



Coming Workshops

A workshop focusing on the Glen Echo Park and Ravine will be held on **Saturday, March 15, 1997, from 9:00AM to 12:00 PM at the Glen Echo United Presbyterian Church**, located at **220 Cliffside Drive**. The workshop is the second of three being funded by a Neighborhood Partnership Grant from the Columbus Foundation and sponsored by the Clintonville Area Commission Ravine Committee.

The workshop will offer a community discussion for the planning and desired improvements of Glen Echo Park and Ravine, as well as a consideration of how repairs will be implemented. Protection measures for the Ravine will also be considered.

The Ohio University School of Landscape Architecture, members of the University and Clintonville Area Commissions, the City of Columbus, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and others will participate.

Please plan to come and contribute your needed input to the planning process!

Also in this issue:

- ❖ Stormwater stenciling
- ❖ Students study Walhalla
- ❖ Northern Saw-whet Owl

The Legacy of Glen Echo Ravine

by Salle Cleveland

Walking through the Glen Echo Park recently, I had the sense of a once beautiful place fallen to ruin, the remains of the original structure and design of the place itself still present, yet large portions of it appearing to be on the verge of being entirely lost.

The historic park is located between Indianola Avenue and I-71, north of Hudson Street, within the Glen Echo Ravine, a wooded corridor which is terminated by I-71 at its eastern border and continues west to the Olentangy River; intercepted by Indianola, Calumet and High Streets.

The stream which runs through the ravine serves as a major stormwater drainageway for the area, which channels stormwater flow west across High Street and on to the confluence of the Olentangy River. The degraded condition of the eastern portion of the ravine, which Glen Echo Park occupies, is representative of the problems which exist throughout its length.

Glen Echo Park and the residential neighborhood which surrounds it was developed in the early 1900's. (see inset, page 5) The Columbus Real Estate and Improvement Company sold the park to the City of Columbus in 1912. Resident Martha Buckalew is working to have the Park placed on the listing for the National Register of Historic Places. The designation would lend recognition to the site and would impose no controls, but would cause a federal review process of all federally funded projects which might impact the Park.

The ravine has withstood decades of neglect and mistreatment from encroaching development around its periphery. The impact this has had on the ravine becomes more significant with some knowledge of the inherent



geologic qualities of the site. The Clintonville area ravines are composed of Ohio and Olentangy shale bedrock. These are considered 'soft' shales, which weather rapidly and do not have a high load bearing capacity. The shales are covered by a



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Ravines Quarterly

Advocate for a Community Resource

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The *Ravines Quarterly* is a publication of the Clintonville Area Commission Ravine Committee, through a grant funded by the Columbus Foundation. The publication is one aspect of the Ravines Project, whose purpose is to foster the preservation of the area ravines through community education and involvement in their conservation.

Submissions and suggestions are welcome.

Ravines Project Advisory Committee

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Thanks and more Thanks . . .

We appreciated the great response to the first edition of the *Ravines Quarterly* (Fall, 1996). Thanks to all those who have contributed their suggestions, articles and photographs for this and future issues. We also thank the Columbus Foundation, who has helped make a publication for the Clintonville area ravines a reality.

Through the help of the Clintonville Beechwold Community Resources Center, we are able to mail this issue to those people for whom we have addresses. If we do not have your address and you would like to be included on the mailing list for future issues, please fill out and return the form found on the back of this issue.

Thanks to all the people who helped to distribute the Fall issue of *Ravines Quarterly* to the Clintonville community and to the Clintonville Beechwold Community Resources Center, for their sponsorship and assistance with this issue.

Salle Cleveland



Do what you can with what you have, where you are.

Theodore Roosevelt



Stenciling to Stop Dumping

by Jerry Wager

If you've been walking or jogging in many Clintonville neighborhoods this past year, you may have seen a white fish painted onto a storm drain, sometimes with the message "Don't Dump, Drains To Brook".

