



Friends of the Ravines Group Forming

A new community-based ravines group, Friends of the Ravines, is in the process of forming and will seek non-profit status in the coming months. The group has been formed for the benefit of the community at large to help protect and preserve the ravine areas which traverse the Clintonville and Worthington communities.

Friends has received a \$3000 Neighborhood Partnership Grant from the Columbus Foundation this summer which will be used toward the continued publication of the *Ravines Quarterly*, which began last year. The Community Resources Center is currently acting as fiscal agent for the grant.

Further funding will be sought over the next several months to support this publication as well as community outreach.

We need people in the community willing to serve as board members for the group. If you would be interested or desire additional information, please call Salle Cleveland at 262-2953

Also in this issue:

- ❖ Native plants in the ravines
- ❖ Glen Echo Ravine circa
- ❖ Water towers update

Greenways

The Greenways initiative that has been afoot in Franklin County the past year and a half has brought attention back to the benefits our waterways provide the communities they traverse. The greenways project is co-sponsored by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPCI) and Franklin County Soil and Conservation District (FSWCD) and is part of a larger state and nationwide movement to provide protected areas of green space within the landscape. The Franklin County Greenways Program has already received \$200,000 from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and is eligible for \$400,000 more.

The term "greenway" refers to linear corridors of protected open space, managed for conservation and/or recreation and often following natural land and water features.

The Franklin County Greenways Plan defines greenways as "linear open space or natural areas along watercourses which preserve the physical functioning of the land-water interface". Integral to this concept is the existence of a healthy riparian edge, or wooded buffer zone, adjacent to a stream or drainage way, made up of trees, woody understory shrubs and soft-stemmed herbs, which provide a transitional zone between upland areas and aquatic systems.

While many new communities are now providing for greenway areas in the planning process, the Clintonville and Worthington areas are fortunate to have



these naturally occurring features running through them in the form of the ravines. Joining the Olentangy River at various points from Hudson Street north, they are known as the Glen Echo, Walhalla, Overbrook, Adena Run and Rush Run ravines. Tributaries of the Olentangy run through all of these areas and are an integral part of the Olentangy watershed, influencing the overall health and water quality of the Olentangy River. The ecological and aesthetic values these features add to the community are many and have been largely taken for granted in the course of development in the area.

Greenway corridors serve a multitude of ecological and quality of life functions in



continued page 3

Ravines Quarterly

Advocate for a Community Resource
Summer 1997
P.O. Box 14128
Columbus, Ohio 43214

e-mail: sclevel@iwaynet.net

Editor

Salle Cleveland

Contributors

Mark Balson
Vince Mazeika
Dick Sims
Jerry Wager
Chris Kasselmann
Bob Armstrong
Salle Cleveland

Artistic and Technical Assistance

Barry Chern

The *Ravines Quarterly* is published in association with the Clintonville Area Commission Ravine Committee and Friends of the Ravines, and is funded in part by a Neighborhood Partnership Grant from 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

Jerry Wager
Susan Williard Gibler
Chris Kasselmann
Mark Balson
Tom Ryther

Summer Wrap-up . . .

It's been a busy summer. Discussions are being held between city, state and county agencies and local communities regarding the future use of state-owned land on the Ohio School for the Deaf and Blind properties, surrounding Adena North Ravine. There are also stormwater sewer projects planned for the Maize/Cooke/Indianola Road areas, which will potentially have far-reaching effects on the Overbrook Ravine. The *Ravines Quarterly* will continue to serve as a vehicle for information and discussion regarding these and other issues affecting the ravines in the coming months.

You'll notice this issue has expanded to 12 pages in order to accommodate some great contributing articles from fellow ravine enthusiasts. Upcoming issues will feature the natural and local history of the Ohio School for the Deaf and Blind properties, aspects of the Maize and Indianola Road stormwater plans, and water quality sampling studies currently being carried out by local schools in Adena North and Adena Brook

Looking forward to fall and the Clintonville Sesquicentennial celebration in September. See you there.

Salle Cleveland.



Letters

My brother, David Horn, forwarded to me the *Ravines Quarterly* newsletter you sent him. It brought back some very fond memories from many decades ago.

My earliest recollection was as a small child - perhaps 1941, when I was four years old or so - walking through the ravine along Overbrook Drive with my mother, on the way to the Beechwood A&P store for groceries, the sun warm on our backs, the smells of foliage and wildflowers fragrant, and the delightful scratchy sound of a long twig Mom broke off for me to drag along the rough shoulder of the road . . .

In the ensuing childhood years, I spent most of my free time "down in the woods", alone or with neighbor children, playing "house", using the small green Mayapple fruits as "peas" for pretend meals... sliding wildly and recklessly down the dirt and shale face of the cliffs and tearing holes in the seat of my pants in the process, to Mom's despair... floating "Pooh sticks" on the creek current from one of the old stone bridges ...eagerly searching each spring for an especially large and beautiful clump of Dutchman's breeches that grew in a particular spot by the creek--it was the harbinger of my own personal spring...the vast carpet of dogtooth violets spreading as far as I could see through the woods along Lenape Drive... playing in and along the creek, fascinated by the

"crawdads" but afraid to touch them ...using the extra-soft limestone as "chalk" to write on large flat pieces of slate, and skipping smaller pieces along the surface of the larger stretches of the creek when I got old enough to master the technique ...and always, summer after summer, wading, wading, wading...

