



January 19, 2011

Notice of Issuance of a Limited Environmental Review and  
Finding of No Significant Impact to  
All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

BLOSSOM HEADWATERS LAND ACQUISITION  
WR391514-0001  
CS391430-0098

The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that Ohio EPA has reviewed the referenced project and finds neither an Environmental Assessment (EA) nor a Supplemental Study (SS) is required to implement the project as discussed in the attached Limited Environmental Review (LER). Therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact is being issued for this project.

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program requires the inclusion of environmental factors in the decision-making process for project approval. Ohio EPA has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action in its review and approval process. Environmental information was developed as part of the facilities plan, as well as through the facilities plan review process. A subsequent review by this Agency has found that the proposed action does not require the preparation of either an EA or an SS.

Our environmental review concluded that because the proposed project is limited in scope and meets all applicable criteria, a Limited Environmental Review is warranted. Specifically, the purchase for preservation of more than 500 acres of undeveloped Blossom Headwaters land containing high-quality headwater streams is a nonpoint source pollution control project consisting of non-structural practices that qualifies for a LER and meets the following additional criteria for a LER:

The proposed project:

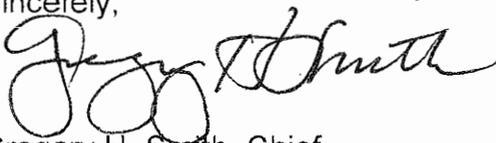
- has no significant environmental effect;
- does not require extensive specific impact mitigation;
- has no effect on high value environmental resources;
- has a reasonable cost;
- is not a controversial action;
- does not create a new, or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters;
- will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters; and

- will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population.

The LER presents additional information on the proposed project, costs, and basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing the contact person named at the end of the LER.

Upon issuance of this determination, loan award may proceed without being subject to further environmental review or public comment, unless information is provided which determines that environmental conditions on the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,



Gregory H. Smith, Chief  
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

GHS/DH

c: NEDO-DSW  
Sue Farmer, OWDA  
File (2)

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### A. Project Identification

Project Name: Blossom Headwaters Land Acquisition

WPCLF# WR391514-0001  
CS391430-0098

Sponsor: Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District  
3900 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44115

Owner / Implementer: National Park Service  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
15610 Vaughn Road  
Brecksville, OH 44141

### B. History and Existing Conditions

The Blossom Headwaters tract in central Summit County includes significant and rare headwater streams and associated wetlands in an area of intact forest, largely undeveloped, within the boundaries of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The Blossom Headwaters property contains over 52,000 lineal feet of perennial and ephemeral streams classified as Coldwater Habitat, Class III Primary Headwater Habitat (PHWH), and as State Resource Waters. Additionally, the property contains approximately 4.6 acres of wetlands habitat. One 2.2 acre wetland is the source of one of the Coldwater Habitat streams. Another is a high Category 2 wetland that extends along 1,000 feet of one of Robinson Run's primary headwaters. The 515 acres of the Blossom Headwaters property encompasses the entirety of the Coldwater Habitat streams that originate on the property and drain directly to the Cuyahoga River. The Blossom Headwaters property is part of a larger tract owned by the Musical Arts Association which owns and operates the Blossom Music Center.

The National Park Service, with the assistance of the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD), proposes to purchase for preservation the more than 500 acres of undeveloped Blossom Headwaters land containing high-quality headwater streams (Figure 1). The property will be incorporated into the Cuyahoga Valley National Park to ensure the preservation of the aquatic habitat and water quality values. The proposed acquisition is the result of negotiations between the property owner, the Musical Arts Association, and the TPL. Ownership and operation of the contiguous Blossom Music Center will remain with the Musical Arts Association.

NEORSD is providing approximately \$3,000,000 of the \$7,899,840 project cost through the Ohio Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) as part of its

construction loan from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel. The remaining funding is federal appropriations for national park land acquisition and in-kind contributions by TPL.

The Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel (ECT) is part of a network of storage tunnels that will be constructed to control overflows from the combined sewer system in the Easterly District. Combined sewers carry sanitary sewage during dry weather and both sanitary sewage and stormwater in wet weather, and discharge directly to surface water when the additional stormwater volume exceeds the capacity of the pipe. The Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel will hold up to 60 million gallons of combined sewage to prevent overflow to and contamination of Lake Erie and Euclid Creek. After each wet weather event, combined sewage stored in the tunnel will be pumped to the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant via a new tunnel dewatering pump station.

