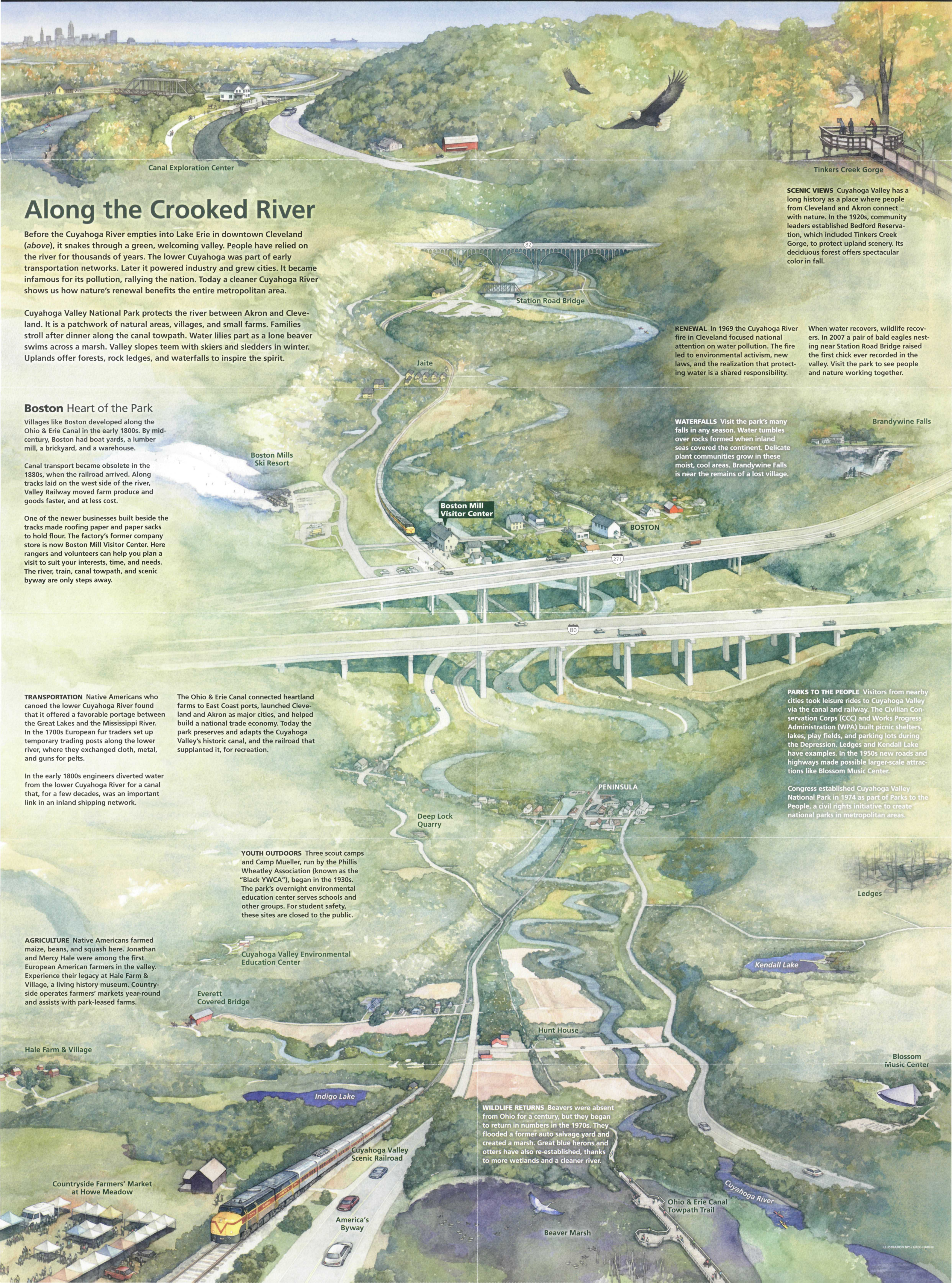




Along the Crooked River

Before the Cuyahoga River empties into Lake Erie in downtown Cleveland (above), it snakes through a green, welcoming valley. People have relied on the river for thousands of years. The lower Cuyahoga was part of early transportation networks. Later it powered industry and grew cities. It became infamous for its pollution, rallying the nation. Today a cleaner Cuyahoga River shows us how nature's renewal benefits the entire metropolitan area.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park protects the river between Akron and Cleveland. It is a patchwork of natural areas, villages, and small farms. Families stroll after dinner along the canal towpath. Water lilies part as a lone beaver swims across a marsh. Valley slopes teem with skiers and sledders in winter. Uplands offer forests, rock ledges, and waterfalls to inspire the spirit.

Boston Heart of the Park

Villages like Boston developed along the Ohio & Erie Canal in the early 1800s. By mid-century, Boston had boat yards, a lumber mill, a brickyard, and a warehouse.

Canal transport became obsolete in the 1880s, when the railroad arrived. Along tracks laid on the west side of the river, Valley Railway moved farm produce and goods faster, and at less cost.

One of the newer businesses built beside the tracks made roofing paper and paper sacks to hold flour. The factory's former company store is now Boston Mill Visitor Center. Here rangers and volunteers can help you plan a visit to suit your interests, time, and needs. The river, train, canal towpath, and scenic byway are only steps away.

TRANSPORTATION Native Americans who canoed the lower Cuyahoga River found that it offered a favorable portage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. In the 1700s European fur traders set up temporary trading posts along the lower river, where they exchanged cloth, metal, and guns for pelts.

In the early 1800s engineers diverted water from the lower Cuyahoga River for a canal that, for a few decades, was an important link in an inland shipping network.

