

Alum Creek

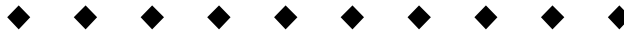


Volume 4, Issue III

September, 2003

Sheets

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



Comments Invited on Draft Alum Creek Action Plan

If you haven't yet been involved with the FACT-sponsored effort to plan for a healthier Alum Creek, another opportunity has arrived! As a draft of the Action Plan for Alum Creek is completed in late October, feedback on the draft is encouraged from everyone within the watershed community.

Four years have passed since the Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries took the very first steps towards initiating the planning process. Now the many community members that have been meeting since January to define strategies are beginning to put the document down on paper.

A formal public comment period will open for approximately four weeks in November after the draft plan is completed. After comments are received, the action plan will be submitted to the Ohio EPA for approval near the end of 2003. The plan will be the basis of a grant application to the Ohio EPA in April of 2004 to implement selected portions of the plan.

To encourage feedback from a broad spectrum of community members, copies of the draft plan will be made available at local libraries and provided to civic associations, local governments, and natural resource agencies. The plan will also likely be posted on the FACT website, www.friendsofalumcreek.org, and notices mailed to all FACT members.

Call 409-0511 to receive notice of the comment period and help shape the future of Alum Creek!



Historical Landmark & Natural Treasure

A Tour of Jeffrey Park Tour on September 11th

Donated to the City of Bexley by the Jeffrey Family around 1950, this elegant 40 acre park hosts 22 acres of mature woodland, the historic Jeffrey Mansion built in 1905, and stories to be told of Bexley and Columbus a century ago.

Join the Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries (FACT) and the Bexley Parks and Recreation Department for a historic tour of the park, as well as an exploration of woodland trails along Alum Creek on Thursday, September 11th at 6:30 PM.

Directions: From downtown Columbus, take Broad Street east 3 to 4 miles. Once in Bexley, turn left at the light on to Parkview Avenue. Go through one stop sign, and the park will be on the left (165 North Parkview Avenue). Meet in front of the Mansion. Call 409-0511 with questions, or visit FACT on the web at:

www.friendsofalumcreek.org



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

Carol Elder, Chair
David Hohmann, Vice-Chair
Margaret Ann Samuels, Co-Treasurer
Jan Tague, Co-Treasurer
Joel Rosenfield, Secretary
Robby Florstedt, River Corridor Committee Chair
Barbara Logan, Education & Outreach Com. Chair

Action Plan Steering Committee

Frances Beasley, Franklin County Greenways
Joe Bonnell, Ohio State University Extension
Jeff Cox, Columbus Division of Sewers & Drains
Keith Dimoff, Ohio Environmental Council
Carol Elder, Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries
Michael Hoggarth, Otterbein College
Dan Lorek, Bexley Development Department
Dick Lorenz, Westerville Division of Water
Vince Mazeika, OEPA Division of Surface Water
Stephen McClary, Columbus Planning Division
Jerry Wager, ODNR Soil & Water Conservation

Staff

Heather Doherty, FACT Watershed Coordinator

Contact Us

Address Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries
2820 Watkins Rd., Columbus, OH 43207
Phone 614-409-0511
Email Doherty@friendsofalumcreek.org
Web www.friendsofalumcreek.org

\$700,000 Awarded to Preserve Two Alum Creek Properties

After your next visit to Easton Town Center, take a short drive west on Morse Road. You'll soon cross Sunbury Road, Alum Creek, and a five acre, wooded parcel on the northwest corner of the intersection that almost became a used car lot. Although that particular proposal was turned down by the Columbus Development Commission, the parcel will soon come under the ownership of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) and will be preserved in its current natural state.

CRPD has been actively acquiring lands adjacent to Alum Creek, or in the riparian corridor, for many years. The addition of this property and a second on Cooper Road was made possible through a Clean Ohio Fund grant, which CRPD applied for with written support from FACT. Preserving lands next to a waterway helps "buffer" the creek from urban pollutants, protect wild life habitat, and preserve the creek's scenic and recreational qualities for local communities. Combined, the two parcels encompass 14 acres and 1,500 linear feet of stream bank, and had both been slated for commercial or residential development.

Congratulations and *Thank You* to the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department for their dedication to protecting urban waterways!

Columbus Erects Signs near Sewer Overflows

When some of the earliest sewage systems were built in Columbus (and many other cities nationwide), relief points or "sanitary sewer overflows" (SSO's) were established to alleviate pressure when the system was over capacity. The City of Columbus Division of Sewerage and Drainage (DOSD) is currently erecting signs to warn the public about overflow sites. The signage is required under a recent consent decree between Columbus and the Ohio EPA, which also mandates steps towards the reduction and/or elimination of SSO's.

Eight of these relief points exist in the Alum Creek watershed - four overflow directly into Alum Creek and four overflow into Alum Creek tributaries. FACT is currently working with Columbus DOSD through action planning to learn about and facilitate steps towards reduction and elimination. Many plans

Continued on page 3

are indeed already in place, but some will take many years to implement. SSO's are thought to be a significant source of a variety of pollutants present in the Alum Creek watershed, although no information is available on the frequency or volume of overflows.