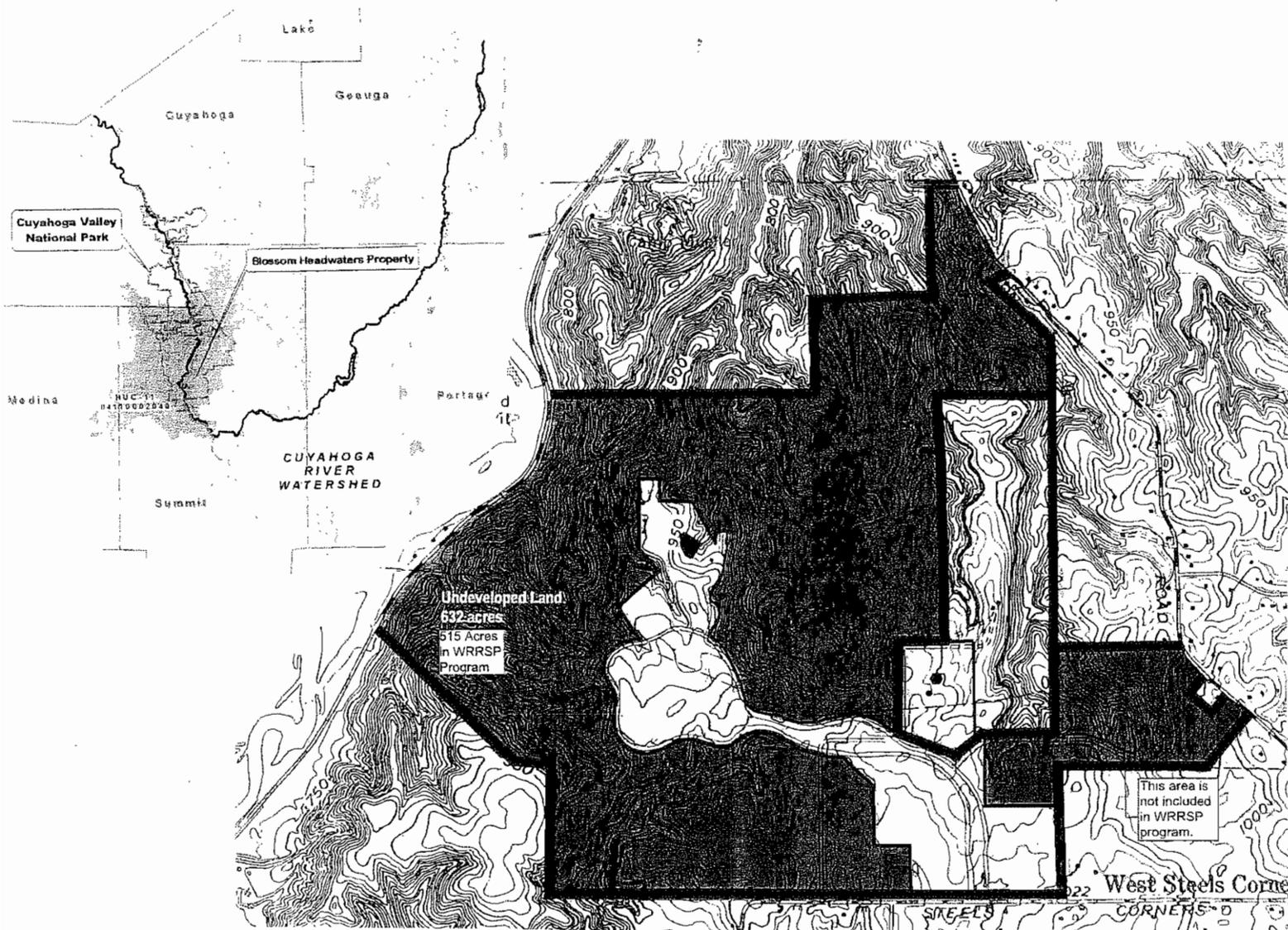


Figure 1 – Project Location

### C. Project Description

This project involves the acquisition for preservation of the approximately 500 acres of land known as Blossom Headwaters owned by the Musical Arts Association. Using federal fiscal year 2010 Department of the Interior Appropriation of \$4,000,000 for this project and expected WRRSP funds available in 2011 (\$3,000,000), acquisitions would proceed as funding becomes available for the overall purchase cost of \$7,721,840 (see E. Project Schedule).

The land will be managed based on *NPS (National Park Service) Management Policies* "Use of Parks" which obligates managers "(1) ... to protect park resources and values; (2) ... to actively manage all park uses; and (3) when necessary... to regulate their amount, kind, time, and place in such a way that future generations can enjoy, learn, and be inspired by park resources and values and appreciate their national significance in as good or better condition than the generation that preceded them."

