

# Alum Creek

Volume VI, Issue III



September - November  
2005

## Fact Sheets

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

### FACT Hosts 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Empty Bowl Benefit

October 1, 2005



Does a bonfire, creek walk, silent auction, music, food, and (to top it off) a free Fiesta Ware Bowl sound like a good time to you? If so, please be our welcome guest for a special night of celebration at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Empty Bowl Benefit. Fill your bowl with an assortment of fresh-made soups while filling FACT's bowl with your support.

Please visit *River Voices* on page 5 for a word from our host, Terry Winebrenner, who with his wife, Brenda, has again graciously offered his home at 5 South West Street in Westerville for the event.

To reserve your spot now, call (614) 409-0511, or visit FACT's website – [www.friendsofalumcreek.org](http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org) – to print a RSVP form.



### More Grants Target Wetland & Riparian Protection

Two more grants are on FACT's horizon for protecting wetlands and riparian\* land in the Alum Creek watershed. In late August, FACT submitted a request for over \$400,000 to permanently protect 30 acres of creek-side land that consists almost entirely of floodplain, woods, and four acres of high quality wetlands. The parcel is located along the creek south of State Route 104, and its high quality has much to do with the creek's ecological recovery in that area. (\*see *FACToid* page 3)

The grant funds are made possible through an Ohio EPA program that links governments applying for low interest loans (for projects such as sewer upgrades) with local environmental projects. Applicants nominate projects along with loan applications, and receive an interest rate deduction if their nominees are selected by Ohio EPA.

The City of Columbus has agreed to nominate FACT's preservation project through this program, titled "Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP)." This year \$15 million are available statewide, and proposals are very competitive. Winning projects will be announced in October.

### Seeking Local Wetland Restoration

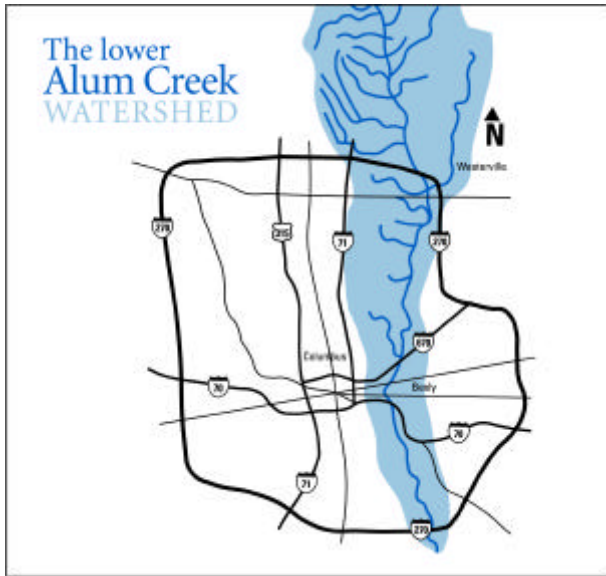
FACT will also submit a much smaller grant proposal to the Columbus Foundation in November to research wetlands within the Alum Creek watershed. The need has arrived as development companies fill local wetlands, but mitigate (or compensate) for the damages in other parts of the state. State regulations requiring mitigation originate from Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, the namesake of such "401" wetland fill permits.

*Continued on page 3...*

# Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries

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[www.friendsofalumcreek.org](http://www.friendsofalumcreek.org)



**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.

## Board of Directors:

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## FACT Members

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Helga Kaplan	Dale Killian	Jeremy & Susan Studer King	Donald Kiser	Terry Lahm
Ryan Light	Peggy Lobb	Barbara Logan	Marilyn Logue	Dick Lorenz
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Tyler Reece	Cheryl Roberto	Brad & Claudia Ross	Dawn & LaMar Roose	Eric Saas
Margaret Ann Samuels	Jack Shaner	Alison Shaw	Ethan Smith	The Smith Family
Bill & Faye Spratley	Leslie & Peg Stansbery	Robert Stauffer	Mark Steiner	Geneva Stewart
Don Stoever	Mark Sulzmann & Carol Reinhardt		Susan Sutherland	Louise Swanson
Julia Tague	Bill Tate	Rob Thorn	Jim & Virginia Wagner	John Warhol
Harvey Wasserman	Dan Weisenbach	Amy Westwater	Cathy Wicks	Brian & Anne Wilke
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## Supporting Members (\$100 or more)

