

SPRING 2019

## From Pavement to Green Space: Hamilton STEM Academy

FLOW is planning to provide shade for students at Hamilton STEM Academy in South Linden this spring by replacing unused asphalt with trees and other plants.

This is FLOW's first foray into "depaving"—replacing pavement with greenery to help disconnect hard surfaces from each other. This lowers heat, and reduces polluted runoff that ends up in the Olentangy River.

Columbus City Schools is partnering with the project by taking out pavement in a small asphalt courtyard on the North side. Then, on May 4, FLOW volunteers will improve the soil and plant redbuds, serviceberry, and other low-maintenance trees for instant shade. Students and faculty will have a shady courtyard where they enter their school, and teachers can use it as an outdoor classroom.

The school will also get large native canopy trees in front, plus about 12 large canopy trees in the Southwest area of

the playground, where asphalt is also being removed. FLOW is seeking funds for benches under these trees.

FLOW is paying for the trees from grants, and is partnering with Columbus Foundation, Lush Cosmetics, and United States Green Building Council, as well as Columbus City Schools.

Columbus is the most quickly growing heat island in the United States, and is expected to grow in population and impervious surfaces. Adding trees and permeable surfaces, and removing unused pavement, will keep this a more comfortable and healthy place to live in 10 or 20 years.

You are invited to help create green space and shade, or pick up litter, at the Hamilton STEM Academy on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to noon.

## Tackling Olentangy Trail Flooding

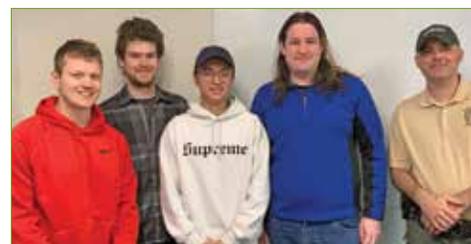
The Olentangy Greenway Trail is the most heavily used Metro trail in Columbus, with almost 2,000 users a day during the summer.

The trail is a favorite with walkers and bikers, and is also an important commuter route. It runs south from Worthington Hills to downtown Columbus, through riparian areas and cityscapes, allowing people to recreate and commute in natural areas isolated from automotive traffic.

Those using the trail need clean, dry surfaces but multiple sections of the trail collect water regularly. Sometimes a commuter will be confronted



with a foot of water over the trail with no way around it. When covered with water, trail users are forced to walk or ride through the water, or use the semi-dry trail shoulder, which can further damage the trail corridor and may encourage further water collection.



*Trail flood crew: Students Joey Smith, Adam Dodson, Yuhan Liu, Jackson Rucker, and Dan Kaderly with Columbus Metro Parks..*

Ohio State University students Adam Dodson, Yuhan Liu, Jackson Rucker, and Joey Smith have been working with FLOW on the problem as part of their Capstone project (a real-world project that integrates what they have learned).

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# Kempton Run's New Habitat



*Kempton Run flows South and East from SR 161 through Don Scott Field and flows into the Olentangy River just south of the Antrim Park lake.*

Kempton Run is a beautiful stream that is getting a healthier riparian corridor, thanks to the efforts of area homeowners and Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed.

One problem that plagues Kempton Run, along with many Olentangy River tributaries, is a massive overgrowth of invasive, non-native bush honeysuckle. This crowds out native plants beneficial to wildlife, promotes soil erosion, and degrades the scenic beauty of the stream corridor.

Kempton Run is one of dozens of tributaries that the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW) test for water quality, and while the quality of the stream is relatively good, there is room for improvement.

## Residents Get Involved

The houses on Kempton Run Road border the northern bank of the stream from Linworth Road. west for approximately 1000 feet to the railroad tracks. One resident was interested in removing honeysuckle. However, a Scenic/Conservation Easement held by the City of Columbus for the stream corridor prohibited residents from any cutting or spraying without written approval.

