

Cuyahoga Valley

Cuyahoga Valley
National Recreation Area
Ohio

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Official Map and Guide



Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

Photo: Tom Cawley



Brandywine Falls

Photo: Kevin C. O'Neil

Crooked River, Beautiful Valley



Photo: Stanley Shields

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



"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 glaciers and the persistent forces of weather, the valley landscape is a diversity of 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 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 Pilgeruh, 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

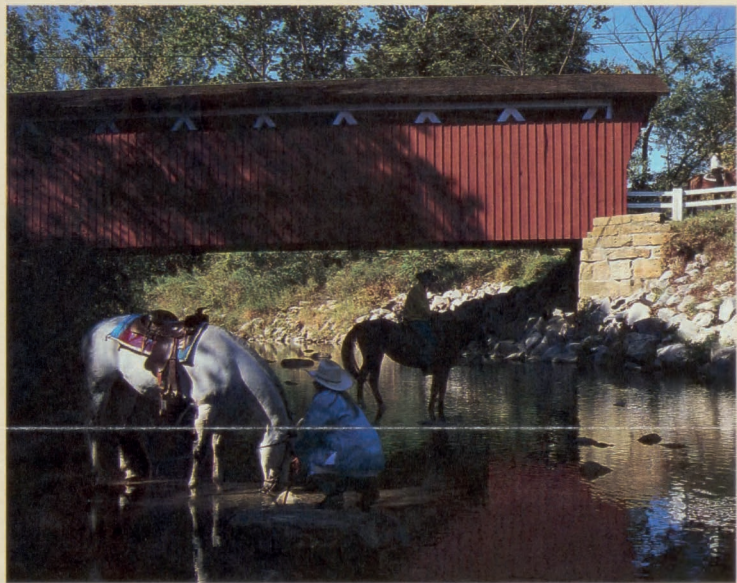
the cities. As the cities grew, the Cuyahoga Valley took on a new significance. The valley became a place of refuge — a place to refresh body and spirit.

A Park For All People
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA) 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 CVNRA as an urban park of the National Park System. 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 CVNRA. 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: Kevin C. O'Neil

Enjoying History and Nature in the Valley



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 CVNRA. 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 Recreation Area also contributes to something greater — the Ohio & Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. CVNRA, in the heart of the corridor, unites Cleveland and Akron, which have active corridor preservation programs. The corridor continues 87 miles south to Zoar, Ohio. It provides continuity and an expansion of the historic connections of natural resources and industry — the lake, river, canal, and railroad — that made this valley and region prosperous.

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

Natural Diversity
What comes to mind when you think of CVNRA? The Towpath Trail or Brandywine Falls? Blossom Music Center or a historic village? These are all special to CVNRA, but the real attraction is the park's silent partner—nature. Everywhere you go in the park, and at anytime, 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. Whitetail deer and Canada geese are common sights. Ever, 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 other animals. Cool ravines provide microhabitats for hemlock, yellow birch, red-breasted nuthatches, and wildlife commonly found in a more northern climate.

Covered by mixed deciduous forests and pockets of evergreens, tree species are abundant. Wildflowers and plant varieties range from spring



Photo: Jim Roetzel

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 are among the more than 100 species of birds that nest in the valley. Watching this imposing 4-foot-tall bird with a wing span of 7 feet become airborne is always a thrill. But, its courtship behavior in spring—bowing, bill snapping, and raised feathers—commands the most excitement. At their rookeries high in the trees you may catch a performance of 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 begins.

Attractions in the Valley

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad runs between Cleveland to Akron 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 and Village. In the winter excursions include scenic trips through snow-covered forests and along the Cuyahoga River; holiday shoppers' trips; ski trains; and special programs for children.

Scheduled trips to Akron include service to Inventure Place, the National Inventors Hall of Fame. Future growth 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.