Acorn Farms, Inc.	Bill & Phadia Adams	Anderson Concrete	Bexley Natural Market	The Brickman Group
Barbara Chuko	Delco Water Company	E.E. Steele Partnership	Gretchen Hummel	Bill & Lisa Lonergan
Old Bag of Nails Pub	Plaza Properties	Morrow Gravel Company	St. Mary of the Springs	Jeanne Schmitt
Julia Schmitt	Pete & Lynn Sullivan	Westerville Sunrise Rotary Club	Whitehall-Bexley Rotary Club	

## Watershed Protection Partners (\$1000 or more)

City of Bexley      Jared R. Nodelman Foundation      City of Westerville

*The above list reflects current members for 2005. Are you a FACT Member? See page 6 for a mail-in form.*

...“Grants” continued from page 1

Through identifying local opportunities for mitigation, FACT hopes to encourage developers to restore and create wetlands within the watershed, where they can continue to provide critical functions such as storing floodwaters and filtering urban runoff pollutants.

The FACT Watershed Watch Committee has indeed already facilitated two local mitigation projects. FACT wrote in the March 2005 *FACT Sheets* about wetland creation at Boyer Park in Westerville. Performance Site Management, who was required to mitigate locally after a FACT member discovered that the company had filled a small wetland without a permit, will also be restoring wetlands in Westerville in the College Knolls subdivision.

## Tire Roundup Nears 100 with Dipietro Tyre Sponsorship



*FACT members Carol Elder & David Hohmann use a small boat to haul tires out of Alum Creek. Photo by Mike Elder*

After reading a few editions of *Alum Creek FACT Sheets* you would probably conclude for yourself that FACT members are very invested in creek cleanups. This year, the target has been tires. Not only are they perhaps the most unsightly of garbage that ends up in Alum Creek, they also present a potential human health hazard by providing prime mosquito breeding habitat.

When we combined those negative motivations with one positive – sponsorship by Dipietro Tyre Center, located at 5700 Westerville Road – the project took off. The total for the year is nearing 100 tires removed with one more cleanup scheduled for early September.

Thanks again to Dipietro Tyre Center for their generous support, to FACT volunteers David Hohmann and David Roseman for their relentless energy, & the High School Summer Leadership Institute volunteers for removing 50 tires from the creek at Morse Road in one outing!

## **FACTOID** Vocabulary of a Greenway: Learn it and Love it!

*by David Hohmann*



Many FACT people are talking *riparian* these days. No, it's not a foreign language. The word **Riparian** simply refers to natural areas along our rivers and streams. Without a riparian buffer, the river has no “room to breathe” during flood events, and we have nothing innately special of the natural variety to appreciate about this locale.

This term is closely related to the **Greenway**, or a linear open space or natural area along a watercourse. With the addition of trails, it can be used to connect people with parklands and historical sites, enhance and protect recreational opportunities, and build natural habitat and scenic areas.

To bring it all together, consider one more term. “Infrastructure” usually implies a manmade support system comprised of utilities, roads, and sewers. A new use of the phrase, paired up with “green,” emphasizes the frequently overlooked fact that the natural environment provides many critical services to the community. By casting it in terms we can recognize and more easily value monetarily, the importance of investing in the care and upkeep of **Green Infrastructure** becomes clear.

In central Ohio, our network of rivers and streams form the backbone of the natural environment and landscape, and provide critical green infrastructure services such as flood storage, recreation, and filtration of pollutants such as excessive sediment and pesticides.

For a variety of reasons, local governments in our watershed are making important new investments in the protection and improvement of green infrastructure, through greater storm water protection, new requirements for construction projects, and upgrades to sanitary sewers. With such protections, Alum Creek will stand more of a chance to survive and thrive.

The last step in this lesson may be the hardest, but it involves the reality that our entire watershed is a form of green infrastructure. Every street and storm drain is a kind of tributary, draining from our driveways to our creek. The challenge for local residents and governments will be to recognize this fact, for the good of the river, and for all of us (animals and plants too) that live in this corner of the little blue planet we call home.

