

GREG J. DAVIES
Director

September 21, 2015

Dear Neighbor:

As you may be aware from recent news coverage, the cities of Columbus, Westerville, Akron, Barberton, and Lima filed a lawsuit in Franklin County Court of Common Pleas against the State of Ohio on September 9 to stop the amendment in the state budget (Sec. 743.50) involving drinking water reservoirs from taking effect. On September 15, the court granted a preliminary injunction and thus put the law on hold until the court can render a final judgment on the merits of the case or otherwise enters a further order modifying or rescinding the preliminary injunction. Currently, the case is scheduled to be heard next September.

While the legal process is underway, as a reminder, city-owned buffers used to filter pollutants for the drinking water supplies of 1.1 million customers cannot be disturbed unless you are working through an approved land stewardship agreement with our Watershed Management Office. Please be aware that unauthorized destruction of vegetation, trees, or building of structures on these buffers without prior approval from the city may still be subject to court action for civil or criminal trespass. In the case of wetlands and other sensitive natural areas, please also be aware of regulatory oversight by the Ohio EPA and US Army Corps of Engineers.

These riparian corridors are commonly used by water agencies as a best management practice to not only filter pollutants and excess nutrients carried in stormwater, but to also prevent land erosion through deeper rooted trees and other vegetation. Erosion not only causes a loss of valuable land, but is considered another pollutant by causing sedimentation. Recent issues with Ohio water supplies, such as excess nutrients resulting in algal blooms and nitrate advisories, make it clear that we all share a role in preventing the contamination of our water supplies. Please see the reverse side for related articles.

For information on obtaining a land stewardship agreement with the City of Columbus or participating in our invasive species removal program, please contact our Watershed Management Office, 645-1721, email watershed@columbus.gov, or visit our web site at utilities.columbus.gov. We thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Rick Westerfield, P.E., Ph.D.
Administrator, Division of Water

