



Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

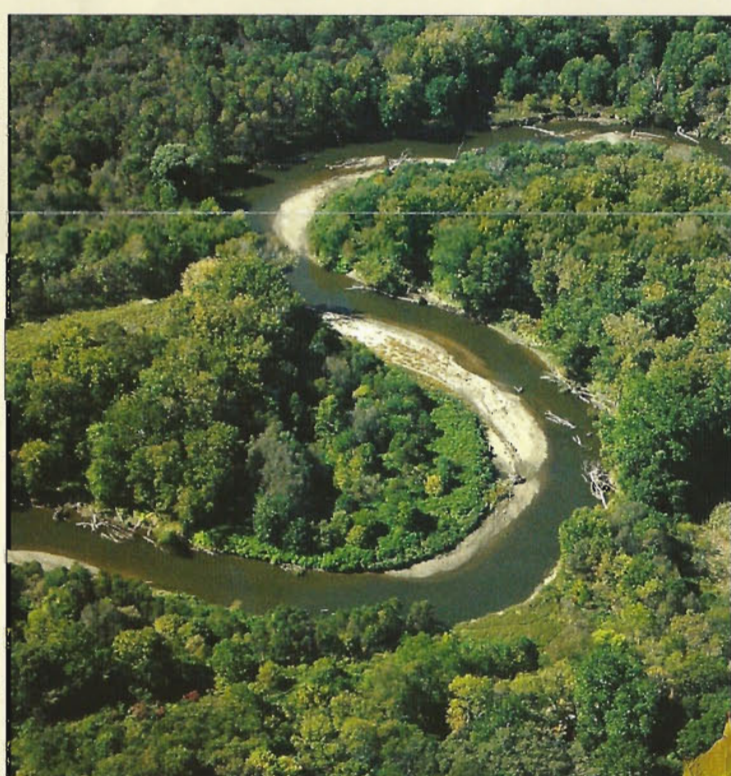
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Brandywine Falls

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## Crooked River, Beautiful Valley



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"Ka-ih-ogh-ha" American Indians called it, crooked. Crooked it is, as the Cuyahoga River twists and turns through 90 miles. As the crow flies the river begins only 30 miles east of its mouth in Cleveland, flowing in a great U along the base of the escarpment the city of Akron sits on. Deep forests, rolling hills, and open farmlands frame the 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 floodplains, steep and gentle valley walls, tributaries with 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 safely from the cold Great Lakes waters to the short portage across the divide to the Tuscarawas River that drained into the Ohio River and thence to the warm waters to the south.

European explorers and trappers arrived in the 1600s, 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 American Indians did before them. The Moravian village of Pilgruh, the valley's first but short-lived European settlement, was near the confluence of Tinkers Creek and the river. In 1786 Connecticut set aside 3.5 million 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. He helped lay out the city named after him. 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 called the land as "good as anyone could wish for."

The Ohio & Erie Canal opened in 1827 between Cleveland and Akron, parallel to and partly watered by the Cuyahoga River. It replaced the river as the primary transportation artery. It was part of a national system of canals connecting the East Coast and Midwest. The canals launched Midwest commercial development and enabled farmers to ship agricultural products to eastern markets. 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 were prevalent and soon replaced the canal as the major route for commerce, industry, and travel. Running through the valley, the railroad led to the canal's eventual demise, but it also contributed to the cities' growth. 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 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 in 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 in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. 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.

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.

© TOM CAVLEY

### 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 Cuyahoga Valley National Park. You can board the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad for a sight-seeing excursion in 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 the Ohio & Erie Canalway. The canalway 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, Ohio & Erie Canalway Byway, and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad are the Canalway's central spines and offer opportunities to explore history and nature along their lengths. Learn more by visiting [www.ohioanderiecanalway.com](http://www.ohioanderiecanalway.com).

The Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center is a residential facility featuring watershed-based curricula for primary and middle school children. It has overnight camps in summer and weekend activities year round. For information about the center and programs for school and youth groups call 800-642-3297 or visit [www.conservancyforcvnp.org](http://www.conservancyforcvnp.org).

### Natural Diversity

What comes to mind when you think of Cuyahoga Valley National Park? The Towpath Trail or Brandywine Falls? Blossom Music Center or a historic village? These are all special to the park, 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 woodland wildflowers, such as hepaticas



© JACQUES LEBLANC

and bloodroot, to late summer asters and goldenrod in open areas. Yellow and blue irises, cat-tails, 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 over 100 other bird species nest in the valley. To see this imposing 4-foot-tall bird with 7-foot wing span become airborne is always a thrill. But its spring courtship behavior—bowing, bill snapping, raising its feathers—commands the most excitement.