The Ohio & Erie Canal connected heartland farms to East Coast ports, launched Cleveland and Akron as major cities, and helped build a national trade economy. Today the park preserves and adapts the Cuyahoga Valley's historic canal, and the railroad that supplanted it, for recreation.

YOUTH OUTDOORS Three scout camps and Camp Mueller, run by the Phillis Wheatley Association (known as the "Black YWCA"), began in the 1930s. The park's overnight environmental education center serves schools and other groups. For student safety, these sites are closed to the public.

AGRICULTURE Native Americans farmed maize, beans, and squash here. Jonathan and Mercy Hale were among the first European American farmers in the valley. Experience their legacy at Hale Farm & Village, a living history museum. Countryside operates farmers' markets year-round and assists with park-leased farms.

WILDLIFE RETURNS Beavers were absent from Ohio for a century, but they began to return in numbers in the 1970s. They flooded a former auto salvage yard and created a marsh. Great blue herons and otters have also re-established, thanks to more wetlands and a cleaner river.

SCENIC VIEWS Cuyahoga Valley has a long history as a place where people from Cleveland and Akron connect with nature. In the 1920s, community leaders established Bedford Reservation, which included Tinkers Creek Gorge, to protect upland scenery. Its deciduous forest offers spectacular color in fall.

RENEWAL In 1969 the Cuyahoga River fire in Cleveland focused national attention on water pollution. The fire led to environmental activism, new laws, and the realization that protecting water is a shared responsibility.

When water recovers, wildlife recovers. In 2007 a pair of bald eagles nesting near Station Road Bridge raised the first chick ever recorded in the valley. Visit the park to see people and nature working together.

WATERFALLS Visit the park's many falls in any season. Water tumbles over rocks formed when inland seas covered the continent. Delicate plant communities grow in these moist, cool areas. Brandywine Falls is near the remains of a lost village.

PARKS TO THE PEOPLE Visitors from nearby cities took leisure rides to Cuyahoga Valley via the canal and railway. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) built picnic shelters, lakes, play fields, and parking lots during the Depression. Ledges and Kendall Lake have examples. In the 1950s new roads and highways made possible larger-scale attractions like Blossom Music Center.

Congress established Cuyahoga Valley National Park in 1974 as part of Parks to the People, a civil rights initiative to create national parks in metropolitan areas.

Visit the Valley

Experience nature, discover history, and pursue recreation in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Four arteries—automobile byway, canal towpath, scenic railroad, and river—extend north and south. Country roads and trails branch east and west toward ravines, falls, forests, lakes, and farmsteads.



Start at the heart of the park
Boston Mill Visitor Center is open daily, with hours that vary seasonally. Rangers, volunteers, and exhibits can answer questions and help orient you. If you arrive before or after hours, see the exhibits in the courtyard.

The train drops passengers off at the station by the main parking lot. Cross the river (east) to reach the canal towpath and see the village of Boston (above). Find snacks and lunch at Trail Mix (store open seasonally). Relax at a shady table as you plan your time in the park.

ROAD



Ohio & Erie Canalway Byway
Attend lock demonstrations in summer (above) at the Canal Exploration Center, a short drive north. Follow the byway signs.

TRAIL



Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail
The popular trail is firm and flat. Mules once walked here as they towed heavy boats.

RAIL



Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad
A scenic excursion ticket allows you to hop on and off the train. Kayakers, cyclists, and through hikers can use the seasonal one-way shuttle service.

RIVER



Cuyahoga River
If you're a skilled paddler you can experience the valley from your kayak or canoe. Travel through the national park on the Cuyahoga River Water Trail at your own risk. Check cuyahogariverwatertrail.org first for important safety information and current access points.



Soon after civic leaders in Cleveland and Akron created Ohio's first two county park systems, they acquired land in Cuyahoga Valley. The first parks in the valley were established in the 1920s. As development pressures grew, advocates called for federal protection. Success came in 1974 when Congress designated the national park.

Landscape Upland streams carve steep ravines into the valley's forested slopes (above, a visitor at Ledges). In the floodplain, the river winds with relative freedom for 20 miles, past natural features, small villages, and historic farmsteads. Restoring natural flow is vital to healthy waterways.

Wildlife Great blue herons gather in nesting colonies along Bath Road. Bald eagles soar above Station Road Bridge. Muskrats, beavers, and otters swim in Beaver Marsh. Turtles and snakes bask on logs in the canal.

Preservation Dive into local history. Some buildings represent the canal era of the early to mid-1800s. Mills, play fields, trails, lakes, camps, and an education center are the legacies of industry, philanthropy, and Depression-era federal programs.

Lodging and Events
Spend the night at a historic house in the park, or camp at a state or county park. Visit forvcnp.org/lodging. To reserve a picnic shelter for your group, visit recreation.gov. Permits are required for weddings, special events, commercial photography, and filming. Use the "reserve" button at www.nps.gov/cuva.

Things to Do Pick up a free quarterly *Valley Guide* at the visitor center for a list of programs at over 50 locations within the park. Choose from leisurely or fast-paced ranger-led hikes, workshops, concerts, and other programs for all ages. The park has many trails, some open to horses and mountain bikes. Leashed pets are allowed on most trails.

National Heritage Area (right)
The park is part of the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area. For information visit ohioanderiecanalway.com.

Partners Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Countryside, and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, check the *Valley Guide*, visit our website, ask a ranger, or call. For advice from a specialist, email cuva_access@nps.gov.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks, visit www.nps.gov.

Emergencies call 911 or 440-546-5945

More Information
330-657-2752
www.nps.gov/cuva

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National Park Foundation.
Join the park community.
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Great Blue Heron with stick.

