



Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

Photo: Tom Cawley



Brandywine Falls

Photo: Kevin C. O'Neil

Crooked River, Beautiful Valley

“Ka-ih-ogh-ha” American Indians called it — crooked. And crooked it is, as it twists and turns through its short 90 miles. The Cuyahoga River begins 30 miles east of its mouth in Cleveland, and flows in a great “U” along the base of the escarpment on which the city of Akron sits. Deep forests, rolling hills, and open farmlands frame the river valley. Hamlets with historic homes and barns dot the area, giving a sense of times past. Locks, spillways, an aqueduct, and other canal features provide clues to a brief but important period in America’s transportation history.

The Valley Through Time
Sculpted long ago by water, glaciers, and the persistent forces of weather, the valley’s diverse landscape includes river floodplain, steep and gentle valley walls, tributaries and their ravines, and upland plateaus.

The Cuyahoga River has long attracted people and wildlife. People have lived here for nearly 12,000 years, and they left a legacy of archeological sites throughout the valley. An important transportation route for American Indians, this area was deemed neutral territory by historic tribes, so all might travel on it safely from the cold waters of the Great Lakes to the short portage across the divide to the Tuscarawas River that drained into the Ohio River and the warm waters south.

European explorers and trappers arrived in the 17th century, and early surveyors put the Cuyahoga River on the map. News about the valley spread. Traders and settlers moved in and soon appreciated the river’s potential as a source of livelihood, as the American Indians before them had. The Moravian village of Pilgrerruh, the first, but short-lived European settlement in the valley, was located near the confluence of Tinkers Creek and the river. In 1786, Connecticut “reserved” 3,500,000 acres in northeastern Ohio for settlement by its citizens. Known as the Western Reserve, it still has a distinctive New England look. Ten years later Moses Cleaveland arrived to serve as a land agent for the Connecticut Land Company and helped lay out the city that bears his name. By treaty between the young United States and Indian tribes, land west of the river was Indian territory until 1805. In 1810 homesteader Jonathan Hale noted that the land was as “good as anyone could wish for.”

The Ohio & Erie Canal opened in 1827 between Cleveland and Akron. It paralleled and was partly watered by the Cuyahoga River, and it replaced the river as the primary transportation artery. An engineering feat, the canal was far more than a new waterway—it was a boon to the development of commerce in the Midwest. The towns of Boston and Peninsula boomed with canal-related industry. Cleveland and Akron flourished. More people moved in, looking for jobs and fortunes. By the 1860s, railroads had become prevalent and within a few years replaced the canal as the major route for commerce, industry, and travel. Running through the valley, the railroad led to the eventual demise of the canal, yet contributed to the growth

of the cities. As the cities grew, the Cuyahoga Valley took on a new significance. The valley became a place of refuge—a place to refresh body and spirit.

A National Park For All People
Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) preserves 33,000 acres along 22 miles of this crooked river between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. In the early 1960s spreading development threatened to take over this valley. Individual citizens joined forces with state and local governments to save the greenspace and historic features. Their efforts crossed paths with the National Park Service, which was then establishing urban recreation areas as a way to bring national parks to people living in cities. In 1974, Congress created Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area as an urban park of the National Park System. In 2000, the recreation area became Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The National Park Service manages the park in cooperation with others who own property within its boundaries, including Cleveland Metroparks and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County, both of which administer several units within CVNP. Together they protect the natural landscape, preserve remnants of the area’s human history, and provide a place where you can relax, play, and learn new things in a beautiful outdoor setting.



Photo: Stanley Shields

Not long, nor wide, nor deep, the Cuyahoga River has a history that makes it important beyond its size.



Enjoying History and Nature in the Valley



A refreshing break under the Everett Road covered bridge.

Photo: Tom Jones

The Valley Today
The park surrounds the Village of Peninsula, which attracts visitors with its history, architecture, shops, galleries, and restaurants. Peninsula is also a popular starting point for recreation in CVNP. You can board the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad for a sightseeing excursion of the park, rent bicycles, take a stroll along the Towpath Trail, or begin an extended hike along the Buckeye Trail.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is also a part of something greater, the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor. The corridor extends 110 miles from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, uniting communities that share a common history of influence from the canal but express that history in individual ways. The canal towpath, CanalWay Ohio National Scenic Byway, and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad are the corridor’s central spine and offer opportunities to explore history and nature along their lengths.

The Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center is a residential facility featuring watershed-based curricula for primary and middle school children. It has explorers and art camps in summer and weekend activities year-round. For information about the center and programs for school and scout groups, call 330-657-2796 or visit www.cveec.org.

Natural Diversity
What comes to mind when you think of CVNP? The Towpath Trail or Brandywine Falls? Blossom Music Center or a historic village? These are all special to CVNP, but the real attraction is the park’s silent partner—nature. Everywhere you go in the park, and at any time, you will find nature’s beauty exhibited with remarkable fashion. Wildflowers wear coats of many colors; droplets in waterfalls cast rainbows in the mist; and autumn leaves and snow transform the landscape with their own decorations.

Wetlands, forests, fields in various stages of succession, and other habitats enable a surprising diversity of wildlife to thrive in a place so close to urban areas. White-tailed deer and Canada geese are common sights. Even the elusive coyote lives here. American beaver (right), missing from the ecosystem for nearly 150 years, has returned. Its industrious dam building has created new wetland habitats for many other animals. Cool ravines provide microhabitats for hemlock, yellow birch, red-breasted nuthatches, and wildlife commonly found in a more northern climate.

Tree species abound, especially mixed deciduous forests and pockets of evergreens. Numerous wildflowers and plant varieties range from spring



Photo: Jim Rootzel

woodland wildflowers, such as hepaticas and bloodroot, to late summer asters and goldenrod in open areas. Yellow and blue irises, cattails, and the American lotus bloom in wetlands in late spring and early summer.

Not to be missed is the stunning view of Tinkers Creek Gorge, the park’s National Natural Landmark. The gorge overlook is along the winding Gorge Parkway in the Bedford Reservation of Cleveland Metroparks.

Great blue herons and more than 100 other species of birds nest in the valley. To see this imposing 4-foot-tall bird with 7-foot wing span become airborne is always a thrill. Its spring courtship behavior—bowing, bill snapping, and raising of feathers—commands the most excitement, however. At their rookeries high in the trees you may catch their showy “twig offerings.” Males present twigs to females, which, if accepted, are the first used to repair or build nests. This strengthens the pair’s bond, and a new family will begin.



Photo: Kevin C. O'Neil

Attractions in the Valley

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad runs between Cleveland and Canton and offers excursions year-round. You may select from a variety of choices: leisurely trips with unscheduled stops to view wildlife and wetlands, bike and hike trips with a baggage car equipped to carry bicycles, trips with rangers on board who discuss the natural features and the history of the Cuyahoga Valley, and trips to Hale Farm & Village. In the winter excursions include scenic trips through snow-covered forests and along the Cuyahoga River, holiday shoppers’ trips, and special programs for children.

Scheduled trips to Akron and Canton include service to area attractions such as Adventure Place, Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens, Quaker Square, and the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Future expansion in the railroad’s operation will take the train to downtown Cleveland, providing access to shopping, parks, and museums, including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and the Great Lakes Science Center. For information about scenic rail excursions and fees, call 800-468-4070 or visit www.cvsr.com.



Hale Farm Homestead

Photo: Kevin C. O'Neil



Photo: Tom Jones



All aboard! Explore the natural and cultural wonders of CVNP while riding the rails.

Here are just some of the attractions within Cuyahoga Valley National Park. For more information, call 216-524-1497.

Hale Farm & Village is owned and operated by the Western Reserve Historical Society. The farm portion centers around the 1826 brick farmstead of Jonathan Hale, one of the earliest settlers in the Western Reserve. Historic buildings from the region constitute the Western Reserve Village, located across from Hale Farm. Through first-person interpretation, potters, blacksmiths, spinners, weavers, candlemakers, and glassblowers demonstrate crafts of the mid-19th century. For more information, call 330-666-3711 or visit www.wrhs.org/sites/hale.htm.

Blossom Music Center offers summer evening concerts that fill the air with classical and pop

music. The Cleveland Orchestra spends its summers here and offers a variety of programs. Come early and enjoy a picnic dinner or take a relaxing walk before the concert begins. The natural, grass amphitheater seats more than 15,000 people. For information about performances and tickets, call the Cleveland Orchestra at 216-231-1111 and Blossom Music Center at 330-920-8040 or visit www.blossommusic.com.

