



NEWS

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Cuyahoga River Area of Concern Moves to Delist First Impairments

CLEVELAND – On Thursday, July 20, the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern (AOC) Advisory Committee concluded that aesthetics and public access have improved dramatically, and voted unanimously to request that OhioEPA and U.S. EPA remove them from the list of ten Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) identified in its Remedial Action Plan. The Cuyahoga and nearby Lake Erie tributaries comprise one of the 27 federally-designated U.S. areas that have experienced environmental degradation.

Surveys and observations over the past few years have shown that persistent “occurrences of sludge, oil, scum or other objectionable materials that produce color, odor or other nuisances,” which are the measure of aesthetic quality set forth in the Remedial Action Plan, are now either nonexistent in the Area of Concern or are being remediated by long term control plans to reduce combined sewer overflows. Litter and woody debris are not considered persistent impairments in this category.

The second impairment, dealing with a lack of public access to the navigation channel and lakefront for recreation, was identified in the initial Plan as a local impairment and not subject to the federal guidelines that govern the other nine impairments. In the years since the impairment was added to the list in the early ‘90s, the development of trails, rowing clubs, fishing areas, boating and paddle sport amenities, residential areas, and dining and entertainment facilities has provided the public access that now allows its removal and signals full recovery.

“This is a significant step forward on the path to delisting the Cuyahoga. It’s great to know that the progress we’re making to restore the AOC can now be recognized. With lasting support from state and federal agencies, and local partners, we can see a future when we reach all our restoration goals,” said Jennifer Grieser, Chair of the Advisory Committee.

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About the Area of Concern Advisory Committee

The Cuyahoga River Area of Concern Advisory Committee consists of thirty representatives of organizations, businesses, agencies, and the public dedicated to removing impairments to beneficial use in the lower 46.5 miles of the Cuyahoga River and the tributary watersheds that drain to that section of river and ten miles of Lake Erie shoreline. <http://www.cuyahogaoc.org>