



Trail Management Plan

Draft Alternatives Draw Public Input

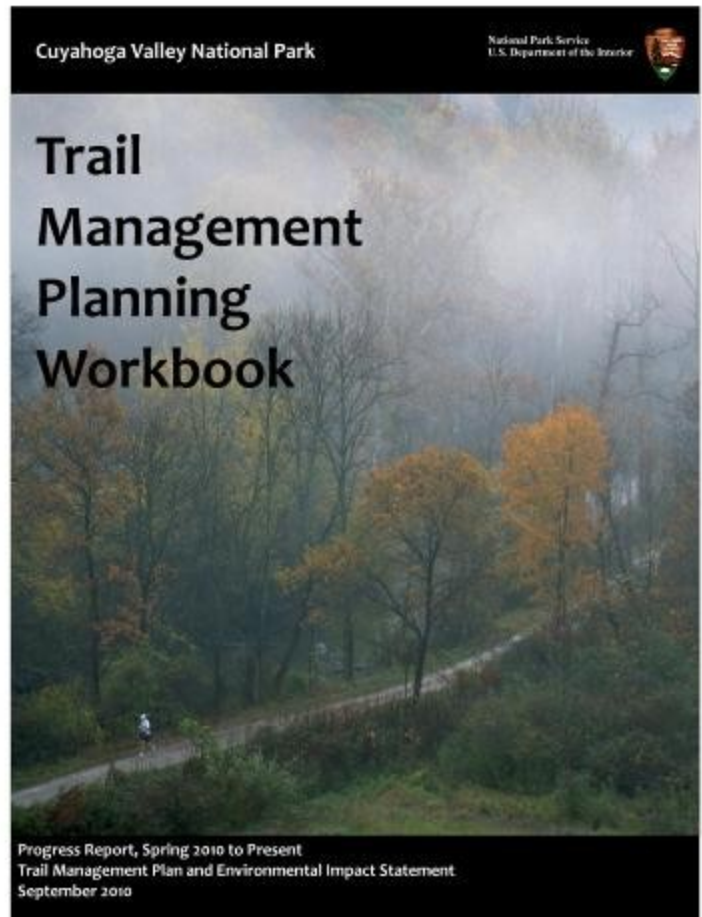
The National Park Service presented its first set of Draft Alternatives for Cuyahoga Valley National Park's Trail Management Plan. The Trail Management Planning Workbook provided a comprehensive update of the planning process and introduced draft alternatives for public review and input.

The Draft Alternatives were the first step in placing ideas on paper for the future trail system in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The Draft Alternatives were based upon ideas from initial public scoping that included input from stakeholders of various user groups, park management, park partners, and information collected on current park use and operations. The six Draft Alternatives included a wide-range of trail recommendations, including specific restoration actions for existing trails to wide-range partnerships with local communities to expand bike lanes within the park boundaries.

The National Park Service invited the public to review and provide input on these initial Draft Alternatives in September, 2010. A summary of input received can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. Thanks to all who took time to participate and provide their input to the planning process thus far.

In this Newsletter Issue:

- ◆ General Summary of Input received for Draft Alternatives
- ◆ Overview of Environmental Impact Statement Process
- ◆ Old Carriage Trail Project Update
- ◆ Appreciation of Trail Plan Volunteers
- ◆ What's Next in the Planning Process



Cuyahoga Valley National Park Mission:

To preserve and protect for public use and enjoyment the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga River and the adjacent lands of the Cuyahoga Valley and for the purpose of providing for the maintenance of recreational open space necessary to the urban environment.

(Public Law 93-555)

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

The planning process for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Trail Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement continues to move forward. In 2010, the park initiated a broad public input process that included meetings in February and September with hundreds of park users taking their time to participate in the planning for the park's future trail system.

In 2011, we will be moving into the next stage of work for the Trail Plan that will produce a Draft Comprehensive Plan. We will invite you to provide your input once again, once the Draft Plan is complete in the coming year.

Thank you for assisting us throughout the various stages of the Trail Plan. Your participation is appreciated and continues to bring ideas to our staff in developing a comprehensive trail system that everyone can enjoy in years to come. See you on the Trails!

Stan Austin
Superintendent

The Trail Management Plan Partners

The Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service is a partner in the public engagement process and development of the Trail Management Plan.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park has established an agreement with **Cleveland Metroparks and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County** to serve as administrative partners for the Trail Management Planning Process for their park units within Cuyahoga Valley National Park boundaries.

Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park's mission is to engage public support for the park and enhance public use and enjoyment of the park.



Draft Alternative Public Input Overview

The Park invited the public to provide input on the Draft Alternatives for the Trail Management Plan, through the distribution of the Trail Management Plan Workbook, four public meetings, and the Trail Plan project website.

The Park received over 600 comments from 175 individuals and groups on the Draft Alternatives. The comments reflect the wide range of trail users and park visitors that visit the park. A summary of the comments is provided in the adjacent box.

The park has reviewed all comments and continue to work on integrating the ideas into revised final alternatives that will be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement. Major revisions to the Draft Alternatives will include:

- Incorporating the restoration of existing trails in all Action Alternatives
- Longer mountain bike trails that are separate from equestrian trails
- New equestrian trails
- New cross-country ski trails
- Longer hiking trail experiences
- Trail and river campsites, and river access will be incorporated into all alternatives.

