

# CUYAHOGA

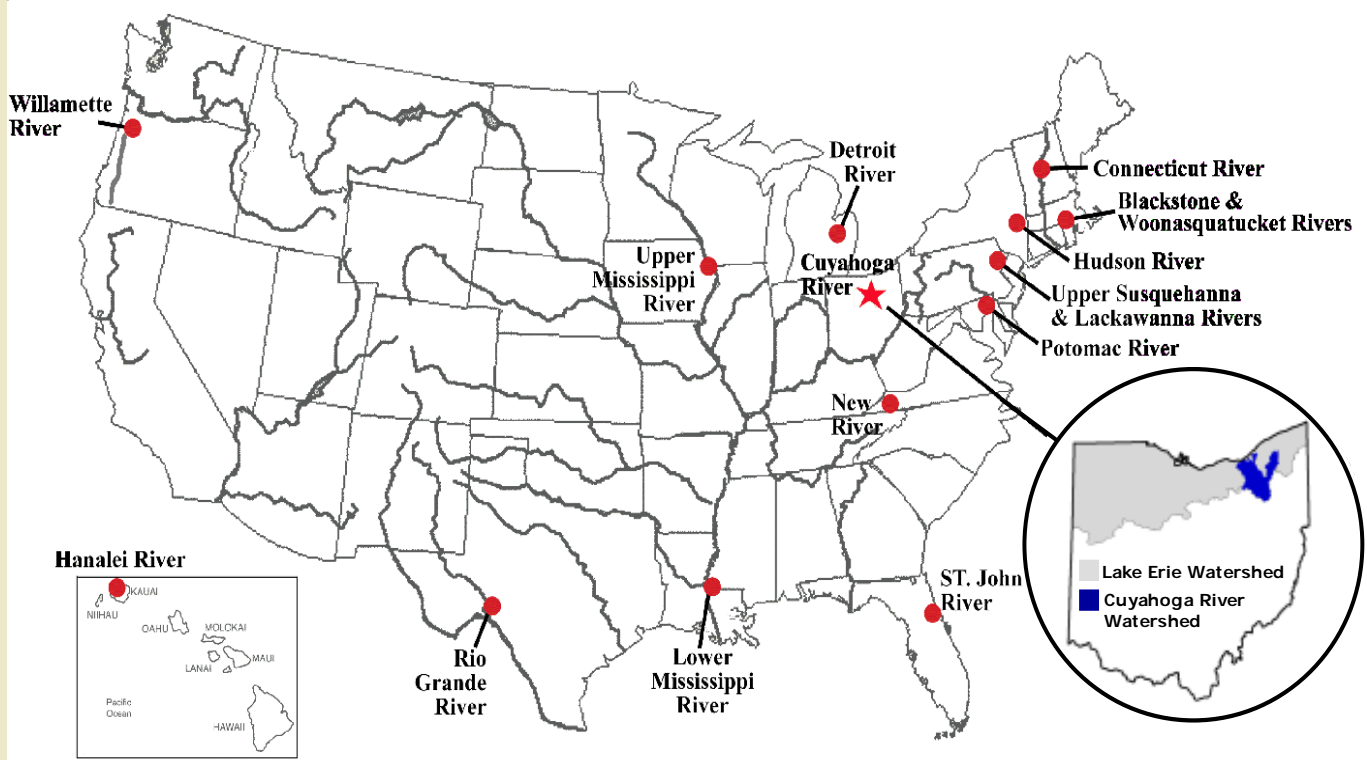


## Ohio's American Heritage River

The **American Heritage River Program** is a Federal initiative to assist local communities with restoring and protecting the environmental, economic, cultural and historic values of the most unique rivers in the US. The Cuyahoga is one of only 14 designated American Heritage Rivers. This designation acknowledges its significant and unique role in our country's history.

The **Cuyahoga River** is part of the Great Lakes Watershed that formed about 10,000 years ago at the end of the Ice Age. The Great Lakes contain roughly 18% of the world's fresh water.

15 million people live in the Lake Erie watershed, of which 11 million use it for drinking water.



From 1795 until 1803 the Cuyahoga River was the western boundary of the U.S.

From 1832 until the Great Flood of 1913, the Ohio and Erie Canals operated as the nation's first inland waterway.

The fire of 1969 was a catalyst for the formation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, the passage of the Clean Water Act of 1972, identification of the Great Lakes Areas of Concern in 1985, and the creation of local Remedial Action Plans (RAP's) in 1988.

The Cuyahoga is known as the *River of Recovery* for the remarkable on going restoration that has occurred from sustained community involvement. Local groups are working throughout the watershed to restore Ohio's American Heritage River.