In those innocent years it never occurred to me to think of the woods, the creek, or the ravine itself as a resource to be treasured and protected -- they were just *there*. The houses were few and far between and most of the area was pristine woods and, on Canyon Drive, unspoiled fields of grasses and "weeds"--milkweed, butterfly weed, Queen Anne's lace, goldenrod, purple asters, lavender thistle, blackberries. As I grew older and the woods and fields were gradually replaced by houses crowding ever closer together, I was into high school marching band, boys, and other things adolescent, and scarcely ever went down into the ravine or gave it a thought.

And in still later years, I came back one wet spring on one of my visits to be greeted by exciting stories of "the big flood down in the ravine." David and I walked down Canyon Drive as far as we could to see the awesome sight-- a raging flood that spread from cliffside to cliffside, inundating the road and bridges under many feet of turbulent muddy water that didn't abate for over a week and took with it parts of the bridges and road . . . even then, I didn't realize the value of that fragile, threatened place, or what was happening to it.

So, Salle, I applaud your efforts to save it from the stupidity and neglect of my generation, to rescue it from the effects of mindless overpopulation and overbuilding. I surely wish you success!

The enclosed check is to cover a subscription to *Ravines Quarterly*. Please add me to your list.

Nancy Ewald, N.Liberty, Iowa

an otherwise built-up urban environment by:

❖ **providing flood control**- the loss of natural floodplain areas to development causes increased stormwater velocity and as a consequence, flood hazards

❖ **improving water quality** along vegetated or riparian areas near the stream channel, acting as a sediment "sink" and nutrient filter

❖ **providing a green oasis** within the urban environment, counteracting the heat buildup associated with asphalt paving and the fragmentation of natural space due to development

❖ **providing a natural habitat** for native species of plants and animals

❖ **increasing property values**

The degree to which the ravine areas maintain these benefits is dependent on their overall 'health' as ecosystems.

Disturbances due to human impacts around them have impaired the natural functions they perform in the landscape.

As part of the greenways initiative put forth by MORPCI and Franklin County, a volunteer inventory of the Adena, Overbrook and Walhalla ravines was undertaken in the spring of 1996 by local residents to assess

the existing conditions and needs for the ravine areas. Pollution from storm drains and sewer line leakages, dumping and uncontrolled bank erosion were some of the primary concerns.



These factors, coupled with the development of natural areas surrounding the ravines over the past 50 years, have contributed to their degradation. Greenspace protection for the Adena Brook North ravine on the Ohio State School for the Blind and Deaf properties is currently being discussed by the City of Columbus, Department of Education, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the FSWCD. The FSWCD Board of Supervisors agreed in August to accept a conservation easement to permanently protect the ravine from development.

However, no monies have been appropriated for maintenance of the area or development of the ravine's potential for environmental education. (A conservation easement is used to protect a resource by limiting or restricting potentially damaging uses of the land. The recipient of the easement is then responsible for monitoring the land.)

Protection measures for the Adena North and the remaining ravines can be formulated with the involvement and cooperation of the local community and government agencies. Options that should be discussed by the Clintonville Area Commission with residents and the city include:

1. Tax abatement for protection and/or creation of green space, particularly along streams which provide flood storage and habitat.
2. Stream and ravine set back ordinances, also known as overlay zoning
3. Changing parking lot, side yard and other building regulations to allow for more flexibility and green space creation
4. Encouraging residents to naturalize areas next to streams and along ravines for native species and increased habitat
5. Require mitigation (compensation) within the affected watershed for greenspace/flood storage capacity

Glen Echo Update

Members of the community near Glen Echo Park have been talking with the City over the past several months to arrive at some agreement on how portions of the \$100,000 allocated for repairs to the Glen Echo Park this year will be used. A conceptual plan for the park was developed by the Parks Department this spring which incorporates some of the concerns identified by the neighborhood, such as bridge repair and erosion controls, planting native communities to attract wildlife and creating better access to the park

Allen McKnight, with the City Parks and Recreation Department stated earlier this year that a large portion of the money would be used for badly needed repairs to the bridges and gabions (an erosion control device) along the stream channel. Mr. McKnight has said that currently they are working on bridge design for replacement structures in the park and that actual construction would probably begin in the spring of 1998.

One unresolved issue which is still being negotiated with the Division of Sewers and Drains, is getting repairs implemented that will eliminate sewer line leakages into the stream.

Julie Boyland, community leader with Campus Partners, said that a group of Ohio State University students will be participating in a clean-up of the Park during welcome week, as part of Community Commitment



Glen Echo Park, 1930's. Courtesy of Bob Armstrong.

Blooming Skunk, Trout, Rattlesnakes and Flies

by Mark Balson

What could we be talking about when we talk about blooming skunk, trout, rattlesnakes and flies? That's easy, these are four of the unique plants found in the ravines in the Clintonville - Beechwood area.

These plants are Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), Trout Lily, (*Erythronium americanum*), Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*), and Crane Fly Orchid (*Tipularia discolor*).

When the Skunk Cabbage blooms, I know that spring cannot be far off - even if the ground is covered with snow and ice. The Trout Lily follows, blooming in early spring when the nights are cool and the days are just starting to



show Skunk Cabbage the promise of warmth.

Rattlesnake Plantain blooms in the middle of summer, when days are so hot that it is hard to believe that it was ever cold. And finally, when the Crane Fly Orchid blooms and dies back, I know it is time to hunker down for winter.

