



## The Big News About Small Streams

### What is a Tributary Stream?

FACT volunteers are accustomed to receiving puzzled looks from time to time at the length of the organization's name and its ending: Friends of Alum Creek & *Tributaries*. Despite the tongue-twisting it may cause, we want to provide assurance that there are good reasons for including tributaries in the organization's name and mission.

In your neighborhood, where does runoff go when it rains or snow melts? It might first go down a curb drain, or into a little creek running through your neighborhood. Over 30 such tributary streams deliver water from the far corners of the watershed into Alum Creek.

Tributary streams are, however, more fragile than larger rivers and most at risk of destruction from human activity. This is due in part to the fact that they start as small branching channels, often flowing only part of the time (after rainfall or wet periods).

Many people assume that these small streams are insignificant and chose to reroute them or enclose them in pipes to make room for new homes or parking lots. This is especially true for the very smallest tributary streams, often referred to as "headwaters" (see *FACTOID* on p.3 to learn more).

But tributaries are like the capillaries of your circulatory system. Injuring one capillary would not put you at significant risk, but injuring all of them would. What happens to small streams directly affects the health of Alum Creek.

Tributaries provide benefits such as filtering pollutants, slowing flood waters, and providing the primary

components of a river's food web. If protected, they also often form the backbone of a network of greenspace running through our communities.

See the *Watershed Watch* column on p.4 and *Internship* article on p.3 on how FACT is protecting small streams, and mark your calendars for a March 10 Education & Outing Series Event on the topic.

### If You Name It, They'll Probably Notice

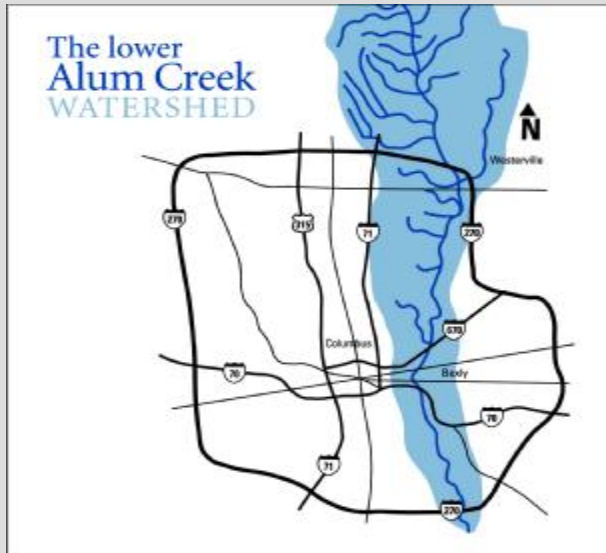


*A tributary stream in Delaware County with no name*

Despite their importance, many tributary streams in the Alum Creek watershed are unnamed, and consequently receive less notice by those driving by. At our **January 13, 2005** meeting, FACT will visit a community to help choose a name for a tributary, and then submit it to the U.S. Geological Survey to make it official. Meeting location TBA, please stay tuned!

# Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries

2820 Watkins Road, Columbus, Ohio 43207 ~ (614) 409-0511 ~ [doherty@friendsofalumcreek.org](mailto:doherty@friendsofalumcreek.org)  
[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:

- Barbara Logan, Chair
- David Hohmann, Vice-Chair
- Jim Lunde, Co-Treasurer
- Jan Tague, Co-Treasurer
- Carol Elder, Secretary
- Margaret Ann Samuels, Watershed Watch Committee
- Harold Highland, River Corridor Committee
- Mike O'Neill, Fundraising Committee
- Joe Bonnell, Education & Outreach Committee

**Staff:** Heather Doherty, Watershed Coordinator

## FACT Members

Robert Lund  
 Stephan Jupinko  
 Eleanor Noltemeyer  
 Jan Tague  
 City of Bexley  
 Harold Highland  
 Eric Saas  
 David & Barbara Smith  
 Craig & Diane Peterson  
 Thoma Swanson  
 Michael O'Neill  
 Roberta Cook  
 Jim Wentz  
 William & Bertha Brandon  
 Tom Christenson & Heidi Wick  
 Erin & Josh Miller  
 Pete Wilms  
 Suzanne Head  
 David Horn  
 David Roseman  
 Gordon & Phyllis Lemert  
 Ryan Light  
 James Henley  
 Sister Raymunda Brooks  
 Karen Compton & Richard Dick  
 Audra Phillips  
 Cherry & Kevin Augen  
 John Powles