The Cuyahoga River RAP has been designated as the River Navigator for the American Heritage River (AHR) Initiative; providing technical resources, along with coordination and support for Federal grants to help restore and revitalize the Cuyahoga River community.

# Watershed Restoration Requires Cooperation

The **Cuyahoga River** stretches for over 100 miles, from its headwaters north of Burton. It flows south to Akron, then turns and flows north, emptying into Lake Erie at Cleveland. The Cuyahoga River drains a watershed of 812 square miles in Northeastern Ohio. Although the watershed occupies only 2% of Ohio's land area it is home to roughly 10% (1.2 million) of the state's population.

## Cuyahoga River Watershed

The Cuyahoga is an American Heritage River with a Remedial Action Plan  
*Promoting Healthy Streams for Healthy Communities*

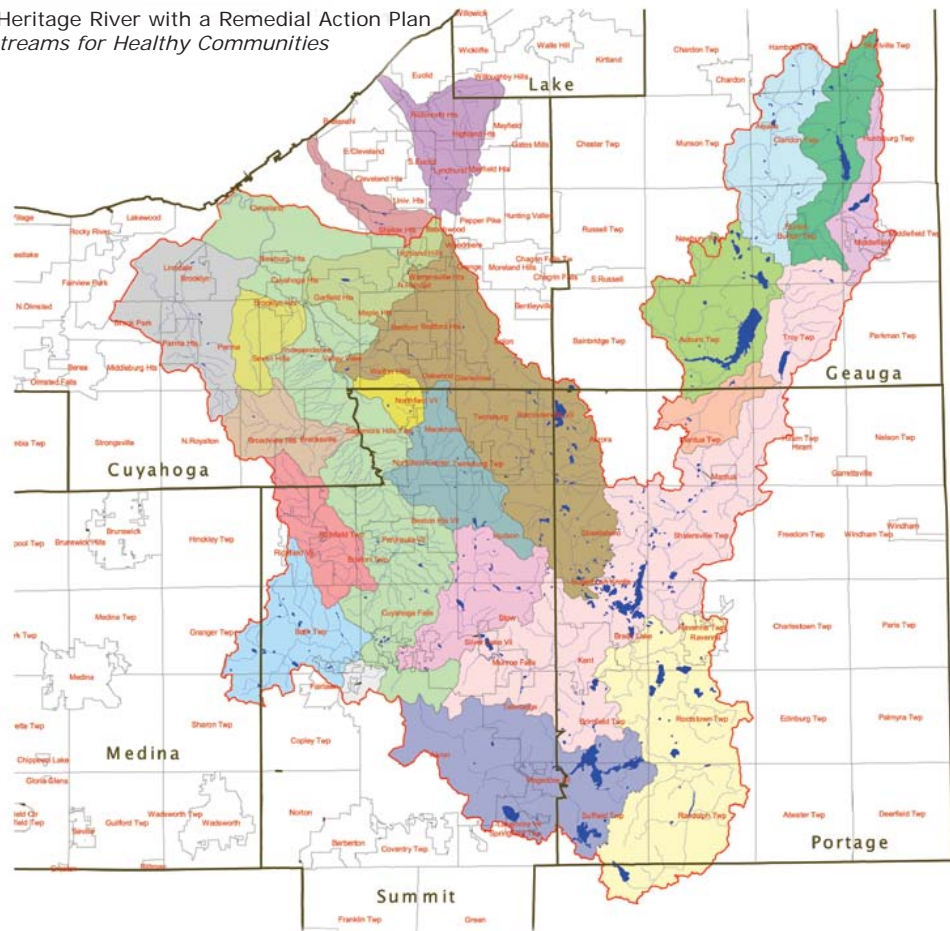
### Watershed Boundaries

Flow to Cuyahoga River:

- Big Creek\*
- West Creek\*
- Mill Creek\*
- Tinkers Creek\*
- Sagamore Creek\*
- Chippewa Creek\*
- Brandywine Creek\*
- Main Stem Cuyahoga River\*
- Furnace Run\*
- Yellow Creek\*
- Sand Run\*
- Mud Brook\*
- Little Cuyahoga\*
- West Branch
- Tare Creek
- Breakneck Creek
- East Branch
- Bridge Brook
- Black Brook
- Upper Cuyahoga
- Flow to Lake Erie:
- Doan Brook\*
- Euclid Creek\*

\* Watersheds in the RAP Area of Concern\*

Lake Erie Watershed in Ohio  
with Cuyahoga River Watershed



**The Cuyahoga River Watershed is as complex geo-politically as it is geographically.** The Cuyahoga River receives precipitation & runoff from 19 main stem tributaries, as it flows through 6 congressional districts, 5 counties, and 83 local jurisdictions. The geo-political complexity of the Cuyahoga River Watershed adds a unique dimension to achieving sustainable improvements to water quality.

