



## **Brown Township, Franklin County Summer 2008**

### **Executive Assistant to Monitor Growth**

The future of Northwest Franklin County including Brown Township is under a large microscope. Several on-going, growth related planning activities in the NW area which include Brown Township require constant vigilance and involvement. Brown Trustees recently hired a part time Executive Assistant, Tim A. Richardson, to assist them in keeping up with these and other immediate growth issues involving the Township. On-going planning activities include:

#### **The Hellbranch Forum**

A Hellbranch Watershed planning group of local jurisdictions and stakeholders is involved in studying potential impacts, including environmental, from increased development in the Hellbranch Run Watershed. As all Brown residents know well, Hellbranch Run is a sensitive drainage system which is subject to poor drainage and frequent flooding. It is a major tributary to the Big Darby Creek, a state and national scenic river. The group is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in this regard.

#### **Environmentally Sensitive Development Area**

The City of Columbus and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency have established a working group of local jurisdictions comprising the Big Darby Creek Watershed in Western Franklin County. The group's task is to recommend policies on streamside buffers, comprehensive storm water management planning, and conservation development strategies. These policies, which are to be completed in 2004, must be in place prior to Columbus extending central sewer service further into the Big Darby Creek Watershed.

#### **Hayden Run Corridor**

A Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission coordinated effort is underway for an area which includes the Columbus area between Hilliard and Dublin as well as portions of Washington and Brown Townships. Due to close proximity, Eastern Madison County is participating as well. Issues such as land use compatibility amongst the jurisdictions, infrastructure requirements and financing. In particular defining financial responsibilities involving increased traffic and circulation and who will bear those costs. These are all critical issues. The need for this planning was prompted by several City of Columbus zoning applications and their immediate impact on adjacent communities.

## Northwest Growth Plan

Interest in the larger geographical area involving growth has evolved from the Hayden Run Corridor plan discussions. Columbus, with suburban communities and developers are eyeing potential opportunities in adjacent undeveloped areas, including Brown Township. Three meetings have been held to date but the major emphasis has been placed on the immediate need for completion of a Hayden Run Corridor plan.

Tim Richardson has either accompanied or represented The Brown Trustees at many of these meetings. He reports directly to the Trustees and understands the importance of maintaining effective communication with them. Tim has had extensive experience in dealing with Western Franklin County issues having served as Program Manager of the Developmental Controls Department of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission from which he retired in 1997. He then spent more than five years with The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Chapter, working as Urban Coordinator in their Big Darby Program. Tim believes that Brown Township's active participation in carefully crafted and coordinated watershed planning, as well as the creation of effective Darby Creek protection measures at all levels, are essential for the preservation of Brown Township's quality of life and the Darby Creek unique ecosystem.

Tim is a Trustee of the Darby Creek Association, a local citizen's group seeking preservation of the environmentally unique Big and Little Darby Creeks. Tim and his wife Kathy reside in the City of Columbus, have two adult children and one grandchild.

## Lessons from History: Perseverance and Overcoming Obstacles in the Darby Watershed

**by: Pam Sayre - Township Trustee**

It has been 20 years since the Big and Little Darby Creeks were named State Scenic Rivers. This ceremonious event happened on June 22, 1984 at the confluence of the creeks in the Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park when then Governor Celeste presented Matie Bradley with a plaque designating the creeks with State Scenic status. No one would have guessed that the event so happily shared had been hard to come by. Consider parts of this letter from Mike Fremont of Rivers Unlimited to his group members dated February 11, 1983:

Big Darby Creek has another chance at being named a State Scenic River. The Darby Creek people have been seeking this for at least 11 years. They were the founding members of Rivers Unlimited. Last go-round there were 920 letters in favor; 17 against. The U.S. Department of Interior told us, informally, that Darby is the best river we have in Ohio. Designation had been held up because Columbus wanted a dam on the creek, for water supply, and a politically powerful property owner with ties to the previous governor didn't want people using "his" river.

But the perseverance paid off and in June of 1984, the Big and Little Darby Creeks became Ohio's 10th Scenic River. Ten years later, on September 30, 1994, a ceremony was held at the same Metro Park for the National Scenic River Designation with this inspiring paragraph written inside the bulletin: *"Overwhelming interest and support for preserving the Darby Creeks played a critical role in the declaration of this resource as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System on March 10, 1994. We are here today to celebrate this declaration and to say thank you to all the dedicated individuals, agencies and organizations who made it possible."*

So here we are, 20 years later, still trying to protect the creeks and the buffering watersheds. What will be said 20 years from now? Will Big Darby Creek still be “one of the Last, Great Places in the Western Hemisphere” or will it become just another urban ditch? It is up to us.

## **Brown Township History Revealed**

### **THE FORMATION OF BROWN TOWNSHIP**

The land now known as Brown Township has a rich and varied history extending back thousands of years. Although most of the remains of the once glorious native inhabitants' city have been eradicated, slight evidence of their ancient culture has survived despite the destructive hands of the white people.

Before the arrival of the early white settlers in 1808, the natives found this to be an excellent hunting area rich in game, especially along the Big Darby Creek, which the local natives called Crawfish Creek.

During the pioneer era there were more Haudenosaunee living in the area than white people. The native People were called Mingoes by the white people. The famous Shawanese leader Tecumtha frequented the area, and Jonathan Alder, a white man who was once a captive of the Mingoes, lived most of his life along Big Darby Creek in and near Brown Township.

### **Petition to Create Brown Township**

*To the Hon. The Commissioners of Franklin County. We your petitioners humbly showth the inconvenience we labor under for want of a new township being laid off in the western part of Norwich and Prairie Township.*

*1st As to attending Elections in Norwich many of the inhabitants have to travel ten or twelve miles or sacrifice their sufferage the Elections ever being held at the extreme east.*

*2nd As to common Schools we are deprived of our equitable rights the township being districted in two districts from East & West. The Eastern population being mostly weighty they organize their Schools draw Revenue and strip us of public Patronage.*

*3rd By we the inhabitants of Prairie being few in number situated in the N W corner suff inconvenience Reaching Schools we therefore pray your Honor to grant us a new Township bounded as follows.*

*Vis beginning at the N w: Corner of Norwich at the County line thence East with the line of Norwich to a point that due fourth line will include John MCCan, thence to a point an Mile and a quarter in Prairie thence West to the county line, thence north with said line to the place of beginning. We in duty will ever pray.*

This petition was submitted to the Franklin County Commissioners on March 1, 1830. Two days later, on March 3rd, the 18th of Franklin County's 19 townships was organized. Brown Township, being the last land to be settled in Franklin County, was created from parts of Norwich, Prairie, and Washington Townships and is the smallest township in the county.

The name “Brown” was for Sylvester Brown, a merchant who had opened the first store in the township. Many of the early white settlers were natives of Virginia, settling on land granted to them in the Virginia Military District. This was an area reserved for former Virginia soldiers. All of Brown Township is located within this reserve. The eastern portion of the township was largely settled by the Welsh. At that time a major portion of north central Brown Township was a timbered marsh.