Porthouse Theatre is owned and operated by Kent State University. Summer stock includes Shakespeare, Broadway musicals, opera, and drama. For information on performances and tickets, call 330-929-4416 or visit www.theatre.kent.edu.

A Guide to Cuyahoga Valley



I have admired the rugged fiords of Norway and the bald peaks of Yosemite. But I gain strength each day at home from the beauty of our own Cuyahoga Valley.

James Snowden Jackson

Planning Your Visit

Canal Visitor Center Exhibits illustrate the 12,000 years of history in the valley, including the history of the canal. Located at the intersection of Canal and Hillside roads in Valley View, the center is open year-round, except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. For information, call voice/TDD 216-524-1497.

Frazee House Built in 1826 this is one of the oldest homes in the valley. Exhibits explain the architecture of the building and history of the family. It is on Canal Road south of Canal Visitor Center. Hours are limited.

Boston Store Visitors to this restored 1836 structure on the canal towpath at Boston Mills Road enjoy interactive museum exhibits on the craft of building canal boats. Hours are seasonal.

Happy Days Visitor Center This visitor center offers information and many activities. You can attend concerts and special events or hike on nearby trails. It is on Ohio 303, east of Peninsula and west of Ohio 8. Hours are seasonal.

Hunt Farm Visitor Information Center Hunt Farm is typical of the small family farms that once dotted the Cuyahoga Valley. Here you can get information about park activities and see exhibits about the area's agricultural history. Hours are seasonal.

Peninsula Depot Visitor Center The depot serves as a welcome center for the park, Village of Peninsula, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor. Hours are seasonal.

Lots of Activities Ranger-led tours, nature walks, and cultural arts programs are available year-round. Rangers can help you plan your visit. For a daily listing of activities offered by organizations in the valley visit www.dayinthevalley.com.

Accommodations CVNP operates no campgrounds. Ask at any visitor center for a list of nearby campgrounds and accommodations. The Inn at Brandywine Falls and Hostelling International Stanford House provide overnight accommodations in historic farmhouses.

Accessibility The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, many activities, and the visitor centers are accessible for visitors with disabilities. Ask at a visitor center for Access CVNP.

You Can Join In Many of the helpful people you meet here are volunteers. For information about volunteering, call 440-546-5996. To join the park's non-profit support group, call 330-657-2909.

More Information Cuyahoga Valley National Park
15610 Vaughn Road
Brecksville, OH 44141-3018
216-524-1497. TDD users call 800-750-0750 for the Ohio Relay Service
www.nps.gov/cuva

National Park Service website: www.nps.gov



Canal Visitor Center

So Many Trails



Bicyclists on the Towpath Trail

It would take you a long time to explore the more than 125 miles of hiking, skiing, bicycling, and horseback-riding trails within CVNP. Hiking along the lush hemlock ravines in Virginia Kendall Park, skiing in the moonlight along the Tree Farm Trail, or walking a short way along the Brandywine Falls boardwalk all offer rewarding experiences. For information about trails and regulations, and to purchase maps and guide books, stop at a visitor center.

Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail If anything says CVNP, it is the Towpath Trail, which follows the historic Ohio & Erie Canal route through the Cuyahoga River valley. This fully accessible trail provides a delightful outing for people of all ages and abilities. Be watchful for wildlife, especially in early morning, as you pass meadows, forests, and wetlands. There are picnic areas, restrooms, and train access points along the way. From the Towpath Trail, you can explore nearby natural and historic sites and connect to other trails.

Bike and Hike Trail Nearly 16 miles of this trail border the park. Ideal for family bike rides, this asphalt trail is managed by Metro Parks, Serving Summit County. A connector trail near Holzhauer Road provides access to the Towpath Trail.

Buckeye Trail A portion of the 1,200-mile Buckeye Trail passes through CVNP. You can follow this blue-blazed trail through hardwood forests and fields, across streams, and into steep ravines for a strenuous but rewarding hike.

