



CVNP Climate Action Plan Summary



Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) is pleased to announce that it has been designated a “Climate Friendly Park.” As a participant in the National Park Service’s Climate Friendly Parks program, CVNP belongs to a network of parks nationwide that are putting sustainability and climate friendly behavior at the forefront of planning. The efforts are the latest in a long list of sustainability measures taken by the park and its partners; including the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the Countryside Conservancy, and the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad.

Climate change is fundamentally the greatest threat to the integrity of our national parks that we have ever experienced.

*National Park Service Director Jarvis
testifying before Congress in 2009*

The **Climate Friendly Parks (CFP) Program** began as a partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and National Park Service (NPS) to help parks understand the concepts of climate change and to communicate these concepts and success stories to park staff, visitors, and partners. The program includes over 100 member parks dedicated to reducing resource consumption, cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and educating park staff and the public about climate change and sustainability.

CVNP Background

The 33,000 acre park encompasses 22 miles of the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. It not only offers a surprising and rich natural diversity that results from the valley’s unique geography and geology, but it also has some of the largest remaining tracts of forest in northeast Ohio. Nearly half of Ohio’s native plant species are found in the park. Wetland and riparian habitats and other aquatic resources exist here, as well as numerous plant and animal species, including rare, threatened, and endangered species which depend on a variety of habitats for protection and survival. The park also has a rich collection of historic and cultural resources including the Valley Railway, Ohio & Erie Canal and related structures and numerous historic homes and farmsteads. In addition, the park has significant built infrastructure including administrative facilities, trails, parking lots and bridges, utility systems, etc.

Workshop

CVNP staff, partners, and sustainability/climate change experts gathered in April, 2013 to hold a Climate Friendly Parks Workshop to better understand and discuss overall sustainability concepts, ways to reduce park emissions and energy consumption, and the likely impacts of climate change on the park. Strategies and a list of proposed actions were developed by working groups.

Emission data for the park revealed that the main areas of energy usage and emissions for the park are:

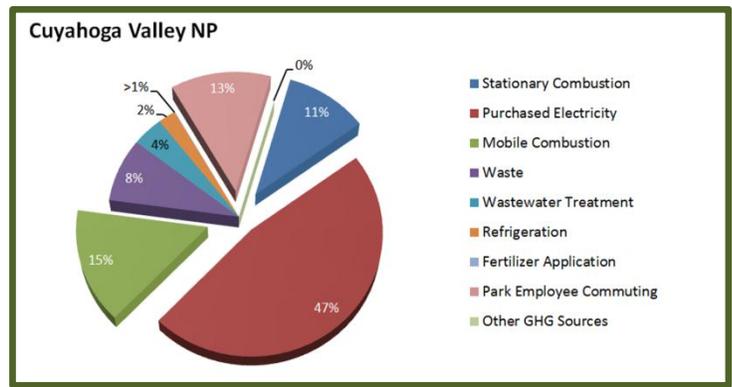
1. Purchased electricity
2. Stationary Combustion (i.e. Building heating systems)
3. Transportation including Mobile Combustion (i.e. Fleet and grounds equipment, Visitor travel, and Employee commuting)

The workshop also included information on the likely impacts at CVNP from climate change which is predicted to include increasing temperatures and changing precipitation patterns vegetation communities, and habitats available for species, and, ultimately, changing the experience of park visitors. The potential for increased flooding and erosion could also put park infrastructure and historic structures at risk.

The Plan

Along with broader sustainability goals, the resulting Climate Action Plan for the park incorporates the strategies that were developed at the workshop and identifies steps that the park is taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to reduce the park's contributions to climate change.

While the plan provides a framework needed to meet the target emission reduction, it is not intended to provide detailed instructions on how to implement each of the proposed measures. These actions will be addressed in the park's Environmental Management Plan.



Cuyahoga Valley National Park has identified the following goals to reduce its GHG emissions produced by park operations:

- Emissions from energy use consumption to 30% below 2008 levels by 2020
- Emissions from waste disposal to 50% below 2008 levels by 2020
- Transportation emissions associated with park operations to 20% below 2008 levels by 2020

In addition to the emission and energy reduction goals, the Action Plan lays out companion strategies that:

- Increase climate change and sustainability education and outreach efforts. (By influencing and educating park visitors, the parks' actions on sustainability and climate change have the potential to extend beyond the borders of the park.)
- Continue reforestation efforts in the park which have the benefit of carbon capture from the atmosphere and facilitate adaptation to climate change.
- Call for the completion of a vulnerability study and actions to protect park resources from the impacts of climate change.

Links

To read the full Climate Action Plan, please go to:

<http://www.nps.gov/cuva/parkmgmt/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=430544>

More information about the Climate Change and Sustainability Programs of the National Park Service can be found at:

Climate Change General Website

Climate Friendly Park program:

www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/

NPS Climate Change Action Plan:

www.nps.gov/orgs/ccrp/upload/NPS_CCActionPlan.pdf

NPS Climate Change Response Strategy:

www.nps.gov/orgs/ccrp/upload/NPS_CCRS.pdf