**Water Quality of the Cuyahoga River is affected by how we manage development and the resulting runoff.** Non-point pollution, a major source of surface water impairment in the US, is a result of various under-managed land use activities. Nonpoint pollutants accumulate down stream. Knowing how a watershed functions can help alleviate water quality problems.

**Water adheres to the laws of physics, not political boundaries.** Streams are a part of a larger network of waterways that are affected by upstream activities. Jurisdictions within a watershed need to work together. A community that is up or downstream may negate another community's pollution reducing efforts. There are many factors in maintaining a healthy river, and it all begins with watershed protection and management.

# Healthy Streams Sustain Healthy Communities

**Effective economic development includes maintaining a healthy natural community.** When new or re-development is designed in a watershed context, homes, businesses and public uses are located and developed in a manner that is friendly to the environment. Watershed stewardship helps protect our property from flooding, keeps our drinking water safe, and provides recreational opportunities. When water resources are protected, community pride is enhanced.

## 💧 Fishing

Lake Erie Fishing contributes about \$1 billion/year. Ohio Sport fishing supports more than 22,000 jobs. Healthy spawning grounds in our rivers are necessary to sustain this industry. Keeping our streams clean will also reduce fish consumption advisories.

## 💧 Parks and Green Space

The Cuyahoga Valley National Park attracts over 3 million visitors/year. New green space can be added through the protection of stream valleys. Protection of these valleys also work to connect existing park lands to new green space and local communities.

## 💧 Drinking water

11 million people depend on Lake Erie as a source for drinking water. The effects of pollutants entering the Lake have put this vital resource at risk. Restoration measures are effective and great strides have been achieved in restoring Lake Erie. It is our community responsibility to continue our efforts to clean up and protect the rivers that flow into Lake Erie.

## 💧 Storm water management

Preserving wetlands and flood zones is an economical and effective way to manage excess storm water runoff and reduce flooding risk. Preserving riparian corridors throughout the length of a stream also helps the stream to filter runoff and reduce pollutants from entering the stream.

## 💧 Erosion and Sediment costs

Upstream erosion from under-managed construction sites leads to downstream sediment problems. Sediment: clogs fish gills; smothers bottom dwelling aquatic communities; impairs water quality by adding oxygen-depleting pollutants; increases the risk of flooding by filling in stream channels; and requires expensive dredging to keep vital shipping channels open. Working to prevent upstream erosion helps to preserve stream functionality and also reduces community costs for dredging and disposal.

## 💧 Property values

Greenspace and natural areas are highly valued. Close proximity to natural areas adds market appeal. Property values are generally higher in areas with the higher quality streams. Protecting and restoring our streams helps increase a community's appeal and stability.



Water contact advisories have increased over 50% since 1998.



Healthy streams sustain healthy communities.



Flooding from heavy rains was compounded by increased urban runoff causing extensive damage throughout the basin.



Protecting a stream valley as green space can offer multiple benefits to a community.

# Partnering for Restoration



"Ohio's beauty, our economy and the quality of life we all enjoy are inextricably linked to the quality of our state's water resources". Chris Jones- Director, Ohio EPA

**Our Role in supporting the AHR Initiative is to help our community stakeholders achieve a broad set of restoration goals:**

- ◆ Provide Access to Federal Funding Opportunities
- ◆ Restore the Environmental Health of the Cuyahoga River
- ◆ Revitalize Riverfront Communities
- ◆ Promote Sustainable Watershed Development
- ◆ Increase Recreational Opportunities
- ◆ Encourage Community-Based Conservation
- ◆ Broaden Education and Awareness and Establish a Shared Level of Knowledge about Environmental Impacts
- ◆ Support Community Partnership
- ◆ Develop Sustainable Watershed Groups



**The Cuyahoga River RAP offers:**

- ◆ Organizational, Educational and Technical Services
- ◆ Planning and Support for Implementation of Stream Remediation and Renovation Projects
- ◆ Tributary-Based Maps and Watershed Information for Local Communities
- ◆ Support for Local Public Outreach and Involvement Programs

**Watershed management** is a holistic approach to water resource protection that recognizes the interconnectedness of all the physical, chemical and biological components of the landscape, including human communities. Solutions to water quality problems are best carried out using a watershed approach, which often involves participation from multiple governmental jurisdictions.



or to help protect  
contact the RAP.

**Cuyahoga River RAP**

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