But besides marking off the blooming season, each plant is an interesting and important plant in it's own right. They are some of the gifts of the ravines that you would not expect to

find in an urban setting.

SKUNK CABBAGE

(*Symplocarpus americanum*)

This is a wonderful plant. It is the first thing to bloom in our area, often blooming through snow and ice and literally generating heat to melt the snow so that it can emerge.

This singular and unique local plant almost always starts blooming in mid to late February. The outside temperature can be averaging in the teens and this plant will still start growing.

Skunk Cabbage is closely related to Jack-in-the-Pulpit and the Calla Lily. It inherits many of the characteristics of these plants, but conventional beauty is not one of them.

This is a small, oddly shaped plant. It grows in wet places that are not sought out by most people so this plant is unknown to almost all urban residents. It needs wet, high acid areas to grow such as swamps, fens, and bogs.

We are lucky to have a scrap of a bog left in the Clintonville area and it is only for this reason that we can walk down a well lit city street and see Skunk Cabbage growing just a few feet from front yards and well tended residential gardens.

In order to understand what this plant looks like, you have to know about the family of plants that Skunk Cabbage belongs to, the Arum family. There are two things that distinguish this family of plants. They have tiny, inconspicuous flowers that are clustered on a rod-like, cone shaped or round organ called a spadix. This spadix is usually surrounded or encircled by a modified leaf that is called the spathe, (the white "petal" on a Calla Lily).

The spadix of the Skunk Cabbage is almost impossible to see unless you lie on the ground and separate the spathe. Remember that it blooms in February, in bogs and swamps, so lying down

near this plant may not be an appealing idea.

The spathe is the part that you can see. It is a dark mottled purple and appears about 2 inches to 7 inches tall. The spathe is broad at the base, tapering at the top. At the top, the spathe curves over the spadix and forms a hooded beak. The spadix is round, looks like a tiny pineapple and has hundreds of the true flowers clustered on it. It is pollinated by insects.

We do not associate insects with February. But there are a surprising number of carrion eating flies and beetles around in February. February is a hard month. If a small mammal like a rabbit, or even a large one like a deer, is



going to succumb to starvation or disease, February is the month this is going to happen.

Nature has provided carrion eating beetles and flies to clean up. To take advantage of this natural situation Skunk Cabbage has made some adaptations. First, it smells like rotting meat. Actually, a lot of plants smell like carrion. But Skunk Cabbage does two unique things.

First, this plant has a very high rate of respiration. It has a rate of respiration so high that it generates heat. A lot of heat. This heat helps disperse the scent of rotting meat and attracts insects. The insects crawl into the skunk cabbage through a gap in the spathe. Once inside they crawl around looking for the carrion. They do not find it but they find a warm environment.

The inside temperature of the Skunk Cabbage can be as high as 72 degrees even if it is below freezing outside. So the bugs linger a while to warm up. And as they crawl around the spadix they may get covered with pollen. Eventually they will leave looking for more carrion and they may find another Skunk Cabbage.

In some ways this is the Club Med for bugs. It is a good place to go to in the middle of February to get warm and meet other single bugs. Isn't nature great?

TROUT LILY

(Erythronium americanum)

This is the plant that made me realize what a diverse and rich habitat for wild flowers the ravines were. I had been interested in wildflowers for a number of years, but I had been going to Delaware, Licking and Madison counties to see the flowers I was interested in. I lived in a house overlooking Walhalla Ravine, and I knew for a certainty that there was nothing worth seeing in these urban gullies. Maybe some dandelion or periwinkle, but nothing of any merit. Everyone knows that you do not see wild flowers in the middle of a city. In fact, I was doing the unthinkable and dumping my grass clippings over the side because I was sure it couldn't do any harm.



One day when dumping leaves from the previous fall I noticed a clump of yellow down on a flat next to the stream. They didn't look like dandelions and I went down to see what they were. They were a small but dense colony of Trout Lily. There were hundreds of single leaf specimen and about two dozen blooming two leaf plants. When I got down there I also found some Dutchman's Breeches, wild ginger, but-

tercup and the next plant we will examine.

Trout Lily is one of those plants that have a lot of jobs. It is known as a spring ephemeral. That means that it blooms in early spring, usually in



wooded areas before the tree canopy has leafed out. Trout Lily blooms early and they perform an essential recycling task.

Spring in this area is usually very wet and the rain and snow runoff tends to leach important minerals out of the porous forest soil. Many forest flower root systems are shallow. Once nutrients have been leached below about a foot they are inaccessible. Trout lily has a bulb and a root system that are between 18 to 26 inches deep.

The Trout lily gathers nutrients, especially phosphorus, and recycles it back up to their leaves and flowers. As the leaves and flowers die back, these nutrients are again available to other plants.

The other thing this plant does is provide a nutritious food source early in the season, for pollinating insects, especially bees. Trout lily is an essential link in the available food for some species of bees. The trout lily is so important that some bees put trout lily pollen in storage so that it will be available when their larvae hatches.

This is a pretty flower. It always blooms from plants that have two leaves. One-leafed plants are immature and cannot

bloom. It



continued page 11

Water Tower Update

by Paul T. Carringer, Commissioner,
District Nine, Clintonville Area
Commission

It is apparent that the water towers will be constructed on land owned by the State of Ohio and near the Ohio School for the Deaf. This development is to ensure water safety from contamination and recognizes the importance of these towers to the health of the community. The project also will move forward due to financial and siting constraints that have been established to be valid by the Columbus Division of Water.

