

# Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Ohio

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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Photo by JJ Prekop Jr.

## Visitor Use Management Plan | Spring 2021 Newsletter

### Introduction

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The National Park Service (NPS) invites you to collaborate on the development of a visitor use management plan for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The plan is in the early stages of development (see Planning Process and Timeline), and the National Park Service wants your help identifying key issues, opportunities, and potential management strategies that impact your experience of the park.

### About Cuyahoga Valley National Park

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Cuyahoga Valley National Park was established as a National Recreation Area in 1974 and then designated as a national park in 2000. The park protects approximately 33,000 acres of river valley, upland forests, and rich cultural history. The park is situated between the urban centers of Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, within the Ohio & Erie Canalway, a national heritage area. It serves more than 2.2 million diverse local, regional, national, and international visitors annually.





## What will the plan consider?

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The visitor use management plan will identify actions that will address issues impacting the park experience such as congested areas, ease of flow, and equitable access. It will also identify solutions that protect and improve the visitor experience and the park's natural and cultural environment. A long-term approach for managing visitor use at the park and on the river will provide managers with the guidance necessary to address current challenges and identify future opportunities.

### The plan will consider management actions to

- adapt to and manage changing park visitation patterns and uses;
- provide inclusive and equitable visitor experiences throughout the park;
- address congestion and visitor conflicts at many key park locations that include roads, parking lots, trails, and river access points;
- improve wayfinding, visitor circulation, and visitor information;
- enhance visitor experiences while promoting NPS identity within the park;
- address impacts to park ecological health and overall natural and cultural landscapes; and
- plan for and design sites to manage river access.

## Purpose of the Park

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The purpose of Cuyahoga Valley National Park is to preserve and protect for public use and enjoyment the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga River and its valley; to maintain the necessary recreational open space in connection with the urban environment; and to provide for the recreational and educational needs of the visiting public.

This planning process will develop strategies that protect and preserve key resources that contribute to the purpose and significance of this national park. These strategies will provide guidance for protecting fundamental resources such as the Ohio and Erie Canal; the trails, water, and rail network; and forest and river ecosystems even if visitation changes or increases substantially over the next decade.



## Key Issues and Opportunities

- Improve opportunities for equitable and inclusive access and experiences that serve diverse communities and visitors.
- Address wayfinding, circulation, and visitor information challenges.
- Address visitor use that is concentrated in key locations, which causes congestion and, in some cases, user conflict.
- Address visitor caused impacts to cultural resources.
- Address visitor caused impacts to natural resources.
- Provide diverse camping opportunities.
- Bolster relationships with partners and communities.
- Evaluate commercial services and opportunities available through the park's lands and leasing program and through permit systems.

## Planning Process and Timeline

### Plan Kickoff: Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

- Define purpose and need for the project.
- Begin civic engagement to inform plan development.

### Actions and Strategies: Spring 2021 – Fall 2021

- Explore potential strategies.
- Develop monitoring strategies.
- Continue public input to inform strategies development.

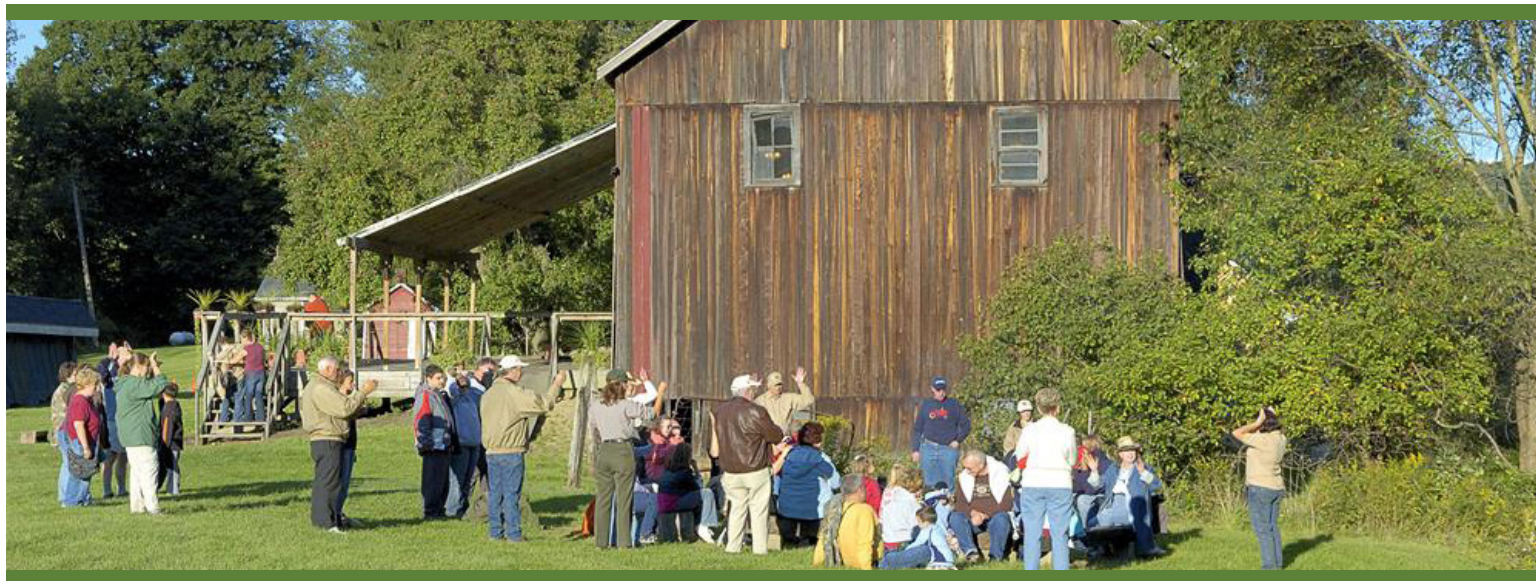
### Refine Strategies and Draft Plan: Winter 2022 – Summer 2022

- Refine the strategies and develop draft plan.
- Request public and stakeholder input on draft plan.
- Finalize plan.

The StoryMap  
(<https://arcg.is/8ijLe>)  
also provides more  
information about the  
plan.







## How Can I Participate?

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Between March 8 and April 9, 2021, you are invited to participate in the planning process (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuvavisitorusemanagement>) as the first of several opportunities. The information gathered through this planning process will inform the development of actions and strategies to address issues and leverage opportunities for the future. During this comment period, it is most helpful if you respond to as many of the following questions as you can:

- What experiences in Cuyahoga Valley National Park are most important to you? What kind of experiences do you want future visitors to have when they come to the park?
- What barriers get in the way of enjoying or visiting Cuyahoga Valley National Park? What barriers prevent you from achieving your desired experiences?
- What strategies do you recommend the planning team consider to address barriers and/or key issues and opportunities?
- What activities, facilities, and services would make you feel more welcome, safe, or satisfied with your experience?
- What other thoughts would you like to share with the project team?

You are also invited to attend one of two virtual public meetings that will be held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, and Thursday, March 25, 2021, from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. EST. Meeting information can be found at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuvavisitorusemanagement> under meeting notices.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### What will be done with my feedback?

The National Park Service seeks feedback from the public on the visitor use management plan for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Your comments will be recorded on the NPS public comment (PEPC) page and then analyzed by an interdisciplinary team made up of a contract team and NPS employees, including park staff. Comments will inform discussion and potential updates to the park's desired conditions, key issues and opportunities, and management strategies.

### Is this the only opportunity to provide feedback?

There will be multiple opportunities to provide feedback throughout the planning process. This is just the first opportunity to engage in the planning process.