Celia Forker  
 Paul Miller  
 Don & Barbara Stoever  
 Taletha Davis Jones  
 Hugh Crowell & Julie Cronk  
 Luanne Hendricks  
 Mark & Chris Dilley  
 Bill Williams  
 Michael Hoggarth  
 Joanne & Richard Samuelson  
 Boatright Family  
 Carol & Mike Elder  
 Nancy Belay & Jeff Turner  
 Terry Winebrenner  
 Larry Korecko  
 Saira Virgee Priest  
 Bruce & Linda Fowler  
 Roger & Connie Warren  
 Chuck & Judith Hoffhine  
 Vicki Deisner  
 Annie & Eamon Cleary  
 Donald Kiser  
 Brad & Claudia Ross  
 Whitehall-Bexley Rotary  
 David Hanselmann  
 Geneva Stewart  
 Baha'is of Columbus

Lawrence Samuels Family  
 Barbara Hysell  
 Daniel & Susan Binder  
 Matthew Perlik  
 Franklin County Greenways  
 Jerome Iles  
 Marilyn Logue  
 Frank Eubanks  
 Helen Barber  
 Mary Travis  
 Randall Bennett  
 David & Becky Hohmann  
 George Boas & Nancy McCargish  
 Richard & Sarah Meizlish  
 Ohio Environmental Council  
 Dan Weisenbach Family  
 Sherry & Seth Pymmer  
 Bill Morgan  
 Marvin & Helga Kaplin  
 Sherrill Massey  
 Susan Kamps  
 Marie & Jeff Hurt  
 Tim & Jan Doherty  
 Barbara Logan  
 Lisa Kaltenecker  
 Cathy Wicks  
 Tamera Evans

Joseph Daubenmire Family  
 William Spratley  
 Brian Wilke  
 Mark Skinner  
 Terry Lahm  
 Dan Jax  
 James & Virginia Wagner  
 Rosida Porter  
 Rob Thorn  
 Margaret Ann Samuels  
 Drew Bergman  
 Dale Killian  
 Donna & Tom Francy  
 Patricia Marida  
 Donald Cook  
 Duncan Campbell & Nancy Kangas  
 Westerville Water Department  
 Mark Young  
 Janina Chadwick  
 Jeffrey & Elizabeth Hawthorne  
 Joe Bonnell  
 Linda Brownstein  
 Heather Doherty  
 Ruthann & Melissa Kennedy  
 Robert Stauffer  
 Virginia Antle  
 Charles & Carol Glaser

## Supporting Members (\$100 or more)

Urban Environments, Inc.  
 Del Co Water Company  
 Bill & Phadia Adams  
 E.E. Steele Partnership

Coca-Cola Fountain  
 Acorn Farms, Inc.  
 Bill & Lisa Lonergan  
 Barbara Chuko

Westerville Public Service Dept.  
 Plaza Properties  
 Westerville Sunrise Rotary Club  
 Julia Schmitt

St. Mary of the Springs  
 Morrow Gravel Company  
 Mike & Linda Smith  
 Jeanne Schmitt

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

Jared Robert Nodelman Foundation

## Columbus Foundation Grant Awarded for Internship

FACT is pleased to welcome Amanda Houston (pictured below) as FACT's newest intern. Amanda is a native of Detroit, Michigan, and is in her sophomore year at Otterbein College studying environmental science. She will begin working with FACT in January to help develop a creek-side land preservation program.

The project was identified as a priority in the Alum Creek Watershed Action Plan to address the ongoing loss of critical land along Alum Creek and tributary streams to new development.



FACT would like to work with local communities and land owners to preserve natural buffers. Planting trees along streams, for example, protects the stream's health by filtering pollutants from runoff. Tree roots also help protect private property by preventing bank erosion.

Funding for the position is being provided through a mini-grant from the Columbus Foundation that FACT was awarded in November. With Amanda's help, FACT will be developing a database of land parcels to target for preservation, based on the presence of important elements such as floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, special aquatic or terrestrial species, etc. Amanda will also help develop an outreach program about good stewardship for creek-side land owners. FACT anticipates launching the program in late 2005.

FACT would also like to thank Bexley High School intern Nora Lyons, who has been working with FACT every afternoon throughout the fall.



*Land along Alum Creek (at Mock and Sunbury Roads)  
that has been preserved for conservation*

## ***FACTOID!***

*by David Hohmann*

### **Headwaters: the "Mother of all Tributaries"**

Every tributary has to start somewhere. Headwater streams are the small swales and creeks that are the origins of most rivers and often have watersheds covering less than one square mile. These lowly roots of the network of streams that combine to form the Mighty Alum Creek are most closely connected with the land.