# Watershed Watch



## “Bulldozer Amendment” Defeated!

*Adapted in part from the Ohio Environmental Council*

A line-item veto of the remnants of the Bulldozer Amendment in late July by Governor Taft ended an all-out assault on Ohio’s wetlands, streams and rivers.

It began at the request of the Ohio Homebuilders Association, seemingly frustrated by a recent permit fee increases to help cover the cost of the permit program, and actions of groups like FACT who are seeking more equitable mitigation for damage caused by fill projects.

The Ohio House of Representatives obliged by quietly amending the state budget bill to include the destructive “Bulldozer Amendment,” that would have created an atmosphere of easy permits and wetland and stream destruction.

It was also an end-run around the Ohio EPA’s plans for *stronger* protections based on the latest field research. This research shows that the current system is nowhere near compensating Ohio for the lost values of the destroyed wetlands, lakes, streams and rivers.

FACT worked with the Ohio Environmental Council as part of a coalition to stop the amendment. Editorials decrying the changes appeared in papers around the state, as did letters to the editor like one written by FACT member Margaret Ann Samuels that appeared in the Columbus Dispatch. FACT also encouraged members to write and call their legislators and Governor Taft.

The State Senate luckily made significant changes to the bill that removed the worst provisions. And with pressure from environmental groups, citizens, and Director Joe Koncelik of the Ohio EPA, Governor Taft vetoed the what remained of the amendment before the budget became law.

Thank you to all of you who called and wrote your public officials, and to the Ohio Environmental Council for providing outstanding leadership!

## FACT Attends Hearings for Wetlands

Earlier this year, FACT requested Ohio EPA to hold public comment hearings for two projects that proposed to destroy small streams in the Alum Creek watershed. Both hearings were attended by FACT members in late August (below); please stay tuned for outcomes.

**The Germain Motor Company** has applied for a 401 permit to build a store at Morse Road and Morse Crossing (near the Easton shopping center) that would place an Alum Creek tributary stream in a pipe under a parking lot. The Ohio EPA has already issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) for damage caused by construction work on the site without the permit.

At an OEPA hearing on the project on August 18<sup>th</sup>, approximately ten FACT members attended and made comments in support of FACT’s request that Germain purchase additional creek-side easement footage to offset degradation to Alum Creek.

FACT feels that this request is reasonable given that 1) portions of Alum Creek have already been damaged by projects similar to this one, 2) Germain has violated state law, and 3) a larger easement is readily available.

**Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)** – ODOT has proposed to impact 932 linear feet of tributary stream during renovation of the I-71/ I-270 interchange, and mitigate damages with easements along Darby Creek. At an Ohio EPA hearing on August 25<sup>th</sup>, FACT requested that ODOT mitigate the damages in the Alum Creek watershed, and that the amount of mitigation be increased to help truly offset the degradation.

FACT also requested that the permit be conditioned with clauses to help ensure adequate erosion control on site once the project gets underway. Concern with this component stems from ODOT’s lack of erosion control and damage to Alum Creek at their I-270 / S.R. 161 project earlier this year, for which they were fined.



### *Other new projects include:*

**Heron Pointe** Condominiums Company has begun building a concrete retaining wall along 350 feet of a tributary stream to Alum Creek on Cooper Road to alleviate erosion problems. FACT is seeking more information regarding the necessity of the project and will seek appropriate mitigation measures. An Ohio EPA hearing will likely be set in September.

**Plaza Properties** is working with FACT to identify local wetland mitigation opportunities for their development project in the Alum Creek watershed along Cassidy Avenue north of I-670, where they propose to fill 1.2 acres of wetland.

FACT reported erosion control violations at several sites in August, including the new Car Maxx on Morse Rd. and the Xenos Christian Fellowship near Cooper Rd.

## ~ *River Voices* ~



*FACT member and host of the Empty Bowl Benefit on October 1st, Terry Winebrenner, joins us as this edition's River Voices author.*



Shortly after moving into our home at the corner of West and Main Streets in Westerville, I went exploring along the nearby Alum Creek. Little did I know

that I was about to experience one of the hidden wonders of central Ohio. Here, in the middle of a suburban concrete jungle, was an area seemingly untouched by mankind.

It was with this experience that I came to appreciate what FACT does for the preservation, protection, and restoration of this natural beauty we call Alum Creek.