Though we have not won the battle of development on this site, several significant concessions are being gained. These concessions are designed to help minimize the impact of these towers on the area, the environment around them and our quality of life.

First, legislation conveying the property from the State of Ohio to the City of Columbus will include language that will help to protect the remaining open green space and ravines from future development. This legislation has been drafted by our State Representative, E.J. Thomas and is currently before the House, (H.B. 552) It will allow for community input and control should the land be considered for a change of its current use.

Second, The Columbus Division of Water will communicate in writing to the Clintonville Area Commission that the Deaf and Blind Schools property will not be the site of a third water tower. Third, no other antenna or structures will be placed on the proposed water towers. Fourth, the Columbus City Division of Water will work with the Clintonville area Commission and neighbors surrounding the water tower site in the development of non-offensive paint schemes with appropriate landscaping and fencing for the water towers and the surrounding area.

The debate on this issue has been

very intense. Though the outcome does not appear to be the best for the open green space in question, the protection of the remaining land is being addressed. We have the opportunity to preserve this unique setting, this urban park land, for many future generations to enjoy.

A Stream Runs Through - But What Is Its Name?

by Chris Castleman

Many of us in the Sharon Heights community have come to know and love the very special stream that runs through our neighborhood and through the beautiful ravine on the State Deaf and Blind School properties. We all live in its watershed, many of us enjoy its numerous treasures in every season, and some of us realize that our own activities can affect the quality of its water.

In a city where most streams have been banished to an underground existence, this lovely waterway is indeed unique. And yet, most of us are just not sure what to call this valuable community resource. Some refer to it as Adena Brook, Adena Brook North or the north branch of Adena Brook.

However, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the more southerly stream that enters the Olentangy River at Whetstone Park is called Adena Brook. The USGS has officially ruled that "our" creek has no name.

So how do we go about naming "our" stream? The Ravine Task Force of the SHCA is in the process of soliciting proposed names from the community. Several local schools have agreed to conduct class projects through which the children will learn about the process and research possible appropriate names. The task force would also like suggestions from community residents and businesses.

Once proposed names have been submitted, the task force will consult several experts on local history and make a recommendation to the SHCA and then to

the Clintonville Area Commission and to the City of Columbus. The proposed name will be submitted to the USGS with supporting information and endorsements.

The USGS applies several general guidelines when considering names proposed for natural features. The name should not duplicate another name used for a similar feature elsewhere in the state. It should be descriptive of topographic form or be suggested by local history, folklore, or event, or by associated natural life or other feature. It should be easily pronounced and not use qualifiers like "big," "little," "upper," or "north." The generic part of the name should relate to the feature. In our case, this means that the term "brook" or "stream" or "creek" or similar generic term should be used after the specific part of the name.

If you have information that could be useful to the process of selecting a name for the stream or would like to do some research and submit a suggested name, please contact Chris Kasselmann at 848-3183.

The task force is planning to review proposals over the next few months. (Please see below)

RAVINE TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

A group of Sharon Heights community residents organized last June to address a number of issues of mutual interest regarding improved stewardship of our local stream and ravine. The stream runs from the commercial area near Sinclair Road and I-71 through the State Schools for the Deaf and Blind, Wesley Glen and Graceland Shopping Center. Several small tributaries enter the creek near I-71 and near Rush Avenue. A Franklin County Greenways Project survey and analysis done in February and March of 1996 identified a number of concerns about the waterway and recommended improved local stewardship of the resource.

The Ravine Task Force has undertaken several projects since its formation. The group conducted a successful clean-up on November 9, with 18 participants. Staff from Ohio EPA,



Ohio
continued on pg. 10

Another View of the Water Towers

by Dick Sims, Sharon Heights
Community Association Water Towers
Task Force

Elsewhere in this newsletter, Paul Carringer of the Clintonville Area Commission (CAC) presents a Water Tower Update. The concessions mentioned in that article were negotiated to mitigate the impact of proposed water tower construction to the community and the local environment near the Ohio Schools for the Deaf and Blind site, and are largely the outcome of a meeting organized by our state representative, E.J. Thomas, held January 27th, 1997.

As Paul states in that article, though significant concessions are being gained, we did not win the battle against the city over development on this green space near the Ohio School for the Deaf. And, as we painfully admitted at the January 27th meeting, the only reason we lost was the amount of money that would be needed to purchase one of the alternative sites versus the amount for the site near the Deaf School.

We are indebted to the Honorable E.J. Thomas for his interest and concern in the water tower issue and for organizing the meeting mentioned above (as well as at least two previous meetings).

In his article, Paul mentions the project "will move forward due to financial and siting constraints that have been established to be valid by the Columbus Division of Water."

The so-called validity of the constraints has really been established by John Doult, Administrator of the Division of Water, acting essentially on his own.

Members of the Engineering section of the Division of Water as recently as December, 1996, have stated that Mr. Doult has been handling this water tower project personally and stated

their belief that no real plans had yet been prepared.

It was learned that a complete detailed set of plans had been prepared as early as February, 1995, by an outside consulting company. This was before the CAC and the local community knew the site was being considered for water towers at all. Interestingly, no one has ever revealed the details of just how the selection of the Deaf School property for the water towers began.

