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Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping the Olentangy River clean and safe for all to enjoy through public education, volunteer activities, and coordination with local decision makers. FLOW is registered with the IRS as a tax-exempt, nonprofit charitable organization under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible.

Because FLOW is a small organization, we rely heavily on volunteer participation to create positive change in our watershed. Please contact us for more information about how you can volunteer. We have a wide variety of opportunities to fit your schedule that will match your skills and interests.

Olentangy River Water Trail to Make a Splash This Fall

By Alice Waldhauer

This fall, the 8.6 mile Olentangy River Water Trail opens canoe and kayak access points to the public, providing another outdoor recreational opportunity for Columbus residents that may have been overlooked in the past. The Water Trail begins at Broad Meadows Blvd just below the pedestrian bridge and runs to a take-out point near downtown Columbus. FLOW anticipates that the Water Trail will encourage residents to venture out on the river and become more engaged in watershed and water quality issues after direct experiences with our water resource. Water Trails are cost effective to develop and maintain compared to bike paths and hiking trails since the trail (the river) already exists. Land-based trails require maintenance such as periodic resurfacing of asphalt or limestone, and care for bridges and right-of-ways.

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Creation of the Olentangy River Water Trail fulfills a goal of FLOW’s 2005 Watershed Action Plan.
Sustainable Stormwater Management Comes to Weinland Park

**Olentangy Urban Rainscapes Project**
by Laura Fay

Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW) and Integrity Sustainable Planning and Design have completed a pilot green stormwater management project at five new Weinland Park homes near the intersection of 8th and Hamlet.

These new homes, developed by Wagenbrenner Development and constructed by Rockford Homes, are equipped with water-conservation features such as low-flow faucets, showerheads, and toilets. These interior water-conserving appliances will save the homeowners on their water bills and lighten their environmental footprint.

Outdoors, these homes feature street trees, bioswales along the tree lawn and rain gardens in the front yards. Two rain barrels have been furnished to each home to harvest rain water from the roof for watering landscape plantings. These features were designed to lighten the residents’ stormwater footprint by infiltrating stormwater that runs off of the roof before it rushes into storm sewers on the way to the Olentangy River. The project illustrates multiple techniques to attractively redevelop residential lots in urban neighborhoods that are good for homeowners, the community and the environment.

The current appearance of muddy banks might not seem like much of an improvement, but the work was needed for construction of features such as riffles, pools and wetlands which will be followed by planting of grasses, shrubs and trees. To the casual observer, the banks along campus look like piles of fill dirt, but there are control structures there too. In five locations where riffles are being constructed, the riverbed is armored with carefully placed stone to provide elevation control, creating areas of faster water velocities that provide habitat and help oxygenate water as it flows past the riffle. Riffles are only one of a variety of structures being constructed to control the direction and velocity of the water within the Olentangy River.

Over a mile of Olentangy shoreline will be revegetated using a technique called “live-branch layering,” where a series of live branches are inserted through the erodible control blankets into the underlying mud, with the goal of quickly reestablishing vegetation as the branches take root and grow. Over 17,000 live branches will grow through erosion-control blankets and intertwine with other nearby vegetation to help hold the riverbanks together. Plans call for nearly 6,000 linear feet of live-branch layering throughout the project area. Planting is complete in the riparian corridor in the southern portion of the project near 5th Avenue, and construction of features such as riffles, pools and wetlands will be followed by planting of grasses, shrubs and trees.

Erosion control blankets on the Olentangy riverbanks are being prepared for planting.

**Thanks to Our Watershed Partners**

- Many thanks to our watershed partners, Shannon Tellier, Jeff Miller and John Wheeler at White Castle for helping FLOW plant a butterfly garden on June 22 and supporting a September 7, 2013, community clean-up project. Both projects are located at their headquarters on Goodale Blvd.

- In July, FLOW partnered with Anheuser Busch and River Network for a River Clean Up at Riverlodge Apartments on Broad Meadows Blvd. Thanks to Showe Realty and community volunteers and staff from the A-B Columbus Brewery for a great turnout to help clean up litter and remove invasive purple loosestrife from a wetland there. This was the third summer that Anheuser Busch and FLOW teamed up for a successful river clean up.

- Thanks to Tim Roberts of Watershed Organic Lawn Care for donating storage space and a canoe to FLOW for our upcoming raffle.

- Thanks to Patagonia and the Outdoor Source for their generous donation to FLOW.

- Thanks to folks that donate to FLOW through the Kroger Community Rewards program. For customers that register their store loyalty card, Kroger donates a percentage of eligible purchases with no cost to the shopper. If you would like to sign up, visit www.krogercommunityrewards.com and look for FLOW under NPO Number 84562.

- Much gratitude for the 100+ community volunteers and students, staff and faculty from The Ohio State University that turned out to help gather litter and debris from the Olentangy river on August 24. FLOW sponsored the Tuttle Park clean up with the Central Ohio chapter of the Sierra Club, Columbus Recreation and Parks and the Department of Public Utilities. FLOW also got help from the BridgeStone Community Clean Up Support program when the company agreed to pick up and recycle more than 370 tires that have been removed from the Olentangy River.

- The goal of the City’s project team is to complete the earthwork along the Fifth Avenue dam pool by the end of 2013, and complete plantings throughout the project by mid-2014, when the construction fencing will be removed. This milestone will mark the beginning of a 5 year monitoring period to evaluate how the ecological system is functioning, and how well the new habitat is supporting aquatic and riparian life. It will take many years for trees planted along the river to reach maturity and provide benefits like shady cover for the river and its many wildlife inhabitants.

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- Thanks to Whole Foods for naming FLOW as a Nickels for Non-Profits recipient between July and September, and for matching volunteer cover-crop refreshments for an invasive honeysuckle removal event hosted by the OSU Wetlands on September 14. Volunteers removed over 2 acres of invasive honeysuckle from the forested wetland there.

- Thanks to everyone that donated to FLOW via workplace giving programs through EarthShare of Ohio. Many employees of federal, state, municipal and county agencies designated FLOW as their charity of choice. FLOW also received workplace donations from employees of Ashland, Inc., JP Morgan Chase, Cardinal Health, and Battelle.

- Thanks to OSU students that turned out in force during recent community service events. Student groups including Green Engineering Scholars, Humanitarian Engineering Scholars, Free the Planet, Ecological Engineering Society, Women’s Synchronized Swim Team, and the Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity have been a tremendous help on service projects throughout the watershed.

**FLOW Calendar of Events**

FLOW has lots of activities to help water quality in the Olentangy Watershed throughout the year. Check our calendar at www.olentangywatershed.org for updates on upcoming events.
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