This message is the result of storm drain "stenciling" done by Clintonville Academy students last spring, the first such project in the City of Columbus.

Students painted messages and fish on drains to remind residents that anything that goes down a storm drain goes directly to Adena Brook. A survey of 240 residents in the Adena Brook watershed the spring of 1995 indicated that nearly two-thirds did not know that storm drains discharge to the Brook - without any waste treatment.

Motor oil, anti-freeze, grass clippings, detergents from car washing, are just some of the pollutants that are dumped down storm drains, apparently by many people who think these wastes won't end up being pollution problems.

However, in a watershed such as Adena Brook's - that is densely developed with homes, streets and commercial areas- storm drains are the single largest source of pollution.

Each year people in the United States dump more used motor oil down storm drains than were lost in the Exxon Valdez ship wreck.

Grass clippings are often put in storm drains by Clintonville residents, probably in the belief that they are "organic" or "natural" and can't hurt the stream.

But, in reality, grass clippings have high levels of nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Often they also carry pesticide residues. The additional nutrients in the grass clippings increase algae growth and reduce oxygen levels in the stream.

Storm drain stenciling is a very visual reminder that everybody has "stream side" property when it comes to affecting neighborhood streams.



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Scout's Good Deed

Thanks to Eagle Scout Donny Root, Overbrook Ravine has a new stairway, which creates safe access to High Street from Overbrook Drive. The stairway was completed last summer and replaces a concrete structure which previously existed at the same location.

The City of Columbus had condemned the concrete structure, however it was still utilized by area residents. Donny built the new stairway as an Eagle Scout Project for community service. The project was sponsored by **Curb Recycling** and donations from area residents.



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thin mantle of glacial till (material deposited by the last receding glacier). The ravine soils which are derived from this material are subject to severe erosion without vegetative or other controls.



Because of the fragile geologic nature of the ravine, insensitive alteration to the ravine environment of Glen Echo Park has exceeded its natural ability to withstand it.

The demands which have been made on the ravine ecosystem; sanitary facilities which crisscross the length of the ravine, increased stormwater run-off, loss of vegetation and habitat, are overtaking an already severely stressed ecosystem.

Long-time resident and ravine caretaker Julie Boyland says, "The problems we're dealing with today are the same ones we were facing 25 years ago."

Following years of neglect, it was neighborhood pressure that led the City to fix an extensive sewer line leak in the ravine in the late 1960's. The organized effort of the Glen Echo Interest Group to secure Capital Improvements funding from the City in the early 1970's brought about the installation of gabions

(rock-filled wire baskets) for erosion control and other improvements at different points in the ravine 1976. Construction of the wooden stairway adjacent to Cliffside Drive was completed in the early 1980's.

Although remedial measures have been taken over the years, they have fallen short of addressing the overall physical deterioration which has continued in the ravine.*

Vegetation

The lack of vegetation on the slopes is the most obvious and one of the most detrimental to the Glen Echo Park and ravine ecosystem.

"The problems we're dealing with today are the same ones we were facing 25 years ago."

During rainfall events, there is ponding throughout the ravine basin due to a lack of, or in many areas, total absence of understory vegetation.



The woodland plant community which would historically have existed in the ravine had an upper story (tree) canopy of oak, beech and maple and an understory of shrubs and herbaceous (soft-stemmed) plants which held the soil in place.

With no understory vegetation, there is nothing to hold the soil in place during storm events, which causes further losses. The effects of this can be seen throughout the park

where large trees have fallen due to the loss of soil from unimpeded run-off.

This is a problem which could be most immediately addressed in the



ravine and the Park with a program of mass revegetation of native species, which would drastically slow down further degradation of the slopes and encourage the plant diversity which was a historic feature of the Park.

Erosion

Erosion is the most damaging force at work in the ravine. Stormwater run-off was dramatically increased with the construction of I-71 in the 1960's, which directed roadway runoff into the ravine and filled in its eastern portion.