Horse Trails Viewing the CVNP landscape from horseback is like no other experience. You can take a 20-minute ride or spend the day traversing the Wetmore and Riding Run bridge trails or the Cleveland Metroparks Bedford and Brecksville reservations trails. The Valley Trail connects these southern and northern bridge trails. Horse trailer parking areas are provided at the Everett Road Covered Bridge, Wetmore, and Station Road Bridge trailheads. There are no horse rentals available in the park.

Summer Activities

Summer is the time to get outside and appreciate life. The longer hours of daylight allow you an early morning jog along the Towpath Trail or a chance to enjoy an outdoor concert at the park's Howe Meadow or at Blossom Music Center. For a refreshing change, why not go on an evening picnic, take your children fishing, or sign up for a photography class?

Picnicking Whether you need an area large enough for a family reunion or an intimate spot for two, you'll enjoy picnicking in the park. There are picnic areas scattered throughout CVNP; many provide grills and all have tables. Alcohol is prohibited in CVNP. Covered shelters may be reserved for a fee. Call 216-524-1497.

Golfing Four public golf courses are in CVNP. Cleveland Metroparks offers Shawnee Hills in the Bedford Reservation and Sleepy Hollow in the Brecksville Reservation. Other, privately operated golf courses include Astorhurst in the Bedford Reservation and Brandywine, with 9-hole and

18-hole courses, on Akron Peninsula Road, south of Peninsula.

Fishing Introduce your children to the sport of fishing at one of the park's ponds, where you may catch bluegill and bass. Anglers need an Ohio fishing license. Boats with motors are not allowed on park ponds. Contact a visitor center for a fishing brochure with a list of ponds and regulations.

Canoeing and Kayaking There are no watercraft rentals within the park. Water sports are not recommended because water quality in the Cuyahoga River varies. Stop at a visitor center or call for information.

Swimming Please be aware that the water quality in the Cuyahoga River varies, and swimming is not advised. There are no lifeguards on duty. You may swim at the privately owned Dover Lake Waterpark. Call 330-467-SWIM or visit www.doverlake.com.



A ranger-led tour in the Ledges

Winter Activities



Sledders at Kendall Hills

The park is a special place in winter, whether you fancy sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or snuggling under a blanket for a horse-drawn sleigh ride. The National Park Service, Metroparks, and other public and private recreational facilities offer a variety of winter opportunities. Request the *Winter Sports* brochure for details.

Kendall Lake The Kendall Lake Winter Sports Center is the hub of winter activities in the park. The center, built of native chestnut and stone by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, is open on weekends in January and February. It offers programs, maps and information, and a cozy place to relax with a cup of hot chocolate. Nearby are the Kendall Hills for sledding and tobogganing, cross-country skiing trails, winter hiking, and snowshoeing. Snowshoe and limited cross-country ski rentals are available. Overlooking Kendall Lake, the center is on Truxell Road, east of Akron Peninsula Road.

Sledding Some of the best sledding around is at Kendall Hills on Quick Road. You may park at Pine Hollow, Crow Foot Gully, and Little Meadow lots. Parking is prohibited on Quick Road. The hills are open for sledding during daylight hours only.

Cross-country Ski Trails Miles of open space and cross-country trails in the park are suitable for both beginning or advanced skiers. You can rent equipment nearby and ski into the park or at Kendall Lake. Ask a ranger or at a visitor center for information about trails and trail conditions.

Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resorts The resorts feature 16 lifts, grooming and complete snowmaking coverage on all slopes, ski and snowboard rentals, snow tubing, instruction, and night skiing. Ask about season passes and special programs for adults and children. For information, call 330-467-2242 or visit www.bmbw.com.

For A Safe Visit

To ensure that your visit here is safe and filled with good memories, please observe these regulations.

● Alcohol is prohibited in the park.

● Do not drink water from the streams and ponds. The Cuyahoga River has hazards and unsafe water. Swimming, wading, canoeing, and kayaking are not advised.

● Pets must be on a leash at all times.

● Do not disturb any wildlife, pick or damage plants, or remove natural or historical features.

● People of all ages and abilities use the Towpath Trail; please be courteous. Give clear warning before passing on the left. Yield to horses and avoid startling them.

The rangers are here to help you. Please report all accidents to a ranger immediately. In case of an emergency, contact a ranger or call 911.

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