

# Cuyahoga American Heritage River

USDA Forest Service  
Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry

*Bringing forestry to the people through collaborative stewardship*



**Description:** The American Heritage Rivers Initiative is a program to help communities restore, protect, and revitalize rivers, neighborhoods, and waterfronts. The initiative integrates State, local, Federal, and private expertise to help the community reach its goals, including natural resource management, environmental protection, economic development, and cultural preservation. The *Cuyahoga American Heritage River Initiative* is led by a core group of organizations called the American Heritage River Partners for the Cuyahoga.

## Key Issues:

- The Northeastern Area is the Federal sponsoring agency that coordinates resources and provides assistance to the "River Navigator," the liaison between the partners and Federal agencies.
- Partners and local communities design and implement projects.
- USDA funding is planned through 2004, and then the program will be self-supporting.

## Accomplishments:

- **River Navigator** – Jim White of the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) was designated as the Cuyahoga AHR River Navigator from November 2002 to the present.
- **Education** – A river symposium, three community workshops, and more than 100 programs have been offered to promote the watershed and its history, water quality, and current opportunities.
- **Public Outreach** – Developed relationships with local communities, governments, and civic groups and established a list of action projects.
- **Projects** – Removed an abandoned railroad trestle; completed a land management study for the Geauga County Planning Commission; submitted grant applications for watershed improvement, wetland inventory, land use planning, wetland restoration, and economic revitalization; and participated in the NASA Glenn Research Center and Ohio-View Universities to sponsor the Scientific Outreach and Applications Using Remote Sensing (SOARS) Program.
- **Partners** – Partnered with the U.S. GA and U.S. EPA to develop a GIS transportation decision tool; the National Park Service, Ohio Canal Corridor, and Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to promote coordinated approaches to green space and park protection and restoration; and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a fish haven project in navigation channels.

## Budget History:

| <b>Cuyahoga American Heritage River Program</b> |                |                |               |               |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| (\$ Thousands)                                  |                |                |               |               |
|   | <b>FY 2001</b> | <b>FY 2002</b> | <b>FY2003</b> | <b>FY2004</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | \$120          | \$120          | \$120         | \$120         |

## Future Direction:

- Promote education and outreach to improve understanding of watershed and restoration issues.
- Promote local capacity building to increase the number of effective tributary watershed organizations.
- Organize local efforts to increase the number of remediation and restoration projects completed.
- Continue USDA Forest Service support of River Partners so the initiative will be self-sufficient and locally funded within 2 years.

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