The increased volume and velocity of stormwater run-off has eroded the stream bed and undercut the banks, making the upper slopes susceptible to failure.

Further construction encroachments, such as improper culvert placement and improperly constructed retaining walls on the upper slopes, have also encouraged slope failure.

photos this page © Barry Chern

A House in the Country

411 Arcadia Avenue in the early 1900's. The house was built by Romeo Gregg at the turn of the century and was one of the first to be built in the area. The photo on left is taken from the location of the present Arcadia Bridge. The photo on the right is looking northeast from the area of Glen Echo Drive. (Photos courtesy of the Williard family)



Legacy of Glen Echo, continued from previous page

An outdated sanitary and stormwater system which is not equipped to handle the existing storm flows is the biggest contributor to the erosion problem. The most recent and widely publicized occurrence of this was the landslide which occurred just west of the Indianola Bridge.



The collapse was due to the erosive effect of a 20 year-old culvert at the base of the slope, which had made it unstable.

It is occurrences such as this which underscore the need for major infrastructure improvements to the ravine, which come out of a consideration of the entire watershed and

not only one portion of it at a time. Although this need has been recognized by the neighborhood and the City, no comprehensive plan is yet in place which would guide further actions within the ravine and Park.

It is clear the Glen Echo Park needs major restoration and an overall plan of action which will accomplish this. It is hoped the City of Columbus will be proactive in developing ravines such as Glen Echo in conjunction with the Greenways Project now underway by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC).

Funds have been made available this year for the Park. Allen McKnight, with the Department of Parks and Recreation, stated that \$100,000 is budgeted this year for improvements.

According to Mr. McKnight, the City is planning to use part of the

money for obvious improvements, such as bridge repair and erosion control in the Park, but is looking for input from the neighborhood to prioritize remaining improvements.

The workshop to be held Saturday, March 15, will seek suggestions from neighborhood members.

Glen Echo Park is a unique resource for the entire community. With a plan in place, it can be restored over time. Making it happen requires an organized effort by the community and the cooperation of the City, but most importantly, it requires the continued commitment and persistence of the members of the Glen Echo community.

Please plan to come to the Saturday, March 15 workshop to be held at the Glen Echo United Presbyterian Church, 220 Cliffside Drive, to help keep this process going.

* The factors contributing to the deterioration of the ravine are documented in two studies of the Glen Echo Ravine done by Ohio State University Landscape Architecture students: *A Study of the Eastern Portion of Glen Echo Ravine and Glen Echo Ravine West, 1994.*

November Ravine Clean-up

Clintonville area residents and representatives of several regulatory agencies joined together for a ravine clean-up sponsored by the Sharon Heights Community Association on a chilly Saturday, November 9, 1996.



The ravine runs along the north side of Graceland, from the Olentangy River east of High Street and continues through property owned by the State Schools for the Deaf and Blind. Formally referred to as Adena Brook North, the stream which runs through the area is currently being renamed.

Helping in the clean-up effort were representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Greenways Task Force, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The School for the Deaf participated in the clean-up on a prior weekday.

The volunteers spent the day removing trash the entire length of the ravine, from I-71 west to the Olentangy River. A large quantity and assortment of material was pulled from the ravines, ranging from various forms of plastic and styro-foam to shopping carts and old tires. Because the portion of the ravine which

runs through state property between High Street and Indianola Avenue has been protected from further development, the ravine ecosystem remaining there is one of the most pristine areas of this sort remaining in Columbus.

Many thanks to the following volunteers for their efforts:

Osmar Ullrich	Richard Fowler
Chris Gecik	Kevin Hinkle
Jerry Wager	Jim Dowdy
Brenda Wright	Susan Moseley
Dick Sims	Matt Warren
Bruce Motsch	Nelson Strong
Sheila McKinley	Chris Kasselman
Salle Cleveland	

Walhalla Ravine Study Focus of OSU Class

by Shelly Keith

A group of five students from the Ohio State University is studying the Walhalla Ravine. As a class project for Natural Resources 601, Assessment of Environmental Impacts with Dr. Joe Heimlich, we have chosen to look at the flooding and erosion problems affecting the ravine.