At their rookeries high in trees you may catch their showy twig offerings. Males present twigs to females; if accepted, they are the first used to repair or build nests. This strengthens the pair's bond, and a new family will begin.

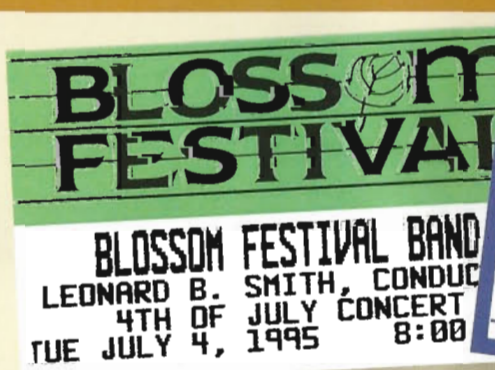


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## Attractions in the Valley

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad runs between Cleveland and Canton and offers excursions year round. You may select from varied choices: leisurely trips to view wildlife and wetlands accompanied by the *Voices of the Valley* audio tour; Bike Aboard! trips with a baggage car equipped to carry bicycles for a one-way train ride paired with a bicycle ride on the Towpath Trail; trips with rangers on board who discuss the natural features and history of the Cuyahoga Valley; and trips to Hale Farm & Village.

Excursions to Akron and Canton include service to area attractions like the Akron Zoo, Akron Art Museum, and Pro Football Hall of Fame. Special events throughout the year appeal to families and those wanting to enjoy an evening out. For information about schedules and fees call 800-468-4070 or visit [www.cvsr.com](http://www.cvsr.com).



Hale Farm Homestead

© KEVIN C. O'NEIL



Countryside Farmers' Market

© SARA SURETT

All aboard! Explore the natural and cultural wonders of Cuyahoga Valley National Park while riding the rails.



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Here are just a few of the attractions within Cuyahoga Valley National Park. For more information call 330-657-2752.

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 from the mid-1800s. For more information call 330-666-3711 or visit [www.wrlhs.org](http://www.wrlhs.org).

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 over 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](http://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 330-672-3884 or visit [www.porthousetheatre.com](http://www.porthousetheatre.com).

Ohio & Erie Canalway Cuyahoga Valley National Park lies in the Ohio & Erie Canalway, a National Heritage Area that celebrates the Ohio & Erie Canal and its legacy.

For more information about the Canalway and its many opportunities for visitors go to [www.ohioanderiecanalway.com](http://www.ohioanderiecanalway.com).

# 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 12,000 years of history in the valley, including the history of the canal. Located at the intersection of Canal and Hillsides roads in Valley View; hours are seasonal.

up to 275 people. Call 330-657-2909, ext. 119, or visit [www.conservancyforcvnp.org](http://www.conservancyforcvnp.org).

**Fraze 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 Fraze family. It is on Canal Road south of Canal Visitor Center. Hours are limited.

**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. Service animals are welcome.

**You Can Join In** Many of the helpful people you meet here are volunteers. For information about volunteering, call 330-657-2296. To join the park's nonprofit support group, the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, call 330-657-2909.

**Boston Store Visitor Center** 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. The center is open year-round except Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. For more information visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

**Hunt Farm Visitor Information Center** Hunt Farm has kid-friendly exhibits, weekend drop-in activities during summer, and general park information. Hours are seasonal.

**More Information**  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Mail: 15610 Vaughn Rd., Brecksville, OH 44141  
GPS: Boston Store Visitor Center, 1548 Boston Mills Rd., Peninsula, OH 44264  
330-657-2752; TTY users call 800-750-0750 for the Ohio Relay Service  
[www.nps.gov/cuva](http://www.nps.gov/cuva)

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

**Lots of Activities** Ranger-led tours, nature walks, and cultural arts programs are available year round. Visit [www.dayinthevalley.com](http://www.dayinthevalley.com) for a daily listing of activities offered by organizations in the valley.

**Accommodations** Stanford House and the Inn at Brandywine Falls offer overnight accommodations in historic farmhouses. Bicyclists and backpackers can camp at a five-site campground behind Stanford House. Reservations are highly recommended. Stanford House and campground: 330-657-2909, ext. 119. Inn at Brandywine Falls: 330-467-1812.