Additionally, a survey of the Ohio School for the Deaf site was completed by the Division of Water in March of 1994, according to House Bill 552 (the bill currently before the House which will convey the property to the city)

Mr. Doult would like you to believe otherwise, but in fact, there was certainly no openness by the water company about their intentions, or community involvement at all, prior to local citizens and the CAC learning something was going on in early 1995. (Citizens in attendance scoffed at his remark, but Mr. Doult later would claim, at the July, 1996, CAC meeting, that he didn't even know that the site near the Deaf School was within the Clintonville-Beechwood area.)

After months of delays, a public meeting was finally held in November, 1995, for presentations by Mr. Doult and Mr. Joyce. At this meeting, attended also by Jennette Bradley, chairwoman of the utilities committee of the Columbus City Council, citizens complained vigorously about the way this water tower issue had been handled from the very beginning.

Councilwoman Bradley admitted that the water tower issue had been handled poorly. But, in the ensuing months, nothing has ever been done to try to correct or to alleviate the mistakes made.

On September 30, 1996, the day City Council was to vote on the water tower variance issue, Councilwoman Bradley called a 30 minute afternoon caucus at which Mr. Doult and Mr.

Joyce gave presentations to the City Council. Two CATS members were present at the afternoon caucus but were not recognized and were not given the opportunity to challenge the comments being made by John Doult and James Joyce.

That evening the Council voted 6-1 in favor of the variance needed by the Division of Water. The vote cast by City Council on September 30 ignored the fact the CAC had voted 7 - 2 against the variance request in July, 1996, and paid little attention to the community outcry that evening against the water tower variance request.

Prior to the evening City Council vote, three CATS members and one CAC member were allowed 3 minutes each to speak against the variances. In the presentations made against the water tower variances, three city sponsored documents were cited which give guidelines or recommendations against the type of development represented by the proposed construction of these water towers. These documents are the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, The Priorities '95 and the Franklin County Greenways Project. Each of these documents refer to the great need for the protection and preservation of ravines and open green space.

The proposed site is located along a ravine tributary of the Olentangy that runs through the Deaf and Blind Schools. It seems the Columbus City Council (except for President Kennedy) totally ignored the city's own documents, which state, "It is the recommendation of the Columbus Comprehensive Plan that ravines be fully integrated into the city's greenway system."

In addition, a Clintonville resident recently came across a copy of The Booster from more than twenty-one years ago, December 30, 1975, which gave a comprehensive report on "The Watercourse Plan for Columbus and Franklin County." The ravine and stream that runs through the Deaf and Blind Schools and the bordering open

green space (site of the proposed water towers) are areas mapped to be protected in this Watercourse Plan.

According to the accompanying quote from 21 years ago, the purpose of the study was: "To determine how best to turn the face of our city, to retrieve opportunities we have thrown away and to utilize the open space which remains in the Columbus River Corridors . . . for a humane and attractive urban environment. Completed in October, 1974 the recommendations are now being implemented by enthusiastic government agencies and private citizens." Unfortunately, the ravine never received the protection suggested by

and buy the Sun TV site. Mr. Doult did admit at the July, 1996, CAC meeting that the two best sites for the towers were the Sun TV site and the site near the Deaf School.

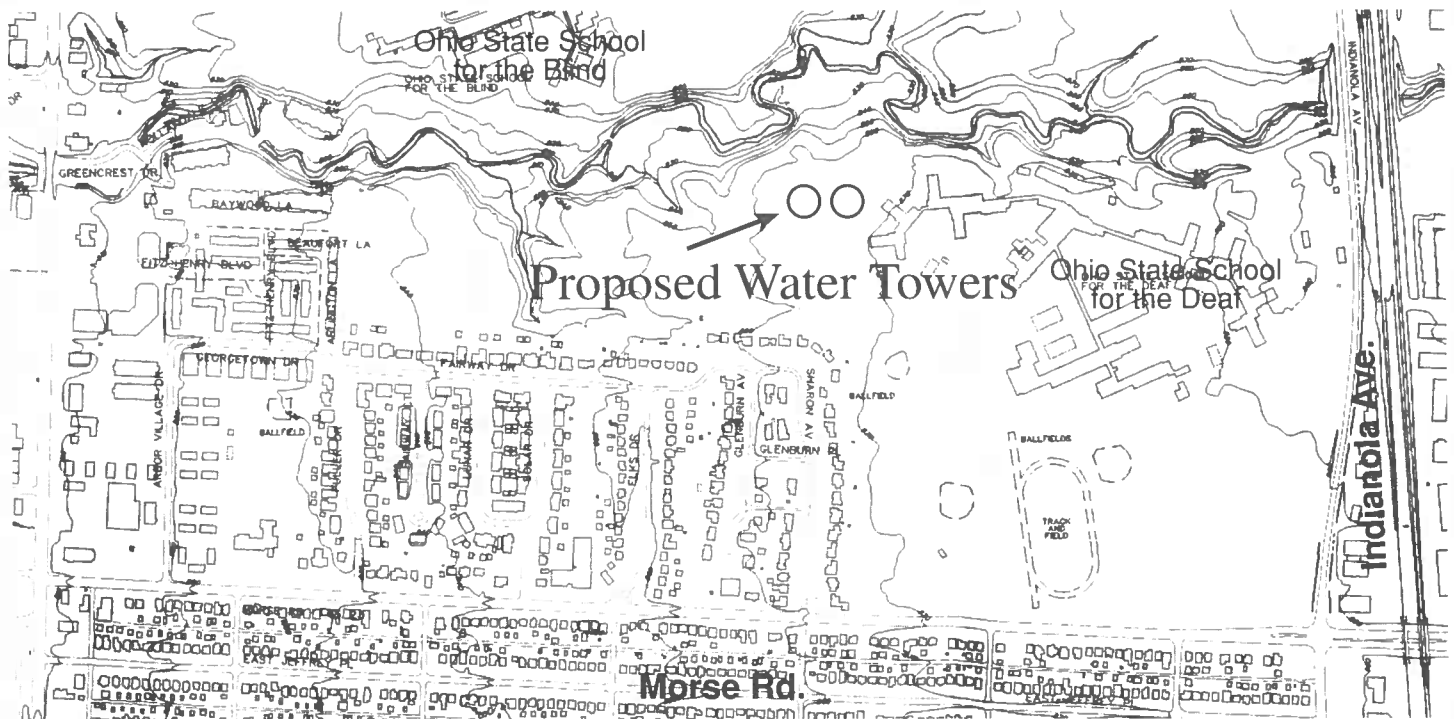
At the January 27th meeting I presented Mr. Doult and others present with copies of a plan drawing showing how the water towers could be constructed on the Sun TV site in a configuration almost identical to the two water towers existing along Busch Blvd.