We are gathering information from state and local agencies, including the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Division of Sewerage and Drainage.

This information, which includes plans currently being considered by the City of Columbus, will be used to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This EIS will present and analyze possible courses of action to deal with the problems.

It will also analyze the environmental consequences and financial costs of each action. Social and cultural impacts, as well as public involvement, are also important parts of such a report. Therefore, we are interested in tracking public opinion regarding this issue.

In the near future Brent Rice, a student working on this project, will be conducting an informal door to door survey in the neighborhood surrounding the Walhalla Ravine.

Also, we invite you to please contact us with any of your questions, concerns, or comments. We are; Shelly Keith (850-0585, keith.26@osu.edu), Andrea Balas (864-5824, balas.6@osu.edu), Scott Foster (759-1379), Brent Rice (291-7036) and Chris Winters (299-3593).

Thank you! Our thanks also to Paul Bingle, Nicole Baird, Mike Martin, Jim Coffee, Laurie Mehl, Salle Cleveland and all others who have helped us in this endeavor so far.

Students Taking Watershed Studies South

by Jerry Wager

Clintonville Academy (CA) students will be heading south this spring to help students in San Isidro, Costa Rica develop a watershed protection project modeled after their work on Adena Brook.

The CA students will demonstrate chemical and biological water quality monitoring methods, watershed protection practices and pollution prevention techniques.

The focus of their studies is the General River, which suffers from runoff from coffee and pineapple plantations, untreated sewage, and erosion from deforestation. CA students will stay with Costa Rican families during their visit; as well as making additional stops at an active volcano, coral reefs and biological reserves.

Students plan to leave water testing equipment with the Ecology club at Unesco High School in San Isidro so pollution studies can continue after they return to the US.

The Academy is seeking donations to help defray equipment costs and travel expenses. Anyone interested in donating to the trip should contact Mrs. Linda Ayers @ Clintonville Academy: 267-4799.



Overbrook Ravine Dam and Waterfall, 1949. I shot this with my father's Brownie fixed focus camera, probably in very early spring. The concrete dam has eroded and broken. It was possible then to walk from one side of the brook to the other on top of the concrete. A nice memento of what the ravine was like way back when. (Photo courtesy of Mary Bucher Fisher)

Winter Encounter

by Salle Cleveland



Northern Saw-whet Owl

It is the presence of the natural world so close at hand and the uniqueness of that element within the urban environment, that make the ravines such a valuable resource.

As I walked through Overbrook Ravine at twilight in early December, I experienced one of those chance

encounters with nature the ravine areas offer.

I heard the call first, what I later read described as a "regular rhythmic whistling note, repeated at about 130 whistles per minute". I stood listening to the call, having forgotten everything else.

More than a year before I had heard the call of the Great Horned Owl near the house, but this I had not heard before.

To my amazement, as I stood there trying to see in the failing light where it was perched, it flew down onto a low branch in a tree about 15 feet from where I stood. The small, rounded silhouette was distinct in outline and it seemed willing to allow my presence for a minute or two.

Then it swooped down across the roadway to the other side of the woods, evidently having spotted a

potential meal.

The call of the Northern Saw-whet Owl was historically likened to the "filing of a saw in a woodcutter's yard", hence the common name.

It ranges through much of the northern United States and parts of Canada and from what I have gathered they are rarely seen in this area, particularly in the winter months.

The Saw-whet prefers moist, forested areas near a stream or other water body and will utilize old woodpecker holes for nesting. Their standard fare are mice, voles and shrews.

Considered one of the most trusting owls, they are described as quiet and inconspicuous but also curious, and on occasion can be easily approached.

As a result of that recent encounter in the ravine, I will forever be an admirer of the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Mailing List

If you wish to be included on a future mailing list for *Ravines Quarterly* please fill out the information below and mail to:

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