Headwaters often flow only part of the time (after rainfall), although some that have strong connections with ground water flow throughout the year and are important hot spots for biodiversity (including some **salamander** species, like the one pictured below).



*Photo Courtesy of Ohio EPA*

Headwaters are valuable resources even when they do not flow all the time. They trap pollutants, moderate storm runoff flows (and flooding), and give life to downstream communities through providing food sources, water at the right temperature and volume, and the right mix of sediment to maintain evolving river beds. The corridors along these streams provide an important connection of wildlife habitats.

The Ohio EPA is developing a **Headwater Streams Initiative** to protect the unique and critical value of headwaters for the health of all rivers. They have developed a system to evaluate headwater streams and will propose new rules in the next year or two to protect them and require mitigation for unavoidable losses. Visit <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/> to learn more.

As we look at our headwater streams (those that we can still find), we must ask ourselves, should we allow them to be ditched and piped (as many would like to - see *Watershed Watch* on p.4), or should we maintain our natural headwaters? FACT is convinced that headwater streams are worth protecting, preserving and enhancing along with the rest of our river system.



# Watershed Watch



*Watershed watch is a catch-all phrase for the monitoring of activities that could potentially harm Alum Creek or tributary streams. Please call 409-0511 for information about the Watershed Watch Committee.*

## FACT Members Attend Hearing to Oppose Dominion Homes Projects

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, thirty-five FACT members attended an Ohio EPA hearing at Westerville Central High School to comment on two Dominion Homes projects that FACT has been following for several months. Whenever an entity plans to directly degrade a stream or wetland (through filling or dredging) they must apply for a “401 permit” from the Ohio EPA. Thanks to the Clean Water Act, the Ohio EPA must provide public notice when applications are submitted, accept written comments, and (upon request) host a hearing to provide a venue for accepting broader public comment.

The response from FACT members was tremendous, although the outcome for the two projects is still uncertain. The Dominion Homes projects in question would involve destroying 500 feet of a small stream north of the Polaris Fashion Place Mall (at the Village at Polaris Green project), and filling 1.76 acres of wetland along Sunbury Road north of Mock Road (at the Village at Stone Cliffs project).

FACT has advocated that Dominion Homes avoid degrading streams and wetlands for both projects. However, regulations allow them to make impacts as long as they mitigate, or offset, the damages. The mitigation that Dominion Homes has proposed for the two projects is inadequate, especially given that Alum Creek has already been severely degraded by the destruction of wetlands and streams. The type of activity that the developer has proposed at Polaris Green, which includes straightening a small stream and lining it with concrete, has been identified by the Ohio EPA as a major source of impairment of the creek.

If the mitigation that FACT has requested is approved by the Ohio EPA, Dominion Homes will make a donation to the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department to help preserve land along Alum Creek, and will also provide funding to restore wetlands in Westerville. Although Dominion Homes has rejected these requests, FACT believes they have a responsibility to compensate for their actions in a way that will benefit local communities.

Thank you to all those who attending the hearing to speak against the destruction our natural resources, and please stay tuned for more news!



*Other projects currently being monitored include:*

**HHGregg**, Columbus (northwest corner of Morse & Sunbury Roads): HHGregg plans to build a new store that will require large amounts of floodplain fill, but with FACT’s encouragement, they will be donating an easement along Alum Creek for preservation. The company may also create new wetlands in the preserve to compensate for filling existing wetlands on site.

**Columbus Fair Auto Auction**, Columbus (New World Drive & Alum Creek Drive): This company has proposed to fill 2.68 acres of wetland to expand its business. The project will require a 401 permit from the Ohio EPA. While the company had initially proposed to mitigate the wetland impacts at a wetland bank several counties away, they are now considered creating new wetlands in Westerville at FACT’s recommendation.

**Bexley Tree Nursery Property**, Bexley: FACT will continue to monitor this new development, which will build condominiums on the City’s 5.5 acre tree nursery site along Alum Creek at the north edge of Bexley.

**Minerva Park Golf Course**: Dominion Homes is proposing to purchase the golf course and build 357 houses. The parcel contains a lake, mature trees, and tributary stream Kilbourne Run. FACT will be contacting officials to discuss ways to maintain the quality of the area and streams flowing through the site.