The plan provides ample construction area for the towers and provides for more than 2 acres of the 2.9 acre site to be resold for commercial development

pay the extra money to get the Sun TV site. This goes back to the above-mentioned "financial and siting constraints" which Mr. Doult has presented.

It would truly be unfortunate if this Sun TV opportunity is lost-unfortunate for the students and staff who are going to be inhabiting the Ohio School for the Deaf over the coming decades as well as the larger community.

So, let's organize and create another view of the water towers—a view at the Sun TV site. Any and all help will be greatly appreciated. Any ideas for monetary sources would be greatly welcomed—to temporarily help the city acquire the Sun TV site (if they are



the Watercourse Plan at that time.

The solutions to all the past mistakes is to follow the resolution unanimously approved in January by thirty-eight (38) members of the Sharon Heights Community Association (SHCA) to abandon the idea of the site near the Deaf School and vigorously pursue the development of the available commercial site behind Sun TV on Morse Road.

The City could utilize funds from a 1991 bond issue (discovered to be available by CATS in January, 1996)

after the towers are completed. This plan differs dramatically from the plan submitted by Mr. Doult at our November 1996 meeting to E.J. Thomas.

Mr. Doult's plan placed the towers right in the middle of the Sun TV site, claimed the construction area was inadequate, and allowed less than one acre for later resale. It is my opinion that Mr. Doult did not try very hard to plan the use of the Sun TV site because over the months (almost years) he has repeatedly said the city is not going to

really going to be stingy with our money already provided to them). Call Dick Sims at 885-0316 if you can help.

In the meantime, confronted as we are with the possibility of water towers on the Deaf School site, we will continue to work with E.J. Thomas to establish the necessary legislation with language to protect and preserve the stream, ravine, and open green space of the Blind School and Deaf School through our Ravine Preservation Task Force.

A Long Walk Home

by Vince Mazeika

"Heart of the whole and essence of the scene is the river, the flowing river with its thin fringe of green, the vital element in what would be otherwise a glamorous but moondead landscape. The living river and the living river alone gives coherence and significance and therefore beauty...."

Edward Abbey

Last year. A beautiful June afternoon, 4:50 pm. Then the car died. Just enough momentum to roll into a quiet Worthington neighborhood. I crossed High Street to call the office motor pool. They'd pick the car up next morning. I decided to walk the Olentangy River bike path to home in Clintonville.

Turning the corner at 161, then down hill toward the river. A dense flow of cars sat on the bridge; flashing chrome and glass under a brilliant sun, surging then sitting, like big metal fish in a tight school. I stopped to look down the shaded green corridor, inviting me to turn south onto the path.

Some of us never accept the path's invitation, we take our river views from bridges: I-270, Wilson Bridge Road, 161, Henderson Road, the foot-bridge at Whetstone Park, North Broadway, Dodridge, Lane, Woody Hayes Drive, King, 5th, 3rd, 315, Goodale Blvd., I-670, Spring Street.

The Olentangy is difficult to avoid. It flows through life in Columbus and compels us to cross over.

We scan up or down river, taking visual relief from concrete and asphalt. Maybe we mark the seasons: January's white blue ice and drifted snow; April's high flow lapping at bankside trees; August's dog day river beneath a shroud of morning mist, October's yellow cottonwood leaves floating on a blue reflected sky.

The path led south from 161 to Antrim Lake; a quarry's deep, cool

legacy on the river's shoulder. Canadian geese, mallards and a lone gull drifted across the rippled surface. The early rush hour escapees - cyclists, bladders, walkers and runners - circled the lake's perimeter. A woman and shining wet labrador fished the bank.

The folk who fish know this river corridor and its web of life. Water and change itself pass before their eyes. Monofilament lines invite the stream's unseen to announce themselves. But most of us are in motion, looking ahead. And we miss the river's stories.

The bitter cold of a past February at morning rush hour: a deer is struck at High and Dodridge streets. The animal, like a science fiction time traveler appears by unknown route from an unknown location.

