

Two Alum Creek dams to be removed Nonprofit group to use federal grants

Thursday, August 7, 2008 3:30 AM

By [Mark Ferenchik](#)

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



Two dams on Alum Creek near Bexley and Columbus should be gone by the end of the year, which will not only improve water quality but also remove two hazards from the creek, according to the group taking them out.

The nonprofit Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries is spending \$250,000 in federal grants to remove the lowhead dams, reseed the banks and plant native vegetation.

The group is holding an informational meeting on the project at 7 p.m. today at the Wolfe Park shelter house, 105 Park Dr., across from St. Charles Preparatory School.

Group members want to educate people about what they're doing and why, and to get the word out before people see bulldozers in the creek, said the group's chairman, Joe Bonnell.

One dam is near Wolfe Park south of E. Broad Street. The other is near Nelson Park north of Broad.

Two Bexley teenagers drowned 21 years ago after bodysurfing over the dam near Wolfe Park and becoming trapped in the churn below it.

Group members hope the dam's removal will help wildlife. Stagnant water behind the dams reduces the oxygen level for fish and other life.

Work could begin in September, group board member David Roseman said.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency awarded the grants for the group, which is the environmental steward for the creek. The city of Columbus also supports the project; it needed to give the group access to the creek's banks, as did a private property owner.

"A watershed group going out after a grant and tackling something of this size and nature, they've really done their homework," said Maureen Lorenz, planning manager for the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department.

"I think it's kind of exciting."

The project is part of a larger plan to improve the creek's quality through Delaware and Franklin counties, Bonnell said.

mferenchik@dispatch.com

http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2008/08/07/ALUMDAMS.ART_ART_08-07-08_B4_QLAV7DU.html?sid=101