



## Cuyahoga River Area of Concern Habitat Restoration

Restoration of riparian habitat on the Cuyahoga River during the **Cascade Valley View Restoration Project** has improved habitat for fish and wildlife by restoring over a mile of river and floodplain.



Project location along the Cuyahoga River

### Project Highlights

Floodplain capacity significantly increased by removing berms and excavating a new floodplain along a 2/3 mile stretch of the Cuyahoga River mainstem

In-stream habitat features including rootwads, undercut banks, and rock-riffle structures have been installed to improve habitat and spawning conditions for fish

Approximately 60 acres of restored floodplain and 5,000 linear feet of the Cuyahoga River reforested

Pre- and post-restoration monitoring of all restoration activities has been conducted

The project is being implemented locally by Summit Metro Parks with funding provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

#### Environmental Benefits

Double floodplain capacity

Improve fish and wildlife habitat

#### Economic Benefits

Improved sport fishing

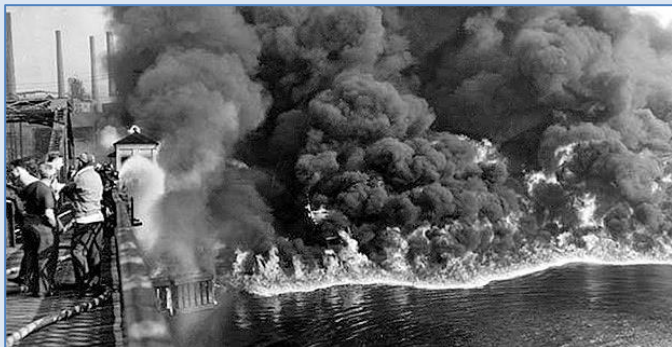
Recreation

#### Community Benefits

Recreation

Shoreline safety

## Background of the Area of Concern (AOC)



Cuyahoga River on fire in 1952 (James Thomas/Cleveland Press Collection)

In 1987, the International Joint Commission designated the Cuyahoga River an Area of Concern (AOC) under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In 1988, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency appointed a planning committee to create the Remedial Action Plan for the AOC. The Remedial Action Plan Stage I report was completed in 1992. The Cuyahoga River AOC has 7 remaining Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) that impair waterways that ultimately flow into Lake Erie. The Loss of Fish Habitat and Degradation of Fish Populations are the targeted BUIs for the project described here. Strong partnerships and stakeholder capacity exist in the AOC to support, guide, and sustain the habitat restoration project, including technical assistance for future monitoring.

## History of the Cuyahoga River

The Cuyahoga River is often thought of as a site of one of the disasters that fueled the environmental movement in the 1970's. In 1969, the river caught fire after decades of toxic waste disposal into the river. Despite several previous occurrences, the 1969 fire received national attention which helped spur passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972.

Water quality in the middle Cuyahoga River has increased greatly over the past few decades. With continued improvements, most notably the removal of the Canal Diversion Dam, this section of the Cuyahoga River will once again be open to migratory species of Lake Erie fish including steelhead, muskellunge, walleye, and state endangered lake sturgeon. This unbroken connection to Lake Erie will once again provide access to these historic spawning sites and the clean gravel substrates and restored habitat that will follow in-stream restoration.

## Project Progress

The Cascade Valley View Restoration Project is identified as a management action for the Cuyahoga River AOC to address fish habitat and populations in the Cuyahoga River. Construction activities have concluded and final monitoring data will be publicly shared on the Great Lakes Commission's habitat restoration database webpage. Continued maintenance and monitoring will be performed by Summit Metro Parks.

## Funding and Partners

Approximately \$3 million is available for this project through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a regional program that is supporting implementation of a comprehensive restoration plan for the Great Lakes, including cleaning up AOCs. The project funding comes from NOAA through a Regional Partnership with the Great Lakes Commission. The project is being managed locally by Summit Metro Parks.

### For More Information

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