An October morning walk to work. A dead bird lay on the sidewalk near Marconi and Broad; softball size,



round and brown feathered, a long probe like beak, dark pop eyes. The woodcock. Game bird of brushy swamps and moist forest.

The sightings whispered of the river's ancient web of life. The white-tail had wandered south on forested banks, crossed the river's thick ice and picked its way up Glen Echo Ravine.

The Woodcock, migrating at night down the Olentangy-Scioto corridor, struck a fog draped Lincoln-Leveque tower.

Our planners speak of the "infrastructure". But its lifeless concrete, asphalt, rails, roads and fiber optic cables frequently trace a stream and river network that's crossed central Ohio for over 10,000 years.

The natural infrastructure of forested corridors has sustained the regeneration and migration of thousands of lifeforms from butterfly to humankind since the last ice age. 315's concrete is stone dead, but the Olentangy's water and remaining wooded banks still pulse with life.

My route led south from Antrim. To the west a chain link fence, grass right of way and the drone of traffic streaming north. On the left a dense tree cover: burr oaks, basswood, rough hackberry bark and smooth pintoe sycamores, then the river. Past the Bethel Road exit, trees flanked the path on both sides. The strong hot sun

hidden. The pitch of gear box whine and buzzing tires faded. Bird calls rose from the cool shadows and I remembered a conversation.

I had spoken with Jed Burt, Ohio Wesleyan zoology professor and Ohio Comparative Risk Project - land use subcommittee member. He said, in effect, "the significance of central Ohio's stream infrastructure is increasing."

As Columbus expands and Latin American rainforests fall under chain-

saw assault, the green, moist corridors become sanctuary for thousands of neotropical birds migrating north across the spreading asphalt and concrete of our artificial landscapes.”

Dr. Burt also said stream corridors could be essential for plant migration. If Ohio's climate warms, suitable weather conditions for some trees and plants will shift northward. River and stream banks will provide pathways for transport of seeds and spores by wind, bird or animal.

I was into a comfortable pace and the Henderson Road bridge lay just ahead. A great blue heron quietly lifted from the river's east bank on slow motion wings and wheeled above homes set among trees.

Near the path a crumpled ATM statement rested among the white dutchman's britches and violets. I picked it up.

The current balance. Who runs the numbers on river things? the weighing of true cost and benefit? a river's worth is not revealed by the narrow focus of ledger books or an accountant's spreadsheet, but through continual presence in the daily quality of lives.

The path led under, then across Henderson Road bridge. I was now on the east bank, passing Whetstone High School and entering the Park of Roses. Here Adena Brook flows through the park to meet the Olentangy.

Buzzing tires sounded behind me. A mountain biker slowed to ford the brook's shale and gravel bed near a willow planting. In April, Clintonville residents (with city and state resource agency help) put in the saplings to increase vegetative cover and protect the banks from erosion.

Can the Olentangy, Alum, Scioto, Darby, Rocky Fork, Blacklick or Walnut add to property value? Pat Kearns Davis, a prominent Clintonville real estate professional who ran the numbers, indicated that a river or ravine side location in Clintonville can add 10% - 30% to

home property value.

The value of shade, sound buffering, cooling, birdsong and beauty found along a green corridor or ravine are figured in by buyers, if only sub-consciously.

But the desire to live in a stream corridor or ravine because of the appeal of that environment becomes a contradiction when trees are cut, concrete replaces soil (or a stream bed), septic systems fail, runoff from construction sites muddy the waters and dumped household debris ruins the natural qualities which so attracted us at first viewing.

Year by year the values may disappear along with the web of life. And eventually the numbers won't work so well.

The path merged with Olentangy Boulevard. I dodged across a busy North Broadway and turned down to Riverside Drive and Delhi Avenue. Bob Ford, retired with thirty two years on the river, was fishing at the dam; he told me about three pound small mouths, crappies, and sauger that he takes here; and the four deer below North Broadway too.

But he also remembered "an oily pink glop" floating downstream some years ago and the changes brought by 315's construction.

Home was near. In Como Park I passed bank sitters, binocular birders, squealing toddlers, retrievers and a picnic. The attraction to stream corridors is an ancient impulse, with roots far beyond our civilization's short history.

I reached home north of the Dodridge Street Bridge. After supper the full moon threw sycamore shadows across my living room floor. A night hawk's rasp echoed up the ravine and I wondered what would remain of the Olentangy corridor in ten years?

A quality stream infrastructure is far more than a nice photo in the promotional brochure: the quality of daily life, home value, tourism (many visi-

tors aren't interested in shopping or professional sports), recreation and science education opportunities are at stake - and perhaps the city's image.

The fate of our stream infrastructure rests on individual and community action. But action begins with awareness of the resource, its value for our lives and for the web of life surrounding us. We need to make all the numbers work.

Ravine Force Activities, cont. from pg.6.

Department of Natural Resources and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission joined in the fun. The Ohio School for the Deaf also participated. The Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio donated bags, gloves and other materials for the clean-up. A second clean-up is planned for September of this year, in conjunction with the Clintonville Bicentennial.

Several members have kept excellent records of birds observed near the stream and are working on collecting additional inventories of the flora and fauna of the area. They have contacted several universities in the region and have generated interest in more formal studies. A naming process is being conducted as well. (Please see "A Stream Runs Through It" article.)