Hale Farm Homestead

Photo: Kevin C. O'Neil



Photo: Tom Jones



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

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

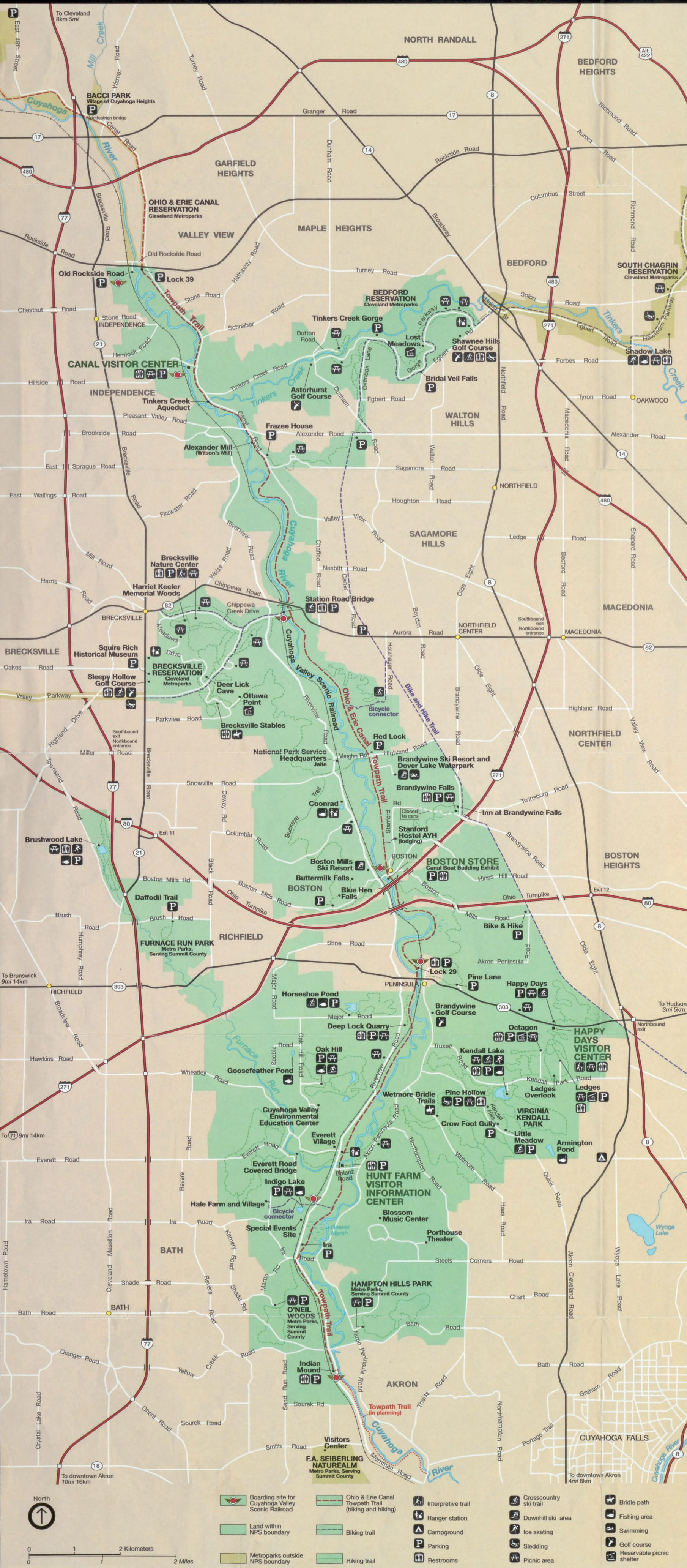
Hale Farm & Village is owned and operated by the Western Reserve Historical Society. The farm portion centers around the 1826 brick farmstead of Jonathan Hale, one of the earliest settlers in the Western Reserve. Historic buildings from the region constitute the Western Reserve Village, located across from Hale Farm. Potters, blacksmiths, spinners, weavers, candlemakers, and glassblowers demonstrate crafts of the early 19th century. For information, call 330-666-3711.