**Ohio Department of Transportation Project at S.R. 161 and I-270**, Columbus: FACT attended a meeting with the Ohio Department of Transportation (DOT), the Ohio EPA, and the Friends of Big Walnut Creek to evaluate Ohio DOT’s massive construction project at the junction of S.R. 161 and I-270. Their work involves the S.R. 161 bridge over Alum Creek and a I-270 bridge over Alum Creek tributary stream Spring Run. (Look to your right the next time you’re headed south on the Westerville curve!)

The Ohio EPA determined that the Ohio DOT had not installed proper controls to keep mud from running off the site and into the streams, where it does considerable damage. The lack of stream protection was clearly evident. Ohio EPA and will be issuing a notice of violation, and FACT will continue to monitor Ohio DOT compliance.

## 2005 Membership Campaign Underway

Membership support is critical to FACT for many reasons, which is why we're excited to have begun our campaign for 2005. We're also excited to be coming off our most successful year ever with a total of 120 members - a 65% increase over the previous year!

Membership contributions are an essential source of funding for FACT, and came to more than \$4000 in 2003. These funds are used to meet FACT's most basic needs, such as staffing and utilities. Membership also helps FACT show decision makers that the community cares about what happens to Alum Creek.

To all of our current supporters – Thank You! And if you haven't joined yet, you can do so today by filling out and mailing the form on the back of this newsletter.



*FACT members receive invitations to special events such as the Empty Bowl Affair, pictured above, held in September 2004.*

## FACT Welcomes New Board Members

Welcome to FACT's three newest Board of Directors members, who were elected at the annual meeting held on November 11<sup>th</sup>: Mike O'Neill, Jim Lunde, and Joe Bonnell. Barbara Logan also accepted the Board Chair position. Along with returning members (see p.2 for a complete list), the Board is now nine people strong! Increasing the Board's size was a goal that was set in 2003 to help build capacity for new action plan programs.

## ~ River Voices ~



*FACT's new Board of Directors President-elect **Barbara Logan** joins us as this edition's River Voices author. Barbara is pictured below (far right) with volunteers celebrating FACT's Adopt - an - Area signage at an Academy Park cleanup in March 2004.*



For as long as I can remember, I have been concerned about various environmental issues including stream degradation and wetland destruction. I have always thought that if people would come together and speak out about such issues we would see change for the better.

Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT) is proof that it's possible. The decisions that our communities make or fail to make can have a profound impact on the environment and our quality of life. Being involved with FACT offers a way to participate effectively in local decision making processes. It is a way that people can help encourage and promote positive change as well as protection of a vital, valuable natural resource.

FACT offers so many ways for people to become involved. There is really something for everyone. FACT sponsors creek side cleanups throughout the watershed. There are educational presentations and/or outings every other month as part of the ongoing bimonthly Education Series. There are opportunities to voice your opinion at public hearings, development commission meetings and city council meetings. And, of course, there are four committees on which you can participate - Education & Outreach, Fundraising, Watershed Watch and River Cleanup.

We welcome all of you to join FACT and become involved in our efforts to protect, preserve and enhance Alum Creek for our own enjoyment and the enjoyment of generations to come.

# FACT Events Calendar

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



Happy Holidays!

Check out **Metro Park's Annual Winter Hike Series** at parks in the Alum Creek watershed: Sharon Woods Park: January 15<sup>th</sup>; Inniswood Metro Gardens: January 30<sup>th</sup>; Three Creeks Park: February 6<sup>th</sup>. Call 508-8000 for more information.

December 9<sup>th</sup> **FACT monthly meeting** – CANCELLED. Due to busy holiday schedules, FACT will no longer hold a December monthly meeting.

January 13<sup>th</sup> *FACT Outing and Speaker Series:* **Community Tributary Naming Event**  
 Help FACT name small tributary streams in the Alum Creek watershed that are essential to the health of Alum Creek and maintaining green space in our communities. Location TBA, please stay tuned.

February 10<sup>th</sup> **FACT monthly meeting**, Ohio Dominican University Neighborhood Center (ODU), 6:30 – 8:30 PM. 1229 Sunbury Road. Park in the large lot just north of the center. Open to the public!

March 10<sup>th</sup> *FACT Outing and Speaker Series:* **Saving Our Streams: What You Need to Know**  
 ODU Neighborhood Center, 1229 Sunbury Road, 6:30 P.M. Learn how FACT is using the Clean Water Act to prevent the destruction of streams and wetlands in the Alum Creek watershed and how you can help.

## 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 Partner      \$1000+	Phone _____ Email* _____	

*\* 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!**



**787 Montrose Avenue  
 Columbus, Ohio 43209**