunbury Road** – Dominion Homes has proposed a residential development next to Alum Creek and along Sunbury north of Mock Road. The site is across from Mock Park, one of the most scenic parts of the creek. Plans would require filling of the Alum Creek floodplain. FACT expressed its concerns to the Northeast Area Commission considering the proposal on February 5<sup>th</sup>, recommending that no fill be placed in the 100-year floodplain and that a wide riparian buffer be maintained.

## Factoid!

### **Alum Creek a Fly-way for Bald Eagle**

*By David Hohmann*

Bald eagles are the U.S. national bird, symbolic of pride in what is special about America. Environmental protection efforts focused by early visionaries like Rachel Carson and her landmark book, *Silent Spring*, gained political support because eagle populations (among other species) were having big problems.

Because they share the top of the food chain with humans and a few other species, eagles can be good indicators of ecosystem health or problems. A gradual recovery of eagle populations has occurred nationwide since the early 1980's since the banning of pesticides like DDT. Air and water quality has also begun to recover over the same time period.

It is a cause for hope locally that a **bald eagle was sighted in November along Alum Creek** in FACT's adopted area in central Columbus (Academy Park and Wolfe Park along Nelson Road). Greenway preservation and enhancement efforts have begun to take hold along Alum Creek. A natural creekside corridor is essential to the health of our river and provides a migratory path for birds and other wildlife.

Thanks to FACT member Jerry Wager for his spotting expertise! Last month a mid-winter bird survey in Ohio found 304 bald eagles around the state. Keep your eagle eyes open and you may find more to Alum Creek than you first expect!

# Calendar of Events

**March 11<sup>th</sup>**      **FACT meeting and Speaker Series**, 21 South State Street, Westerville, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

**Natural Lawn Care** - The City of Westerville Public Service Department and FACT are partnering to bring you guest speaker John Stock of the Watershed Organic Lawn Care Company. Excess nutrients running off of suburban lawns and into Alum Creek can promote the growth of algae and wreak havoc on biological communities. Learn how you can help prevent river pollution by using traditional fertilizers correctly or switching to natural lawn care. Westerville residents will also learn about new FACT and City programs to address pollution in Alum Creek and Spring Run. *Don't miss your chance to win a year of organic lawn treatments from the Watershed Organic Lawn Care Co.!*

**March 13<sup>th</sup>**      **Alum Creek Cleanup at Academy Park**, Academy Park, Columbus, 9:00 – 11:30 AM  
Join FACT, the Whitehall-Bexley Rotary Club, and Keep Columbus Beautiful in kicking off the national “Great American Cleanup” campaign. FACT will once again be cleaning up its adopted area along Nelson Road and Academy Park. Help FACT celebrate our new “Adopt-an-Area” signage! Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and clothing; equipment provided. Academy Park is located along Nelson Road between Main & Broad Streets.

**April 8<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. Park in the large lot just north of the center.

**April 17<sup>th</sup>**      **Earth Day Cleanup**, Alum Creek Greenways Trail between Westerville and Columbus  
Stay tuned to for details about this Alum Creek cleanup south of Schrock Road.

**May 13<sup>th</sup>**      **FACT meeting and Speaker Series**, Inniswood Metro Gardens, 6:30 – 8:00 PM



*Wild Geranium in bloom*

**Spring Run Inniswood Metro Garden** - Join FACT and the Westerville Service Department for a tour of beautiful Inniswood Metro Gardens, featuring wetlands, spring wildflowers, and Spring Run. This Alum Creek tributary stream will be the focus of new FACT and Westerville programs; learn what's happening with this waterway and how you can get involved!

**May 15<sup>th</sup>**      **Delaware County Friends of the Trail Cleanup**, Galena Square, 9:00 AM  
These “Friends” are working hard in Delaware County to connect the Alum Creek Trail to Sunbury and beyond, and eventually as a part of the Ohio to Erie system. Contact Mike O’Neill for more information at 740-965-2646.

*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 shows 2004 FACT members. For more on the FACT membership campaign, see article on page 2.

Celia Forker	Lawrence Samuels family	Stephan Jupinko	<b>Supporting Members</b> Bill & Phadia Adams DelCo Water Urban Environments Plaza Properties Acorn Farms Lisa & Bill Lonergan Mike & Linda Smith St Mary of the Springs
Paul Miller	Jeanne Schmitt	William Spratley	
Eleanor Noltemeyer	Don & Barbara Stoever	Daniel & Susan Binder	
Brian Wilke	Jan Tague	Taletha Davis Jones	
Matthew Perlik	William & Bertha Brandon Jr.	Mark Skinner	
City of Bexley	Hugh Crowell & Julie Cronk	Franklin County Greenways	
Terry Lahm	Harold Highland	Luanne Hendricks	
Jerome Iles	Dan Jax	Eric Saas	
Mark & Chris Dilley	Marilyn Logue	James & Virginia Wagner	
David & Barbara Smith	Jared Nodelman	Frank Eubanks	
Rosida Porter	Craig & Diane Peterson	Michael Hoggarth	
Helen Barber	Rob Thorn	Thoma Swanson	
Joanne & Richard Samuelson	Mary Travis	Margaret Ann Samuels	
Mchael O'Neil	Boatright Family	Randall Bennett	
Drew Bergman	Donald Cook	Carol & Mike Elder	
Richard & Sarah Meizlish	David & Becky Hohmann	Sister Raymunda Brooks	
Linda Brownstein	Donald Kiser	Marie & Jeff Hurt	
Terry Winebrenner	Whitehall-Bexley Rotary Club	Dale Killian	
Jim Wentz	Nancy Belay & Jeff Turner		
George Boas & Nancy McCargish	Donna & Tom Francy		
Joseph Daubenmire family	Erin Miller		
Robert Lund	Patricia Marida		

*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 Partner      \$1000+		

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

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

**Thank You!**



787 Montrose Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43209