In Spring 2018, with support from the homeowner's association president and written consent from the residents, FLOW initiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the City, where FLOW would oversee all the invasive shrub removal and the replanting of native trees and shrubs.

## Team Effort to Restore Stream

In August 2018, the first session of honeysuckle removal began with help from Ohio State University students, neighbors, friends



*Cleared of invasives, this Kempton Run area has room for native species and gives people access to the creek.*

and FLOW volunteers. The FLOW volunteer chainsaw operators cutting the shrubs were all experts, and the FLOW volunteers chemically treating the cut stumps were trained in herbicide application along waterways.

The property owners along the first section of the stream corridor preferred that branches be removed, rather than leaving them along the stream in piles or "habitat hotels." Thus, most of the labor included dragging the branches up to the roadway. In



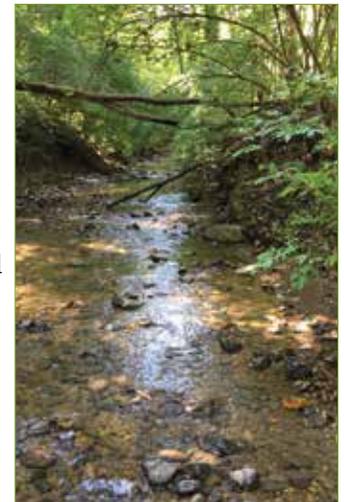
*Hardworking Pay It Forward members at Kempton Run.*

addition, a dumpster for honeysuckle branches was provided without charge.

Three subsequent honeysuckle removal events took place in the late summer and fall. New native trees and shrubs were planted, thanks to FLOW volunteers and neighbors, plus a local company that funded the plant materials and provided more volunteers.

The last stage of honeysuckle removal along the north bank is planned for completion in spring 2019. Two more plantings are also planned for the spring and early summer, using grant funds from Western Reserve Land Conservancy to purchase the trees, shrubs and ground cover plants.

Thus far several of the neighbors along Kempton Run have commented on how much better the stream corridor looks even in the winter. With the honeysuckle shrubs removed, they can see Kempton Run from their windows for the first time in years.



*Overgrowth of invasive plants made Kempton Run inaccessible.*

## A Model for Other Stream Projects

Hopefully the project at Kempton Run can serve as a model for subsequent community-driven efforts to improve stream habitats by removing non-native invasive plants and replacing them with native trees and shrubs, thus improving wildlife diversity, water quality and the scenic beauty of our streams and river tributaries.

## Tackling Olentangy Trail Flooding

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If you live along a waterway, you can help by:

- Knowing that all local storm water drains lead to your stream or river. They are not filtered so anything you can do to prevent pollution will help.
- Reducing the use of fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn.
- Leaving an unmowed barrier along the edge of your stream to help filter rain runoff.
- Cleaning up pet waste and litter.
- Washing vehicles on your lawn.
- Planting native species and considering a prairie or pollinator garden.

### Thanks to our Watershed Partners

Thanks to all of FLOW's watershed partners. Please consider visiting these businesses that help to support water quality where we live.

*A special thanks to:*

- Those who donate to FLOW through the Kroger Community Rewards and Amazon Smile programs. This gives FLOW a percentage of eligible purchases at no cost to the shopper. Please see directions on the FLOW website for how to donate.
- Green Columbus for providing over 5000 seedlings for Earth Day plantings and for 18 large balled and burlapped trees for Hamilton STEM Elementary School.
- Cliff Original for supporting FLOW via the sale of some of their local products.
- The Columbus Foundation for another grant for Trees for Schools.
- Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District for their grant to the Ecole Kenwood School for naturalizing their playground.
- The Pay-it-Forward students at OSU for their help on 7 events in our watershed on March 23rd.
- The OSU capstone students for their Olentangy Trail Flooding Assessment and Whetstone Park 5-Year Plan projects.
- Serve Ohio for funding to buy containerized trees for Potter's Creek Restoration at Perry-Snouffer Parks.
- The USDA Office in Delaware for helping to restore our riparian areas with native American Elms.
- The student chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration for their work to remove invasive Callery Pear and replant native species at the Fawcett Center Floodplain.
- The many volunteers who come to workdays and otherwise stand up for a clean environment in the Olentangy Watershed.

