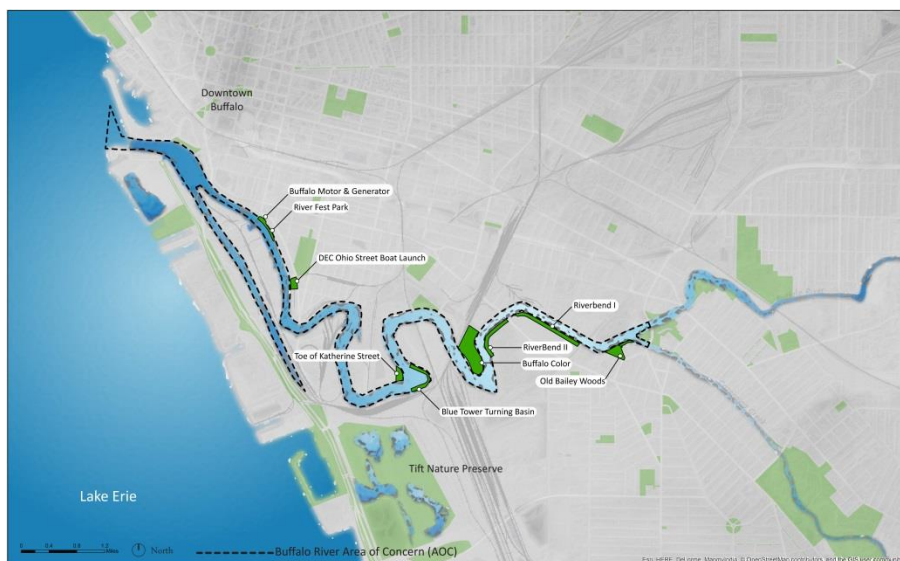


Buffalo River AOC Habitat Restoration

Restoring Habitat in the Buffalo River Area of Concern

Eight project sites were restored enhancing nearly two miles of shoreline and 20 acres of habitat along the lower Buffalo River. These projects bring the river closer to being removed from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC).



Project Highlights

- Enhancement and restoration of nearly two miles of shoreline and twenty acres of habitat
- Increased shoreline stability and natural conditions
- Improved storm water treatment, reduced erosion, fewer invasive plant species, and less sedimentation
- Economic and community benefits directly related to the improved river ecosystems
- Funded by the NOAA-GLC Regional Partnership and implemented by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper.

Buffalo River – AOC and NOAA-GLC-BNR Partnership Habitat Restoration Sites

Environmental Benefits

Contribute to AOC Delisting
Enhance fish and wildlife habitat

Economic Benefits

Recreation
Tourism
Sport-fishing enhancement and revitalization

Community Benefits

Increased water-based recreation
Improved water quality and ecosystem health



BMGC and River Fest Park



NYSDEC Ohio St. Boat Launch



Toe of Katherine St. Peninsula



Blue Tower Turning Basin



Buffalo Color Peninsula



RiverBend Phase II (SolarCity)



RiverBend Phase I (JW Danforth)



Old Bailey Woods

Background of the Buffalo River AOC

The legacy of the Buffalo River is one of heavy industrialization and subsequent contamination of sediments, poor water quality, and degraded and altered habitat. The Buffalo River was considered biologically dead as recently as the 1960s, with extremely low levels of dissolved oxygen, high temperatures, stagnant flows, and lack of any life other than extremely hardy or pollution-tolerant plant and fish species. In 1987 the Buffalo River was declared an Area of Concern (AOC) by the International Joint Commission due to possible impairment of 14 beneficial uses. Since being designated an AOC, nine of fourteen Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) were declared to be “Impaired” or “Likely Impaired” by the Buffalo River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Remedial Advisory Committee. The ultimate goal of the AOC program is to address each Beneficial Use Impairment and “delist” the AOC. The Buffalo River RAP Delisting Targets call for implementing the Buffalo River Habitat Action Plan, and with a goal of restoring a minimum 25 percent of the AOC’s shoreline to natural slope, shallows, and aquatic native vegetation, including naturalizing areas of the City Ship Canal shoreline.

Project Progress

All project sites (Buffalo Motor and Generator, NYSDEC Ohio St. Boat Launch, Toe of Katherine St. Peninsula, Blue Tower Turning Basin, Buffalo Color Peninsula, RiverBend Phase I and II, and Old Bailey Woods) were completed in fall 2018. The projects provided significant on-the-ground benefits to the AOC including invasive species removal, near-shore habitat improvement, native species plantings, aquatic vegetation plantings, and shoreline softening.

Funding and Partners

Just under \$6 million was provided for these projects by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through a Regional Partnership with the Great Lakes Commission. Funding came from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a regional program that supports the implementation of a comprehensive plan for the Great Lakes, including restoration of Areas of Concern. The projects are being managed locally by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, who have been participating and coordinating the restoration of the Buffalo River for more than 25 years.

For More Information Contact:

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