The land will be managed as a natural area. No development or activity of any kind inconsistent with protecting natural resource values unimpaired will be permitted on the property. The NPS will continue to implement and expand scientific research and monitoring to inform all future management decisions for the property. Management actions consistent with natural resource protection (e.g., invasive species control) would be implemented according to approved park plans. The property will be open to public access and passive recreation as is typical of NPS-owned lands, no specific plans for recreation infrastructure on the property except for a short trail extension and overlook being considered at this time.

The property acquired with WRRSP funds will also be protected by an Environmental Covenant that strictly limits the uses and activities allowed on the land in perpetuity to ensure the protection of the aquatic resource value.

### D. Estimated Project Costs

The purchase agreement purchase price of the Blossom Headwaters land is \$7,721,840. Federal fiscal year 2010 Department of the Interior Appropriation provided \$4,000,000 for this project. This will be combined with \$3,000,000 from the WRRSP expected in 2011, and acquisition will proceed based on available funding in order of prioritized ecological value of the respective sub-parcels. The National Park Service continues to pursue appropriated funds from Congress to complete acquisition.

NEORSD anticipates a WPCLF loan in February 2011 to partially fund the proposed ECT. NEORSD qualifies for the standard below-market interest rate, which for January 2011 is 3.71% for a 20-year loan; the rate is set monthly and may change for a February loan. Interest on that loan will enable sponsorship of eight WRRSP projects, in exchange for which NEORSD will receive an interest rate reduction of 0.1%. More information on the ECT project is available from the contact named at the end of this document.

## E. Project Schedule

Assuming February loan award for the NEORSD project, funding for Blossom Headwaters acquisition would be available in March. WRRSP funds will be available after the Environmental Covenant has been signed and recorded, and will be available one year after the Initiation of Operation is issued for the NEORSD ECT project.

To facilitate phased purchase, the property has been defined as 8 sub-parcels that could be acquired separately or together in varying combinations depending on funds immediately available (seven of the parcels are in the purchase agreement).

The NPS plans to acquire, in priority order, the largest, highest resource value parcels as funding becomes available. If federal funds are available before WRRSP funds are available, sub-parcels 1, 2, 3, and 7 would be acquired immediately, followed by sub-parcels 4, 5, and 8 in whatever combination available WRRSP and future federal appropriations may allow. If WRRSP funds are available first, sub-parcels 4, 5, and 8 would be acquired first.

## F. Public Notification

This Limited Environmental Review (LER) is related to a separate environmental review of the NEORSD ECT project. The sponsorship of the Blossom Headwaters WRRSP project will benefit NEORSD by reducing the interest rate on its WPCLF loan and will benefit citizens of Ohio by helping preserve a high quality water resource.

The sponsorship of this project has been discussed during NEORSD Board Meetings to pass the WRRSP authorization. NEORSD and the National Park Service entered into a sponsorship agreement for this project on December 1, 2010. Ohio EPA is unaware of any opposition to the Blossom Headwaters land acquisition project.

The Ohio EPA is sending this Limited Environmental Review (LER) decision and Finding of No Significant Impact to interested parties. Information supporting the LER is available from the project contact named below.

## G. Planning Information

The proposed project was reviewed by the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Historical Preservation Office. Neither of the agencies opposes the project.

## H. Conclusion

The proposed land acquisition to preserve high-quality headwater stream habitat is a nonpoint source pollution control project consisting of non-structural practices that qualifies for a LER and meets the following additional criteria for a LER:

*It has no significant environmental effect; it has no effect on high value environmental resources; and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation* – The proposed land acquisition will merely change ownership of critical aquatic habitat and associated intact terrestrial habitat. The land transfer from the Musical Arts Association to the National Park Service will positively affect high value environmental resources by protecting the streams and eliminating the possibility of residential development that would threaten the hydrology and aquatic habitat. No development, other land use change, or impact mitigation is anticipated.

*The cost is reasonable* – The Ohio WRRSP funds will provide permanent protection of high quality headwater habitat.

*The project is not a controversial action* - Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about the project that will acquire important headwater stream habitat for inclusion in the protected Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

*It does not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters; it will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters; and it will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population* – Land acquisition for inclusion as part of Cuyahoga Valley National Park will have no effect on wastewater discharge locations, volume, or conveyance or treatment capacity.

The planning activities for the project have identified no potentially significant adverse impacts. The project is expected to have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources (floodplains, wetlands, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeologically or historically significant sites, or threatened or endangered species).

The project will help acquire for preservation a significant parcel of undeveloped land that encompasses important headwater habitat tributary to the Cuyahoga River.

I. For further information, please contact:

Dan Halterman  
Ohio EPA - DEFA  
P.O. Box 1049  
Columbus, OH 43216-1049  
(614) 644-3658  
dan.halterman@epa.state.oh.us