The students studied a spot just north of the Henderson Road bridge. At times, this area has standing water a foot deep with a huge pond around it. It has high stormwater runoff plus low elevation and lack of an accessible floodplain.

Their mission is to research and recommend possible solutions that are affordable, effective, long-lived, healthy for the river, and useful in other areas along the trail also.

They researched the challenges of a trail system, topography, soil composition, and all the ways drainage can be done. They learned the technicalities involving land use: utility lines, right of ways, and ownership.

They came up with about 12 possible interventions and reduced the list over the winter. Some remaining possibilities are:

- A grade change plus an infiltration ditch that filters through stone into a drain that goes into the river
- A grade change with a vernal pool that goes into the river or a tributary

These are being studied further now. After the students come up with a recommended solution, FLOW will look into its impact on the river. Columbus Metro Parks will look at its impact on trail use, and also determine whether it will hold up to flooding.

Those working with the students include FLOW's Bob Campbell and Laura Fay, OSU Technical Advisor Dr. Margaret Kalcic, and Advisor Kristen Conroy. FLOW has coordinated with Dan Kaderly, manager of the Columbus Metro Parks Greenway Program, the organization responsible for general maintenance of the trail system.

"It's been a lot of fun," according to Bob Campbell. "They are really impressive guys."

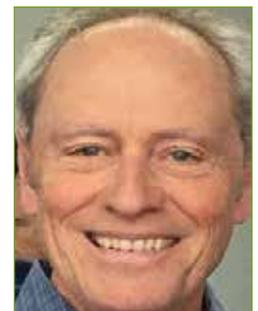
### Congratulations!

FLOW's Laura Fay received a much-deserved honor recently when she was inducted into the Honorary 100 by OSU's School of Environment and Natural Resources. Among her many leadership contributions: "She has been a tireless advocate of the Olentangy River and students... and demonstrates how to get important environmental work done with lots of enthusiasm and knowledge."



### Metro Park Greenways Trail Volunteer of the Year

FLOW's Bob Campbell has been recognized as Metro Park Greenways Trail Volunteer of the Year.



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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.

**FLOW relies heavily on volunteer participation to create positive change in our watershed.**

Please contact us for information on how you can volunteer. We have a wide variety of opportunities to fit your schedule and match your skills and interests. To be added to the FLOW email list, please send a request to info@olentangywatershed.org with a subject line of "Email list".



## Free ways to Donate to FLOW



### Kroger Plus Card

By registering your Kroger Plus card, you can help FLOW receive a donation of 5% of qualified purchases under the Kroger Community Rewards Program at no cost to shoppers. Use your registered Kroger Plus card when shopping for each purchase to count. Go to [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com), select Savings & Rewards, and then Kroger Community Rewards. FLOW's new code is AU317.

### AmazonSmile:

With AmazonSmile, you can donate to FLOW at no cost to yourself. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and search for Friends Of The Lower Olentangy.

Thereafter, start your Amazon sessions at <http://smile.amazon.com>.



## FLOW calendar of events

FLOW has a variety of activities throughout the year. Please join in! Check FLOW's calendar at [www.olentangywatershed.org](http://www.olentangywatershed.org) or see the Facebook page: Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW).

## One Little Thing

Our thoughts are turning to spring cleanup of our yards. Those perennial stems may be looking ragged and messy!

But, inside the hollows of stems, many beneficial insects are still sleeping. These include tiny native bees and other pollinators.

Since most of us want to cut down old stems before new growth starts, we can pile up the cut stems in an inconspicuous spot in our yards and leave them until Mother's Day.

This is one little thing that we can incorporate into our life right now.