Canal Visitor Center

**Facility Rentals** Make memories by hosting your family or business event in one of the many rental facilities. Choose from rustic picnic shelters, charming historic buildings, and lodges accommodating

## 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 in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Hiking along the lush hemlock ravines in Virginia Kendall Park, skiing in the moonlight along the Towpath Trail, or walking a short way along the Brandywine Falls boardwalk offer rewarding experiences. For information about trails and regulations, and to buy maps and guide books, stop at a visitor center.

**Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail** If anything says Cuyahoga Valley National Park, it is the Towpath Trail. It follows the historic Ohio & Erie Canal route through the Cuyahoga Valley and continues both north and south of the park. Fully accessible, the trail makes a delightful outing for people of all ages and abilities. Be watchful for wildlife, especially in the 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 asphalt trail border the park. Ideal for family bike rides, it is managed by Metro Parks, Serving Summit County. A connector trail near Holzhauser Road gives access to the Towpath Trail.

**Buckeye Trail** Part of the 1,200-mile Buckeye Trail passes through the national park. You can follow this blue-blazed trail into hardwood forests and fields, across streams, and into steep ravines—a strenuous but rewarding hike.

**Horse Trails** Viewing the Cuyahoga Valley National Park 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 the Cleveland Metro Parks Bedford and Brecksville reservations trails. The Valley Trail connects these southern and northern trails. Horse trailer parking areas are provided at the Everett Road Covered Bridge, Wetmore, and Station Road Bridge trailheads, near the Boston trailhead, and on Sagamore Road near Canal Road. No horse rentals are 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?

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.

**Picnicking** Whether you need an area large enough for a family reunion or an intimate spot for two, you'll enjoy picnicking in one of the many picnic areas located throughout the park. Alcohol is prohibited in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Covered shelters may be reserved for a fee. Call 330-657-2909.

**Canoeing and Kayaking** Canoe or kayak on the Cuyahoga River at your own risk. There are no watercraft rentals or official put-in locations within the park. The river has hazards, and water quality often does not meet standards for recreation. The most current water quality information is found at [www.ohionowcast.info](http://www.ohionowcast.info).

**Golfing** Four public golf courses are in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Cleveland Metro Parks offers Shawnee Hills and Sleepy Hollow. Other, privately operated golf courses include Astorhurst and Brandywine.

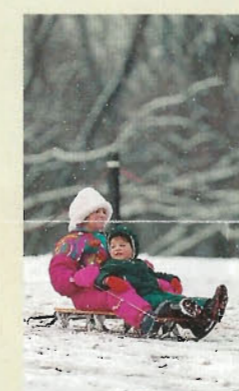
**Discovering Small Farms** Sustainable farms recreate the valley's rural scenery and recall its past as a farming community through the Countryside Initiative, which leases historic farm properties to farmers. Small farms are raising everything from arugula to zucchini, not to mention sheep, goats, chickens, and turkeys. You can find products and activities at the farms and the Countryside Farmers' Market.

**Fishing** Introduce your children to the sport of fishing at one of the park's ponds, where you



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 the adventure of downhill skiing and snowboarding. The National Park Service, Metro Parks, and other public and private recreational facilities offer a variety of winter opportunities. Request the *Winter Sports* brochure for details.

**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.

**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, cross-country skiing trails, winter hiking, and snowshoeing. Adult and youth snowshoe and cross-country ski rentals are available. Overlooking Kendall Lake, the center is on Truxell Road, east of Akron Peninsula Road.

**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 and take skill-building workshops at the Winter Sports Center at Kendall Lake. Contact a visitor center for snow conditions and hours.

**Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resorts** The resorts feature 16 lifts, grooming and complete snowmaking coverage on all slopes, ski and snowboard rentals, snow tubing at Polar Blast, instruction, and night skiing. Ask about season passes and special programs for adults and children. For information call 800-U-SKI-241 or visit [www.bmwv.com](http://www.bmwv.com).

## For a Safe Visit

To ensure a safe visit, please observe these regulations.

- Do not drink water from streams or ponds. The Cuyahoga River has hazards and sometimes poor water quality. Swimming and wading are not advised. Canoe or kayak at your own risk.
- For firearms regulations visit the park website.
- Do not disturb any wildlife, pick or damage plants, or remove natural or historical features.

• People of all ages and abilities use the Ohio & Erie Canal 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.