

Cuyahoga River RAP-Up

To the Cuyahoga River RAP Coordinating Committee

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PUBLIC INVITED TO COMMENT ON DREDGING DISPOSAL PROJECT

A proposal to expand a dredging disposal area and its potential to impact Lake Erie water quality will be the focus of a **March 12, 2007**, Ohio EPA public meeting in Cleveland.

Ohio EPA is holding the information session and public hearing to accept comments concerning a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) application to expand an existing confined disposal facility (CDF) located at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Carnegie West Branch of the Cleveland Public Library, 1900 Fulton Road.

USACE is requesting to vertically expand CDF12 approximately 14-16 feet above the existing structure. If approved, the additional capacity would allow USACE to place up to 800,000 cubic yards of dredged material on top of the existing dredged material.

Anyone wanting to discharge dredged or fill material to waters of the State must first obtain a water quality certification from Ohio EPA and a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ohio EPA's review is to ensure the project will comply with Ohio's water quality standards.



Cleveland Lakefront with Confined Disposal Facilities (CDFs) adjacent to Burke Airport

The proposed project may result in a change to the current water quality conditions of Lake Erie, but cannot violate Ohio's water quality standards. Ohio EPA will consider the technical, economic, social and environmental aspects of the project before deciding to issue or deny a water quality certification.

Anyone interested in being placed on a mailing list for this project or submitting written comments concerning the application should write to: Ohio EPA, DSW Permits Processing

Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049.

The public comment period ends March 19, 2007.

The application and related materials are available for review by calling (614) 644-2001.

Ohio EPA Biological and Water Quality Study of Furnace Run

In 2006 the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) conducted a biological and water quality survey of the Furnace Run watershed, a tributary of the Cuyahoga River. The purpose of this study was to provide an updated environmental status report of the area. This information will be used to appropriately assess the level of beneficial use impairment for aquatic life and fish habitat in this section of the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern (AOC).

Prior sample efforts by Ohio EPA in 1991 and 1996 indicated that this watershed is in full attainment of biological and water quality standards. However, a study conducted in 2003 by Metroparks

Serving Summit County found that Rock Creek, a tributary to Furnace Run, was in non-attainment of fish and macroinvertebrate community aquatic life criteria. This was attributed to high dissolved solids levels resulting from slag leachate during and immediately following construction of the Interstate 80 interchange near this area in 2000-2001.

The Ohio EPA collected aquatic life community data, habitat information and water quality samples at seven sites within the Furnace Run watershed. Additional fish community data were collected at one site at the mouth of Furnace Run as part of a separate project.



2006 Furnace Run Survey map

Furnace Run originates in Brecksville, Broadview Heights and Richfield in northern Summit and southern Cuyahoga counties in northeast Ohio. It flows approximately 10.4 miles southeast through Bath and Boston townships to meet the Cuyahoga River at river mile (RM) 33.08. It drains approximately 35 square miles of

predominately suburban lands. A 2001 satellite land cover analysis determined that approximately 14 % of the watershed is considered urbanized with generally impervious surfaces. The remaining 86 % of the watershed is comprised primarily of wooded (47%), grass/agricultural (34%) shrub/scrub (7%) cover. 1991 and 1996 Ohio EPA surveys found Furnace Run to be in FULL Attainment of the current Warm Water Habitat (WWH) aquatic life use designation.

Furnace Run Metro Park, operated by Metroparks Serving Summit County, is located within the Furnace Run watershed. It currently consists of seven tracts of land totaling approximately 870 acres in Richfield. The tracts are fragmented east-west by Interstate 77, State Route (SR) 21, and Brecksville Road, and north-south by Brush Road and State Route 303; however, two of the southernmost tracts, approximating 43 acres along Wheatley Road, are disjunct from the remainder of the park and ecologically separated by Interstate 271. Furnace Run Metro Park is contiguous with, and often considered part of, Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), which contains 30,000 acres of wetland and forest along the Cuyahoga River from Akron to Cleveland. Metro Parks is responsible for the management of these natural areas. In 2003 they contracted a natural resource management study to provide baseline ecological data and ensure continued protection of the resource.

