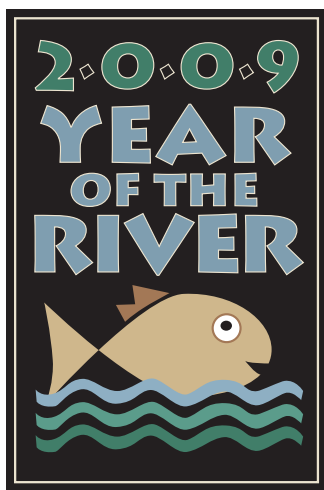


RiverNews

renewing and revitalizing the Cuyahoga River, its tributaries and watershed

Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization • Cuyahoga River RAP • Cuyahoga American Heritage River • CLEERTEC



2009 is the Year of the River. Forty Years of Cuyahoga River Recovery.

The famous 1969 fire on the Cuyahoga (not the first, not the worst, just the one everyone thinks about) will have its fortieth anniversary on June 22, 2009.

That event was a wake up call. An alarm, actually, reminding us that we are responsible for cleaning our messes and protecting our rivers and streams.

We intend to use all of 2009 as a way to get every single person in the watershed aware of and involved in stream stewardship, by getting everyone to think about streams and fish and water.

Many of the hundred-plus communities in the watershed have proclaimed 2009 Year of the River and their governments have resolved to support and encourage stewardship through their policies and operations. Cleveland's City Council, led by Councilmen Matt Zone and Brian Cummins, was the first to pass a YOTR resolution. Beachwood, Richfield Village, South Euclid, Independence, Brooklyn Heights and Parma have signed resolutions or proclamations...or both. Dozens more are in the pipeline, and we hope that all our communities will eventually express their support.

Our first goal is to commemorate The Fire of '69 as a turning point in environmental awareness and the event that sparked the Clean Water Act, the creation of the EPA, and a whole new environmental movement.

The second goal is to celebrate the progress that's been made as we reintroduce Northeast Ohio to this vital new Cuyahoga River.

Our third goal is to foster public discussion about the work that remains to fully restore the entire watershed to health, so that this collaboration can produce a blueprint for what our region can

accomplish by the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the fire, in 2019.

We'll tell the stories of heroes who worked for the cause of the river's cleanup and caretaking. We'll try to get people down to the rivers and out to the streams.

Some of our work in the coming year will be about public education. Some will be about raising funds for restoration and ongoing research, conservation, stewardship support and maintenance. Some will be about planning for sustainability. Some will be about taking action.

Our partnership of groups, organizations, businesses, institutions and individuals is growing, presenting programs and activities designed to engage new populations and train new watershed stewards for the future.

You can see the list on our website – www.riveryear.org – and stay up to date on programs, events and activities.

You can go to www.riveryear.org and visit the FotoFish Gallery for a look at fish and folks on the water, and to put yourself, your kids, your scout troop or your class on the page with our own smiley fish. Look for the fish logo throughout the year, and please support the organizations and people who support the watersheds that we depend on.

YOTR ORGANIZING MEETINGS -

Share ideas. Grab a project. Join a committee or start one.

(note: we'll be doing the same thing at both meetings, so choose one or the other)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16 •

2pm-4pm • NEORS

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District - 4747 East 49th Street, Cuyahoga Height

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17

• 10am-noon • CanalWay

Center Cleveland Metroparks Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation

Come one, come all!

RSVP to 216-241-2414 x610 or EMAIL...yotr@crppo.org

JOIN THE TEAM!

WE NEED project leaders, ambassadors and volunteers. We've got some terrific projects and ideas for programs...we just need YOU to help us make them real.

Come to an organizing meeting or contact us to get connected to a project or committee.

WE ALSO NEED Sponsors...big ones and little ones, too. Gotta feed the fish!

