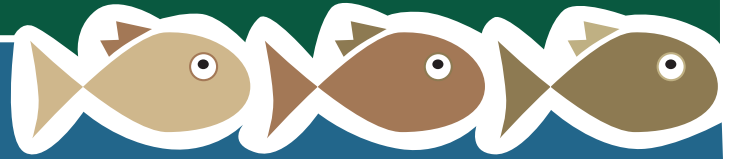


# GREEN BULKHEADS ON THE CUYAHOGA RIVER

update

September , 2008



## Green Bulkhead partners install fish habitat systems along Cuyahoga River shipping channel.

We call them CHUBs™. We hope that larval fish will call them home, at least for as long as it takes to migrate from the river's main stem to Lake Erie.

Human visitors can see the tops of emergent plant species poking out of the water along the corrugated steel bulkheads lining the Cuyahoga Rivers shipping channel. These strings of mini-habitats are there to give fish and their progeny a place to stop, rest and recharge on their trip to the lake. Four hundred propotype CHUBs have been produced and will be installed this year.

The Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization and a team of local experts developed the prototype CHUB design and alternative bulkhead restoration options. The prototype rubber baskets are produced by Custom Rubber Corp. in Cleveland.

Filtrexx Int'l. makes the mesh bags, also called "plant pillows" or "Soxx," that hold the compost/soil planting medium and plants. Filtrexx also assembles the pillows and grows the plants at its Grafton headquarters. Alex Marks and his crews have been installing the CHUBs, which are designed to fit snugly within the corrugations of the steel walls, to protect them from errant watercraft. Chains suspend the baskets at different levels, down to three feet deep, depending on the height of the plant in that particular CHUB.

The bottom of the channel, dredged to 23 feet to accomodate the massive oar boats that ply the river, is too deep for aquatic plants to grow and for fish to feed. The straight walls offer no habitat within reach of migrating fish, whose food and shelter normally reside in the top few feet of the river.

This begins the testing and evaluation phase of the Green Bulkhead project. Last year, the Cleveland Metroparks provided space in the waters of the Ohio & Erie Canal to test the planted pillows. Others were tested at Filtrexx, and "after a winter freeze," Marks reports, "they came back strong."

The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's Cuyahoga Valley Initiative is CRCPO's partner in the planning and implementation of the project. CCPC is the non-federal sponsor for the nearly half-million dollars in Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) funding from the Corps of Engineers. The City of Cleveland will sponsor sites for two hundred baskets. Said Mayor Frank G. Jackson, "With nearly seventy species of fish in the River, these underwater baskets are meant to serve as a way to help with the migration of fish whose lifecycles depend on moving downstream through the ship channel."

ArcelorMittal, recognizing the need to link environmental restoration with preservation of the important maritime shipping corridor, has been a strong sponporter of the project, providing local match funds through a major grant, as well as multiple test locations along the river. and beds of plant pillows behind rebuilt walls will be tested at four sites.



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