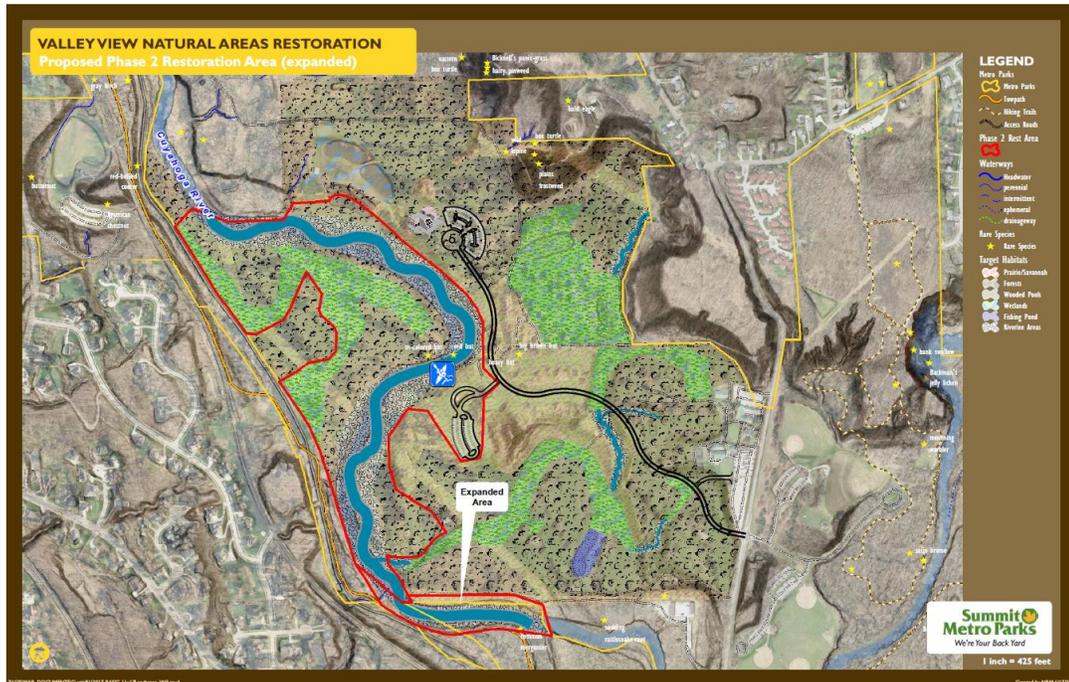


Cuyahoga River AOC Habitat Restoration

The Cuyahoga River habitat restoration at Cascade Valley View will improve habitat for fish and wildlife by restoring a mainstem of the Cuyahoga river and the associated floodplain.



Project location along Cuyahoga River

Project Highlights

- Double river capacity and floodplain restoration by removing berms and excavating a new floodplain along a 2/3 mile stretch of the Cuyahoga River mainstem.
- Install in-stream habitat features including rootwads, undercut banks, and rock-riffle structures to improve habitat and spawning conditions for fish.
- Reforest approximately 50 acres of restored floodplain and 5,000 linear feet of the Cuyahoga River.
- Pre- and post-restoration monitoring of all restoration activities.
- Summit Metroparks is implementing this project.

Environmental Benefits

Double river capacity
Improve fish and wildlife habitat

Economic Benefits

Improved sport fishing
Recreation

Community Benefits

Recreation
Shoreline safety

In 1987, the International Joint Commission designated the Cuyahoga River an Area of Concern 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 10 remaining Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) that impair waterways that ultimately flow into Lake Erie. The loss of fish and wildlife habitat and populations are the targeted BUIs for the project described here. The AOC enjoys strong support from federal, state and local agencies, which will help secure technical support and compliance with applicable permits. Strong partnerships and stakeholder capacity exist in the AOC to support, guide, and sustain the habitat restoration projects, including technical assistance for monitoring.

History of Cuyahoga River

The Cuyahoga River is often thought of as one of the environmental disasters that fueled the environmental movement in the 1970's. In 1969, the river caught on fire after decades of toxic waste disposal into the river. Despite several previous occurrences, the fire that occurred in 1969 took place when the environmental movement had already begun. The status of the Cuyahoga and numerous other waterways as dumping grounds for waste helped pass the Clean Water Act in 1972.



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

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 and the Gorge Dam, this section of the Cuyahoga River will once again be open to migratory species of Lake Erie fish including steelhead, muskellunge, and walleye. State endangered lake sturgeon will also once again have unbroken access to the clean gravel substrates of these historical spawning sites and locations proposed for in-stream restoration.

The project location is approximately one mile downstream from the Gorge Dam, a barrier in a U.S. EPA funded removal planning process. The Cascade Valley View restoration project is listed on the state's priority management action list for the Cuyahoga AOC and as a management action to address habitat restoration and floodplain reconnection along the Cuyahoga River in the Support for the Development of Management Actions in the Cuyahoga Area of Concern, a 2017 Ohio EPA publication.

Project Progress

The Cascade Valley View project is currently in the middle of its engineering and design phase. A final design is expected to be completed by the end of 2019 with restoration activities to begin in 2020.

Funding and Partners

Approximately \$3.7M is available for this project through the GLRI, 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 GLC. The project is being managed locally by Summit Metroparks.

For More Information Contact:

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