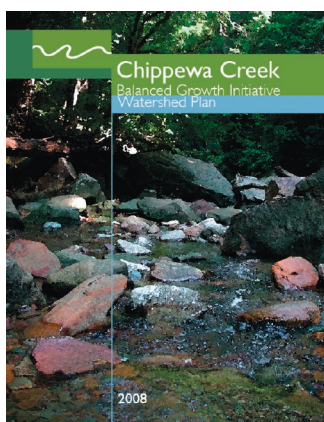
Ohio Lake Erie Commission Endorses Chippewa Creek Plan as the First Approved Lake Erie Balanced Growth Plan

On December 17, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission endorsed the Chippewa Creek BGI Plan produced by the RAP in partnership with the Chippewa Creek Watershed Planning Partnership communities of Brecksville, Broadview Heights and North Royalton, as well as the Cleveland Metroparks and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

This is the first Lake Erie BG Plan to be brought before the Lake Erie Commission for approval and endorsement. It signifies that we're not just on the right track, we're leading the pack.

The Balanced Growth Program was created to link land use and development planning to the health of watersheds and the Lake. BGI programs create Watershed Planning Partnerships in each watershed; designate Priority Conservation Areas and Priority Development Areas in each watershed, and develop model regulations to help promote best local land use practices.

An important goal is to make state policies, incentives, and other resources available to communities that support BGI watershed planning.





NEW REPORT: Prioritizing Wetlands for Restoration Potential in the Tributaries of the Cuyahoga River Area Of Concern

One of the challenges communities and developers face when trying to keep wetland mitigation projects within the affected watershed is that there may be no approved mitigation sites in that watershed.

The second big challenge is that if an appropriate site is identified, the municipality or a caretaking organization has to own the land or a conservation easement must be in place.

The third challenge is to decide which, if any, existing wetlands in the watershed would be the most important ones to capture for the purpose of making into a mitigation site.

To address these issues, and to make the process of in-watershed mitigation more likely and more effective, the RAP's wetland ecologist and GIS expert, Marie Sullivan, and watershed coordinator Chuck Hambly led the

effort to construct lists of the top ten wetlands in each subwatershed.

The project included development of a state-of-the-art ranking model to identify the "most important" wetlands in each tributary watershed of the Cuyahoga River AOC. The criteria for the rankings involve wetland performance, size, location and restoration potential – costs, access and other elements.

The introduction and overview of this new report is available for downloading at our website, www.crcpo.org.

Detailed information for each tributary watershed will be posted in the weeks to come. In the meantime, if you absolutely cannot live another day without data for a particular trib, give Marie a call at 216-241-2414.



CHUBs Installed and Open for Business, Host First Visitor

The first batch of CHUBs (Cuyahoga Habitat Underwater Baskets) were installed in late summer, and at least one fish was seen stopping by to enjoy the new facilities.

Before the plants went dormant and weather precluded doing so, one basket was lifted from the water and checked for activity. Sure enough, there was a fish...species unidentified...in the basket.

Although the visiting fish declined to comment on his satisfaction with the amenities, or to identify his home stream, the management was pleased that the fish had found the CHUB.

The partners in the project now wait for spring, when they'll have an idea of how well the plants recover from winter and how well the rubber baskets have endured their first Cleveland winter. This will mark the first of the multi-year test period for the wall-hung version of the Green Bulkhead habitat improvement project.

In the meantime, other cities with maritime-based industries are watching and hoping to host test installations of their own.



CONGRATULATIONS to...

DAN BEST, Geauga Park District Senior Naturalist, winner of the Master Interpretive Manager Award from the National Association for Interpretation at its conference in November. The award is given to one who demonstrates "a mastery of interpretive technique, site or program and staff management, and a respected ability to pass these skills on to others." If you want to learn about the headwaters of the Cuyahoga, you can't do better than to arrange a canoe trip with Dan.

And Last But Not Least...

The BIG CREEK Balanced Growth WATERSHED PLAN is in its final stages. We've been working with Friends of Big Creek, with financial support from an ODNR Coastal Management Assistance Grant and matching funds from the watershed localities.

The BRANDYWINE CREEK Balanced Growth WATERSHED PLAN is just getting underway. The Ohio Lake Erie Commission approved a \$15,000 grant for the project at their September meeting.

CRCPO Executive Director Jim White will head to Chicago to talk about CHUBs at the January 22-23 Great Lakes Urban Habitat Restoration Symposium presented by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and hosted by the Chicago Park District.

Jane Goodman will speak to Tri-C's Lifelong Learning students in January and March. If you'd like a speaker for your group, contact us at 216-241-2414 x610 or email goodmanj@cuyahogariverrap.org.

We wish you a HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR (of the River)...Go Fish!