Here in Westerville, Alum Creek provides drinking water, scenic recreation and a great backdrop for the Alum Creek Bikeway. In my opinion, without a healthy, vibrant and clean Alum Creek, the quality of life in the area would certainly be diminished.

As one member of Westerville City Council, I am proud of the partnership FACT and the City have developed over the last few years. This partnership has helped both FACT and the City accomplish goals of cleaner water.

I ask each of you to join me in supporting FACT by doing several things: First of all, use less pesticides and fertilizers on your yard. Second, continue to be a member of FACT; your small annual investment will

help keep the mission of FACT alive and well. Thirdly, advocate for FACT and Alum Creek by:

- ? Picking up a bag of litter along the creek by participating in the annual Earth Day clean-up sponsored by Westerville Rotary Sunrise;
- ? Attending public meetings and supporting FACT whenever testimony is being given on creek issues;
- ? Or simply "tell a friend". Word of mouth is the best advertising FACT can buy.

Finally, I hope you will support FACT by attending the Empty Bowl Benefit that my family and I will be hosting on October 1. As I mentioned earlier, our home is near the Alum Creek. Please bring your walking shoes and go exploring - I am convinced that Alum Creek will fascinate you once again.

Sincerely,  
Terry Winebrenner

## FACT Says Thank You

Thank you to naturalists Tanya Taylor and Linda Petit for their energetic leadership of the **Creek Walk at Strawberry Farms** on July 14<sup>th</sup> (pictured below). And for a fantastic **Three Creeks Fest** on August 6<sup>th</sup>, FACT would like to thank Metro Parks and MORPC.

Thank you in advance to the Winebrenner Family for hosting the **Empty Bowl Benefit**, to the Mid State Wire (Matt Sullivan, Jill Harris, Greg Macey & Matt Hubbard) for providing a great show, and to our many business sponsors (please see FACT's website for a complete list).

Lastly, FACT would like thank our webmaster of three years, Luanne Hendricks, for her commitment and resourcefulness, and welcome new volunteer webmaster Carol Ray.



*FACT Creek Walk at Strawberry Farms in July 2005. Photo by Mike Elder*

# FACT Events Calendar

*Contact the Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries at (614) 409-0511 for more information on all events*

- Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>     **Alum Creek Greenway Trail Ride**, Nelson Park, 430 N. Nelson Rd., 6:30 PM  
Enjoy a leisurely 4-mile bike ride on the Alum Creek Trail through Columbus and Bexley, including trail expansion updates from Metro Parks and Columbus, trail safety and etiquette guidelines, and great door prizes! Meet at the Nelson Park shelter, at the corner of Nelson Road and Clifton Avenue one block north of Broad Street.
  
- October 1<sup>st</sup>    **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Empty Bowl Benefit**, 5 S. West Street, Westerville, 6:00–9:00 PM. See page 1 for details.
  
- October 13<sup>th</sup>   **FACT monthly meeting**, Ohio Dominican University Neighborhood Center (ODU), 6:30 PM  
1229 Sunbury Road. Park in the large lot just north of the center. Open to the public!
  
- October 15<sup>th</sup>   **Academy Park Cleanup**, Academy Park (between Broad & Main Streets on Nelson Road), 10:00AM  
Help FACT with our third cleanup of the year in our adopted area. Please wear long sleeves and pants and old shoes, and bring gloves if you have them. Other equipment will be provided.
  
- November 10<sup>th</sup> **FACT Annual Meeting, Potluck, & Year-in-Review Slideshow!** Martin de Porres Center, 6:30 PM  
Don't miss the chance to get to know your Alum Creek neighbors, learn, and be entertained! The Martin de Porres Center is located just south of ODU on the St. Mary of the Springs campus, 2330 Airport Drive. Exit 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. from 670, west one block, north on Nelson, and straight through light at Airport Drive onto St Mary's campus.

**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		
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family   \$15-50	Organization/Business _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization         \$50-200		
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Sponsor    \$100-500	Address _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> River Steward       \$500-900		
<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Protection \$1000+	Phone _____ Email* _____	
Partner	<i>* Please provide your email address to help FACT save resources.</i>	

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

**Thank You!**



**787 Montrose Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43209**