

Establishing Linkages Between the Park and the National Heritage Corridor

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The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area was founded as an urban national park with a byline: "*The park that begins where the sidewalk ends.*" Situated between the two great cities of Akron and Cleveland, its addition to the family of national parks was welcomed as an important recreational and cultural asset that would serve a great metropolitan area.

Yet, the CVNRA has struggled in this mission. Before the construction and opening of the Towpath, it suffered from a lack of identity, lost in the communities' consciousness. Today, the Towpath provides not only the defining feature—the Old Faithful—of the CVNRA, but a physical link that will connect this tremendous national resource to communities north and south from Cleveland to Zoar, Ohio.

Arguably, the CVNRA will only realize its ultimate aim of being relevant to the communities of NE Ohio through the linkages, both physical and programmatic, provided by the establishment of the Ohio & Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. Besides the Towpath Trail, the Heritage Corridor will include the extension of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and the recognition of a system of backroads designated as a Scenic Byway.

The Heritage Corridor represents a collection of natural, cultural, scenic, recreational, and historic resources along the Ohio Canal from Cleveland to Zoar. The extended boundary of the Heritage Corridor brings new opportunities to the CVNRA to co-sponsor educational, recreational, and cultural events in NE Ohio.