Furnace Run lies within the area covered by the Lower Cuyahoga River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report, which was

approved by U.S. EPA on September 26, 2003. TMDLs identify and evaluate water quality problems in impaired water bodies and propose solutions to bring those waters into attainment. Because of earlier identification as being in FULL attainment with Ohio Water Quality Criteria it was not specifically included within the report.

The results of the aquatic life and habitat evaluations indicate that this watershed is in PARTIAL attainment with Ohio water quality criteria for the Warm Water Habitat Use Designation (Table 2). Although the fish community in both Rock Creek and Furnace Run are meeting the IBI criteria, the macroinvertebrate community is showing signs of impairment, particularly in the qualitative samples. Use of these qualitative samples to determine degree of attainment may be a better methodology for evaluation of sites with a drainage area less than 10 square miles.

PARTIAL attainment in the Rock Creek tributary to Furnace Run is due to low ICI scores attributed to historical impacts from upstream pollution sources. However, the increase in IBI and ICI scores at this site from a 2003 survey which found the stream to be in NON attainment indicates that this small tributary is improving or adjusting to the impacts from the slag leachate discharge from upstream sources, although water chemistry results indicate that these impacts are not diminishing with time.



Everett Road Covered Bridge

The stream restoration area in the Furnace Run mainstem (RM 7.8) was completed in 1999. This project consisted of returning Furnace Run to its original watercourse after previously being diverted to Brushwood Lake. Restoration of this stream segment consisted of utilizing soil bioengineering techniques to improve riparian habitat. The 2003 survey conducted by Metroparks serving Summit County found this area to be in PARTIAL attainment with Ohio WQS for aquatic life, while the 2006 survey found the area to be in FULL attainment. This indicates that the restoration project has been a success in this stream segment.

The results of this survey indicate that the Furnace Run watershed meets the BUI Restoration Targets for Degradation of Fish Populations and Loss of Fish Habitat (Ohio EPA Delisting Targets for Areas of Concern, 2005). The aquatic macroinvertebrate data indicate that although the majority of the watershed meets the BUI restoration target for Degradation of Benthos, there appears to be continuing impact from slag leachate that affects Rock Creek.

Additionally, the physical habitat in Furnace Run sites at RM 6.5, 4.8, and 0.9 appeared to have been influenced by high flow

events during 2006 and previous years. Significant bank erosion is occurring in lower Furnace Run based on visual observations of banks at sampling sites along with excessive amounts of silts/clays covering the stream bottom. The stream bottom at RM 4.8 was covered with gray silts which clearly appeared to have eroded from the stream banks.



Furnace Run at RM 1.0

The Furnace Run watershed should continue to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the restoration targets continue to be met and that the watershed remains in attainment with Ohio biological and water quality criteria. It is recommended that local political jurisdictions within the watershed implement riparian protection strategies and storm water management programs to maintain the current level of biological and water quality, as noted in the Lower Cuyahoga River Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Report (Ohio EPA, 2003). Communities within the Furnace Run watershed are also regulated under Ohio EPA Phase 2 Storm Water National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits which require the implementation and enforcement of these storm water management programs by early 2008.

For a digital copy of the full report, please contact Kelvin Rogers.



Furnace Run meander

New Ohio Law Bans Mercury in Consumer Products

An important step in the regulation of mercury-containing products has been achieved, thanks to the hard work of Ohio EPA. House Bill 443, initiated and authored by Ohio EPA, was signed into law on January 4, 2007. Over time, most thermometers, thermostats and novelty items sold in Ohio will be mercury free.

Surprisingly, prior to the bill's passage, Ohio was the only Great Lakes state without any type of state-mandated consumer product mercury ban. Until now, mercury reduction efforts have been voluntary, and some Ohio industries, retailers and communities were obliging.