Overflows can occur during heavy rain events, or when a tree root or grease build-up blocks sewer lines. When DOSD is aware of overflow events, they attempt to notify adjacent land owners with temporary signage and door hangers.

Call DOSD at 645-7102 if you suspect that you've witnessed an overflow, or visit www.dosd.org to learn more about SSO's. Call FACT at 409-0511 to learn about the specific locations of SSO's in the Alum Creek watershed.

FACT Finds A New Home at Three Creeks Park!

The office of the Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries has moved into a new creek-side location at Three Creeks Park in southeast Columbus! Three Creeks Park is a joint venture between Metro Parks and the city of Columbus, although the FACT office is located in the Three Creeks Metro Park office. The park derives its name from the fact that it encompasses the confluence of Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek, and Black Lick Creek.

FACT bids a warm *Thank You* to Metro Parks for graciously donating the space, and also to the owner of FACT's prior space of 15 months, Capital University. Successive rent-free office space is highly valuable, allowing FACT to spend its limited resources on programs that will directly affect Alum Creek. Come visit the new office at the corner of Watkins and Spangler Roads!

Academy Park Cleanup Planned for September 27th

A cleanup of FACT's "adopted area" near Academy Park will be held on September 27th from 9:30 to 3:00 PM. FACT has committed to conducting cleanups three times a year between Broad Street and Bryden Road along Nelson Road and Alum Creek. This site was selected for adoption partially because of large volume of litter that collects here from passing cars. Please see the Calendar on page 5 for details.

~ River Voices ~



"River Voices" contributing writer Jill Snyder joins us from Three Creeks Park as the Park Naturalist. Visit www.metroparks.net for a list of programs.



I came to Three Creeks Park from Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park. After working in Big and Little Darby Creeks, the gems of central Ohio's waterways, I had pretty low expectations for these big city creeks. Boy was I surprised at what I found!

Within the park, there are numerous mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. I actually found a Spotted Salamander, a great environmental indicator, in a wetland near Alum Creek! The Alum Creek corridor is also an amazing flyway for migrating birds in the spring and fall, with loads of summer and winter residents. All this wildlife was a very good sign about the health of the park's creeks.

When I finally jumped into Alum Creek to check it out, I was pleasantly surprised. I found many insects, fish, and even a few freshwater mussels! All of these things indicate good water quality. There is nothing I love more than playing in the water, so I was happy to find Alum Creek in good shape.

I have also since waded in the creek, hiked along its edge, biked along the greenway trail, and enjoyed fishing in the ponds near its banks. I am looking forward to a canoe access along the creek so I can enjoy more time in the water.

My favorite part of my job at Three Creeks Park is sharing hidden treasures, like Alum Creek, with the public. I would like to invite everyone to join me for a hike along the creek or even to wade into its cool water. The Alum Creek is continuing to improve, and thanks to groups like FACT, it will remain a great place to enjoy the wonders of nature!

Watershed Watch



By Margaret Ann Samuels

New Developments Threaten Water Quality

Silt and pollution runoff from construction sites continues to be a major source of contamination for Alum Creek. The Ohio EPA recently sent letters to developers at several sites in the watershed, in Genoa Township in Delaware County. FACT had notified OEPA after a visit to the area revealed numerous violations of required runoff controls. We hope that improved practices will result, as this area north of Westerville undergoes such rapid development.

Plantings and protected corridors along the creek and tributaries help control runoff, but too often these are voluntary on the part of developers. Municipalities and townships need to adopt policies that will protect the water.

Bexley's draft Southwest Master Plan proposes such a zoning protection. The few locations for new construction in the city are mostly close to the creek. Bexley is seeking to sell city-owned land next to Alum Creek, for potential development. FACT has participated in the Master Plan process and continues to work with the city, in the hope that protections can be put in place.

BWARI to be Next Step in Massive Stormwater Control Project

FACT continues to follow efforts by the City of Columbus to comply with the federal Clean Water Act in dealing with stormwater and sewage disposal. The Big Walnut Augmentation Rickenbacker Interceptor (BWARI) is now planned to be completed in 2008. This project will result in a 12-foot diameter concrete tunnel to the Southerly Wastewater Treatment plant. The pipe will be able to store sewage when stormwater events send a heavier volume of water into the system, which can overwhelm the treatment plant and also cause sewage to be discharged into Alum Creek at sewer overflow points (see article page 2). The next phase of that plan will be built along Alum Creek, and should eventually eliminate sewer overflows.

Columbus residents in the Alum Creek watershed experienced flooding in mid-August when a rainfall of several inches overcame the stormwater system in the area where Bliss Run has been channeled into underground concrete tunnels. This occurred despite a new underground 12-foot stormwater passage recently installed by the city in the lower part of Bliss Run, which discharges stormwater runoff into Alum Creek's floodway.