All stakeholders will have an opportunity to review and provide input to the revised Alternatives when the Draft Trail Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement are complete.

Summary of Comments Received on Draft Trail Alternatives

- Restoration of existing trails is essential.
- Improved maintenance of existing trails is needed.
- Trailside and riverside campsites provide potential for new trail experiences.
- Paddle/canoe access provides the potential for new park experiences.
- Expressed desires both for and against:
 - More trails
 - More equestrian trails
 - Mountain bike trails
- A desire for longer mountain bike trails
- Shared use of trails between equestrian and mountain bike users is not desired
- Cross-country skiing only trails should be identified.
- Trail connections both within and outside the Park has the potential for improved user experiences.



NPS

Appreciation to Trail Plan Field Volunteers

When the 1985 Trail Plan was assembled, the Park had very limited staff to carry out extensive scoping for the Plan. Many of the ideas outlined in the 1985 plan were a direct result of the many citizens with interests in hiking, biking, running, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding heading out into the park to explore and identify areas for future trails. To carry on the spirit set forth in the 1985 Plan and the citizenry that this Park was established upon, the 2010 Trail Plan invited volunteers to explore areas identified during public scoping. Over the summer and fall, volunteers logged 75 volunteer hours to explore miles of parkland with the Trail Planner where trails were proposed during public scoping. These outings assisted the park to initially evaluate proposed areas and their conditions for consideration in the Draft Trail Plan Alternatives. The park recognizes their time and give thanks for their volunteering efforts in sometimes very warm and less than ideal hiking conditions.

Trail Plan Field Volunteers:

Frank Dessoffy
Laura DeYoung
Tom Fritsch
Greg Gantzer
Aaron Hall
Dan Nelson
Nancy Piltch
Tim Rhodes
John Sorna
Brian Squire
Patricia Vance
Craig Wood

Environmental Impact Analysis— How it Works

The Cuyahoga Valley National Park Trail Management Plan is being developed utilizing the framework required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NPS Director's Order 12. NEPA governs the process of decision-making when a federal agency proposes any action that has the potential to affect the human environment. When those effects are expected to be significantly beneficial or adverse, NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the most comprehensive evaluation process. The scope, content, and park-wide nature of the Trail Plan led the Park to decide this was the appropriate level of compliance with NEPA.

As the park refines the Trail Plan Alternatives, the next step will be to evaluate the impacts they each may have on the park resources.

The EIS achieves this through:

- Identifying impact topics relevant to the park and the proposed action, (completed during the scoping process)
- Describing the park resources that may be affected by the action (the "affected environment")
- Identifying impact indicators and thresholds to both measure and evaluate each impact. The impacts, both direct and indirect, of each alternative will be evaluated and compared to each other. Evaluation of impacts to park resources will include the short-term, long-term, and cumulative effects for each alternative.

Once the impact analysis is complete, a Draft Trail Management Plan/EIS will be released for public review. Public input will then be considered before completing a Final Trail Management Plan/EIS.

Old Carriage Trail Project Update

One of the most beloved trails within Cuyahoga Valley National Park is the Old Carriage Trail located in the mid-section of the park. The Old Carriage Trail has all of the elements of a great trail; challenging terrain, history, scenic beauty, and easy connections to neighborhoods and the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. In late 2009, a portion of the Old Carriage Trail was closed due to the unsafe conditions of its bridges. Many of the Old Carriage Trail and park users have contacted the park stating your desire to re-open the Old Carriage Trail. Rest assured, we feel the same way.

Unfortunately, the site conditions that have made the experience of these bridges so special for the public are the same site conditions that contributed to their unexpected degradation and will make the ultimate solutions challenging and costly.

In 2011, the park in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, will be working on a formal engineering evaluation of the bridges and various options for the future of the trail. These options may include repair of existing bridges, replacement with new bridges, re-routing of trail, and other options that may be developed. Options will be evaluated based upon many factors, including feasibility, sustainability, support of the park's mission, and environmental impacts. Estimated costs of different options will be determined.

Once a recommended approach is decided upon, developing a funding plan for the recommendation will follow.

The park will continue to keep the public and Old Carriage Trail users informed on the progress throughout the year.



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Trail Plan: What's Next

Cuyahoga Valley National Park has been working on a number of activities to move the Trail Management Plan process forward. These include reviewing all of the comments received on the Draft Alternatives, refining purpose, need, goals and objectives, developing Sustainable Trail Guidelines, refining Trail Plan Alternatives, and identifying Environmental Impact Statement issues for the Impact Analysis. In 2011, the Park will be developing a Draft Trail Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Once the Draft Plan is complete, the park will invite the public to review and provide input to its contents. The Draft Plan for public review will likely not be available until Summer, 2011.

Any updates regarding the plan will be available on the NPS park planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuyahogatrailplan>. Contact Lynn Garrity, Trail Planner to be added to the Trail Management Plan mailing/email list.

We look forward to continuing to work with everyone on the comprehensive trail plan for Cuyahoga Valley National Park in 2011. Stay Tuned.