A water quality monitoring project with the Clintonville Academy, Dominion Middle School and the Deaf School has begun. Community outreach will be done in connection with this project to determine residents' understanding of water quality issues and the impacts of their actions on the waterway.

There is a great deal of work to be done to continue these efforts. For example, community residents are needed to help with the water quality monitoring project. About 100 to 200 stormwater drains will be labeled to remind us not to dump waste materials in them because they drain into the stream. Also, the fall clean-up will require planning and elbow grease. It would be an ideal activity for families and scout troops! If you have information on any of these topics or would like to assist with any of the projects, please contact Chris Kasselmann at 848-3183.

may take 7 years for a Trout lily to bloom. It can attain a height of from 4 to 10 inches. There is always a single flower and it is a rich golden yellow with red or magenta splotches. This is still one of my favorite flowers.

RATTLESNAKE PLANTAIN

(*Goodyera pubescens*)

This is one of my favorite plants.



This is also one of the plants that I found in Walhalla Ravine near the Trout Lily's. There were about 7 to 10 tightly clustered plants. It was the first of two native orchids that I found in the ravine. I have been able to find these orchids in a wide number of places. I seem to be able to find them in the most unusual places. I have found them near a tourist walkway in Williamsburg Virginia, in a coniferous tree farm and in an urban ravine in Clintonville. I once found one in a neglected "flower bed" at a roadside stop just north of Kings Island on Rt. 70 in Ohio. But when I went back to Walhalla Ravine to find this orchid, both of the sites that they grew in had been bombed by what I call the "Wizard of Oz Bomb". They have had a house dropped on them. I do not know if they still exist in the ravines.

Rattlesnake Plantain is a fairly com-

mon plant, at least as orchids go, and can be found either as solitary plants or in large colonies of several hundred plants. It grows around the world in the Northern Hemisphere. It can be found in Scandinavia, Russia, Japan and Columbus, Ohio. It seems to be especially plentiful around the Great Lakes area and around the Chesapeake Bay. I almost tripped over them in the Williamsburg area of Virginia. As a final aside, if looking for this plant, look right after a light, but covering snow. The leaves of Rattlesnake Plantain are evergreen and they stand out much better in snow than trying to look for them in the forest litter and dappled light.

This plant is fairly tolerant of a wide range of conditions. They seem to prefer wooded areas and acid soils. I have found one colony in a single species pine tree farm and in terminal beech forest. I have read that they grow in bogs and swamps but have never seen one there.

These plants have attractive foliage. The leaves are arranged in a basal rosette and are a dark green with all the veins, especially the mid vein, marked white. Between the veins is a network of white markings which gives rise to the common name "Checkered Rattlesnake Plantain". The leaves are rather oval and end in a dull point. They are from a little less than 1 inch to a little over 3 1/2 inches long and are from a little less than 1/2 inch to a little over 1 1/2 inches wide.

The flower spike emerges from the center of the rosette and is from 4 inches to 16 inches tall. The flower is rather round overall. The upper sepals are rather concave and along with the lateral sepals and the dorsal petals are tightly overlapping and forming a hood over the lip. The lip is somewhat pouch-like. There are fine hairs covering the outer parts of the flower and the flower spike.

I hope we have not lost this small orchid. It's greatest threat is destruction of habitat and I prefer to think that in some little seen corner of one of the

ravines there is a healthy colony of Rattlesnake Plantain. I hope you will look for it next time you are out walking in one of our ravines.

CRANE-FLY ORCHID

(*Tipularia discolor*)

The last plant is the Crane Fly Orchid. It is also one of the last flowers to bloom in the season. There may be some asters that bloom later but not many things bloom after the Crane Fly Orchid. This is not an attractive plant and the flower is not only green and difficult to see in the low light levels of most wooded areas in September, but if you do see it, it looks a lot like a small cloud of Crane Flies. It is also one of the least known of the native orchids. It is not especially rare, it is just difficult to see and blooms when most people are not walking around in dark wooded areas. Try walking through a woods in mid-September and the deer flies, gnats, and mosquitoes will eat you alive.

This orchid may have also had a house dropped on it. But it is hard to say for sure. The reason is that this plant puts up a leaf exactly the opposite time of most other plants. It doesn't put up a leaf until late autumn. This single leaf remains through the winter and then dies back in early spring. When it blooms there is no leaf showing. So I didn't even look for this orchid. There would be nothing to see even if it was still in the ravine. But I am concerned. The only colony of this orchid that I knew was growing in close proximity to the Rattlesnake Plantain, and thanks to house construction, that habitat is now gone for good.

This plant grows in mixed deciduous forest, usually at the base of a slope or on a flat next to a stream or river. It grows in fairly loose, well drained soil that is slightly acid. It grows a few small, sparse flowers at a time when most of us are not looking for it. Later this summer I will go looking for the small, single, philodendron shaped leaf of this plant. I hope I find it.

We need your help . . .

Support *Ravines Quarterly* with your subscription. History, current issues, upcoming events, natural history, folklore, conservation

- Individual Subscriber \$15**
- Supporting Subscriber . . . \$35**
- Sponsor \$50**
- Ravine Friend \$100**



send to:
Ravines Quarterly
P.O. Box 14128
Columbus, OH 43214

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____



Clintonville Community Resources Center
14 West Lakeview Ave.
Columbus, OH 43202