Ohio EPA worked for well over a year to get the mercury provisions of HB 443 passed, along with a diverse array of other interested parties, including the Ohio Manufacturers Association, the Associated Builders and Contractors, Ohio Nurses Association, Ohio

Environmental Council and several more.

Schools will not be permitted to buy mercury or mercury-added measuring devices for classroom use starting April 6, 2007. Six months later, Ohio will ban the sale and distribution of mercury-containing thermometers and novelty items. Beginning April 6, 2008, a ban on the sale and reinstallation of mercury-containing thermostats will go into effect.

Ohio EPA Posts 2007 Fish Advisory Updates

Sunfish and yellow perch caught in Ohio are now safe to eat twice per week, according to Ohio EPA's 2007 fish consumption advisory released February 28. This recommendation is based on fish tissue testing in Ohio and is a departure from the previous recommendation to limit all Ohio-caught fish species to one meal per week.

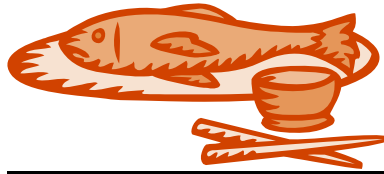
Other notable changes include:

- A do-not-eat advisory was lifted on the Middle Fork Little Beaver Creek in Columbiana and Mahoning counties;
- A do-not-eat advisory was issued for the Ashtabula River from U.S. Route 20 to the mouth due to current dredging activities;
- Three locations were added where fish should be eaten no more than once a month due to mercury;
- Four locations were added where fish should be eaten no more than once a month and

two locations were added with a limit of once every two months, both due to PCBs.

For further details on the latest changes, go to:

<http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/fishadvisory/2007NewFishAdvisories.pdf>.



Upcoming Meetings

Several meetings and events that may be of interest include:

- **Portage County Storm Water Task Force – March 14 at 9:00am** at the Garden Meeting Room, 6970 State Route 88, Ravenna. Contact Crystal Cherry at 330-297-7633 for details.
- **Summit County Storm Water PIPE Committee – March 15 at 9:00am** at the Bath-Copley Stony Hill Fire Station, 4570 Medina Road, Copley. Contact Cindy Fink at 330-929-2871 for details.
- **Yellow Creek Watershed Committee – March 19 at 7:00pm** at Bath Township Hall.
- **Mill Creek Watershed Partnership – March 20 at 9:00am** at Garfield Heights City Hall. Contact Chuck Hambly at 216-242-2414 ext 253 for details.
- **Friends of Big Creek/West Creek Preservation Committee Joint Meeting – March 20 at 7:00pm** at Cuyahoga County Public

Library Parma/Snow Branch, 2121 Snow Road.

- **Chippewa Creek Watershed Planning Partnership Meeting – March 21 at 1:30pm** at North Royalton Council Chambers, 13834 Ridge Road. Contact Chuck Hambly at 216-241-2414 ext 253 for details.

- **Local Land Use Workshop – March 29 at 8:00am** at Medina County Administration Building, Medina. Register at least one week in advance by calling the Lake Erie Commission at 419-245-2514, or by emailing lakeeriemission@ameritech.net. Additional information is available at: <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo/bq1/index.html> or contact Chris Riddle at the Commission at 419-245-2514.

- **Raingarden Workshop – April 7 at 2:30pm** at the Akron Public Library. Contact the Summit Soil & Water Conservation District at 330-929-2871 for details.
- **Cuyahoga River RAP Board of Directors/Steering Committee – April 12** at NOACA offices. Contact Jim White at 216-241-2414 ext 307 for details.

- **Doan Brook Community Cleanup - April 22 from 9:00 am to noon.** Meet at the pavilion at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. For more information or to sign up to clean a particular spot, please call the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership at 216-291-3304.

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- **Cuyahoga River RAP
Coordinating Committee –
April 26.** Time and place TBA.

- **50th Annual IAGLR
Conference on Great Lakes
Research - May 28 - June 1
University Park,
Pennsylvania.**

Contact: Hunter Carrick

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*If you have any items or meeting
notices for the next RAP-Up
newsletter – please contact me at
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