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 Special Attractions at 216-566-8184.

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.

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 Here you will find information and publications. Exhibits illustrate the 12,000 years of history in the Valley, including the history of the canal. The canal-era building once served canal boat passengers waiting to pass through Ohio & Erie Canal Lock 38. Canal lock demonstrations are conducted seasonally on weekends by National Park Service staff and by volunteers wearing period costumes. Located at the intersection of Canal and Hillside roads in Valley View, the center is open year-round, except January 1, Thanksgiving, and December 25. For information, call voice/TDD 216-524-1497.

Boston Store Visitors to this restored 1836 structure enjoy interactive museum exhibits on the craft of building canal boats. A full-scale canal boat stern, historic tools, and artifacts are featured. It is on the canal towpath at Boston Mills Road, in the village of Boston. Hours are limited in off seasons. Call 216-524-1497.

Happy Days Visitor Center This visitor center offers information and many activities. Here you can attend concerts, lectures, plays, and special events. Or, you may hike on the trails that are nearby. It is on Ohio 303, east of Peninsula and west of Ohio 8. Hours are limited in off seasons. For information, call voice/TDD 330-650-4636.

Hunt Farm Visitor Information Center The Hunt Farm property 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. Next to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and near the intersection of Bolanz and Riverview roads, it is an ideal starting point for a hike or a bicycle ride. Call 330-650-4636.

Lots of Activities Ranger-led tours, nature walks, and demonstrations are available year-round. Rangers can help you plan your visit. You

can get a quarterly *Schedule of Events* with a list of events and activities at any park visitor center.

Accommodations CVNRA operates no campgrounds. There are campgrounds and accommodations nearby; ask for a list at any visitor center. The Inn at Brandywine Falls and the American Youth Hostel Stanford House use historic farmhouses to provide overnight accommodations.

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 CVNRA*.

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 citizens support group, call Cuyahoga Valley Association at 330-657-2909.

Information Write: Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 15610 Vaughn Road, Brecksville, OH 44141-3018, or call 216-524-1497. Find information at www.nps.gov/cuva/ on the Internet.



Canal Visitor Center

So Many Trails



It would take you a long time to explore the more than 125 miles of hiking, skiing, bicycling, and horseback riding trails within CVNRA. Hiking along the lush hemlock ravines in the Virginia Kendall unit, 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, regulations, and to purchase maps and guide books, stop at a visitor center.

Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail If there is anything that says CVNRA, it is the Towpath Trail. This 20-mile trail follows the historic route of the Ohio & Erie Canal through the Cuyahoga River valley, from Lock 39 at Rockside Road in the north to Indian Mound near Bath Road in the south. The fully accessible trail of crushed limestone provides a delightful outing for people of all ages and abilities. Keep your eyes open for wildlife, especially early in the 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 crushed stone trail is managed through a partnership with Cleveland Metroparks and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County. A connector trail near Holzhauser Road provides access to the Towpath Trail.

Buckeye Trail A portion of the 1,200 mile Buckeye Trail passes through CVNRA. 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 CVNRA 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 trails or Cleveland Metroparks Bedford and Brecksville reservations trails. Horse trailer parking areas are located at the trailhead at Wetmore Road. 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 Special Events Site 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 CVNRA; many provide grills and all have tables. Alcohol is prohibited in CVNRA. Covered shelters must be reserved in advance; call 216-524-2248.

Golfing Four public golf courses are in CVNRA. 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.



A ranger-led tour at Ice Box Cave.

Winter Activities



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

Kendall Lake Winter Sports Center This 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, crosscountry skiing trails, winter hiking, and snowshoeing. Snowshoe 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.

Crosscountry Ski Trails There are miles of open space and crosscountry trails in the park suitable for both beginning or advanced skiers. You can rent equipment nearby and ski into the park. Ask a ranger or check 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.

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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