The Division of Sewerage and Drainage is preparing a revised stormwater policy and has included FACT in the advisory group monitoring the process.

Factoid!

"Rifle, Run, Pool" is the flow cycle followed by water as it moves at different speeds and depths down a healthy stream or river. The exact locations of these features evolve over time in a natural pattern as the river erodes and redeposits sediment.

Pools are the more tranquil fishing spots (best when shaded by overhanging trees to keep the water cool), usually ending abruptly near a stream bar deposit or curve where the water becomes quite shallow and narrower, and moves more rapidly over the rocks.

Rushing over these shallow **riffles** renews the life-giving oxygen in the water. Water bugs and small fish like to hang out in the rocks too.

Runs are fast-moving deeper channels which serve as good habitat for fish and mussels. Eventually the current slows down into another pool, before cascading again over the next riffle. It's like a series of stairsteps the water takes on its downstream path.

You can see these features very well from a canoe or river bank. Take a look the next time you visit Alum Creek!

You may *not* find these features in areas where habitat has been impacted by humans, such as behind dams. Water behind dams is often backed up into long stagnant pools with stinky goo on the bottom for a mile or more. There are five small dams on Alum Creek. Runs, riffles, and pools, don't have a chance to develop here, and not surprisingly, the quality of water and fish diversity is also poor in these areas.

Calendar of Events

- Sept. 11th** **A Tour of Jeffrey Park**, Bexley, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
Join FACT and the Bexley Parks and Recreation Department for an historical and natural tour of this elegant urban park bordering Alum Creek. See article and directions on page 1.
- Sept. 14th** **Schrock Lake Spectacular**, Sharon Woods Metro Park, 1:00 – 4:30 PM
A fun-filled family event focusing on water resources, including kid's fishing, crafts, and water safety. Call 891-0700 for directions and more information.
- Sept. 27th** **Alum Creek Clean Up**, Academy Park, 9:30 – 3:00 PM
Help cleanup FACT's "adopted area!" Located along heavily traveled local roads, this area becomes inundated with garbage that pollutes Alum Creek. Come for as little or long as you like, but be sure to wear old shoes and clothes. Bring gloves if you have them - all other equipment will be provided. Academy Park is located on Nelson Road between Broad and Main Streets.
- October 4th** **Kick-off for the Otterbein Lake Project**, Westerville, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
- Mallards take a swim at Otterbein Lake.*
- 
- Come witness the unveiling of plans by local citizens and the City of Westerville to transform a neglected borrow pit into a beautiful pond and recreational resource! Activities include project board display and site tours, demonstrations of adaptive fishing gear for the disabled, educational walks, music, and food. This site is also adjacent to the Alum Creek and the multiuse trail. Learn more on line at <http://otterbeinlake.home.att.net/>.
- Directions:* Exit on Cleveland Avenue north from I-270. Right on Main Street. Right into the site entrance just before crossing bridge.
- October 9th** **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.
- Oct. 24 -25th** **2003 Simply Living Conference: "Community and Cooperation: Creating a Global Vision"**
This event will be held at the Agriculture Administration Building on the Ohio State University campus. Call 292-9410 for details, or visit www.simplyliving.org/sl.
- November** **Submit your comments on the draft Alum Creek action plan!**
See article page 1.
- November 13th** **FACT monthly meeting and Speaker Series: Alum Creek's Lowhead Dams**, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
Learn about Alum Creek's small dams and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources's emerging strategy for selective dam removal. FACT meetings are open to the public and held at the Ohio Dominican University Neighborhood Center, 1229 Sunbury Road.
- December 11th** **FACT monthly meeting**, Ohio Dominican University, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Happy Holidays!

Call 409-0511 for details on all events, or visit www.friendsofalumcreek.org

Thank You to all new and renewing FACT MEMBERS!

The following list includes new or renewing members that have joined during the last quarter (since June 2003).

Individual / Family

Frank Eubanks
Ruth Quinn
Donna Hamilton

Steve Ellman
Barbara Logan
Tom Christenson & Family
Taletha Davis Jones

Bill & Phadia Adams

Organization / Business

Whitehall – Bexley Rotary Club

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.



Historic Landmark & Natural Treasure
A Tour of Jeffrey Park



Thursday, September 11th, 2003
165 North Parkview Avenue, Bexley

Sponsored by FACT and the Bexley Recreation and Parks Department. Look inside for details, or call 409-0511!

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. FACT is a chapter of the Columbus Recreation Council with 501(c)(3) status under terms of the IRS.

Make checks payable to FACT, and return to 787 Montrose Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43209.

Choose a Membership Category: Name(s) _____
 Student/Senior \$5
 Individual \$15
 Family \$25
 Organization \$50
 Business \$100
 Riparian Manager \$200+
Organization/Business _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

NOTE: Please help FACT save resources by providing your email address, and preference for email or hard copy correspondence (circle one).



787 Montrose Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43209