

Gorge Dam Removal: Cultural Resources



“...every natural spot in the county preserved as a park, its wooded places made beautiful and its waters conserved.” (William J. Laub, 1921)



Purpose of Presentation



Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA):

- Requires federal agencies to take into account effects of an undertaking on historic properties
- Must allow time for comment, consultation
- Public involvement is part of the process!

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Purpose of Presentation



Historic properties are any prehistoric or historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are eligible for or already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Gorge Dam Removal



What kind of impacts?

1. Removal of the sediment
2. Storage of sediment
3. Removal of the dam
4. Exposure of the riverbank
5. Change in viewshed

Purpose of Presentation



If an undertaking will impact a historic property, then what?

- Avoid impacts
- Minimize impacts
- Mitigate impacts

Mitigation: documentation, public programming, preserving part of the site for interpretation—just to name a few options!

Purpose of Presentation



Public comments about cultural resources:

- During public involvement meeting (in person or on written forms)
- Online (SITE)
- Can send to contact information

Your comments and input are important!

History of the Gorge



1700's

Seasonal Native American residence, hunting and travel



1778

Creation of Northwest Territory, continued westward European migration



1803

Ohio Statehood



1836

Both Cuyahoga Falls and Akron incorporated



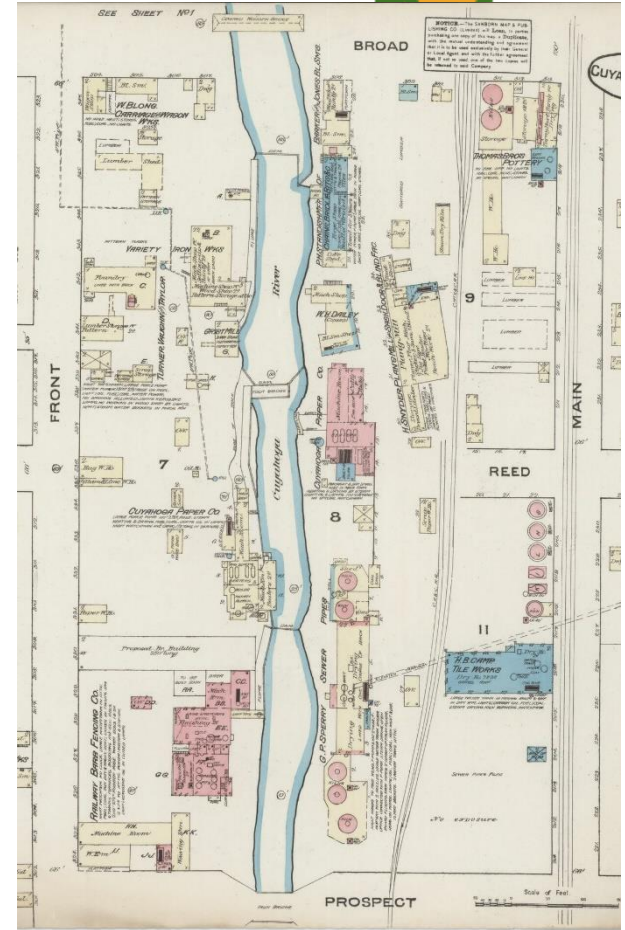
1840-44

Chuckery Race constructed



1854

5 dams provide water power to various industries along the river



1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. (Library of Congress)

History of the Gorge



1876 High Bridge constructed at Prospect St.

1879 High Bridge Glens and Park opens

ca. 1895 Front Street bridge constructed;
streetcar lines run to Gorge

1912 Current dam constructed by NOL&T

ca. 1915 River View Amusement Park opens

1929 Akron Metro Parks assumes ownership
of Gorge

1933 Roseland Dance Hall closes



Stairs to Old Maid's Kitchen. (Mary L. McClure)



Dam, 1914. (Mary L. McClure)

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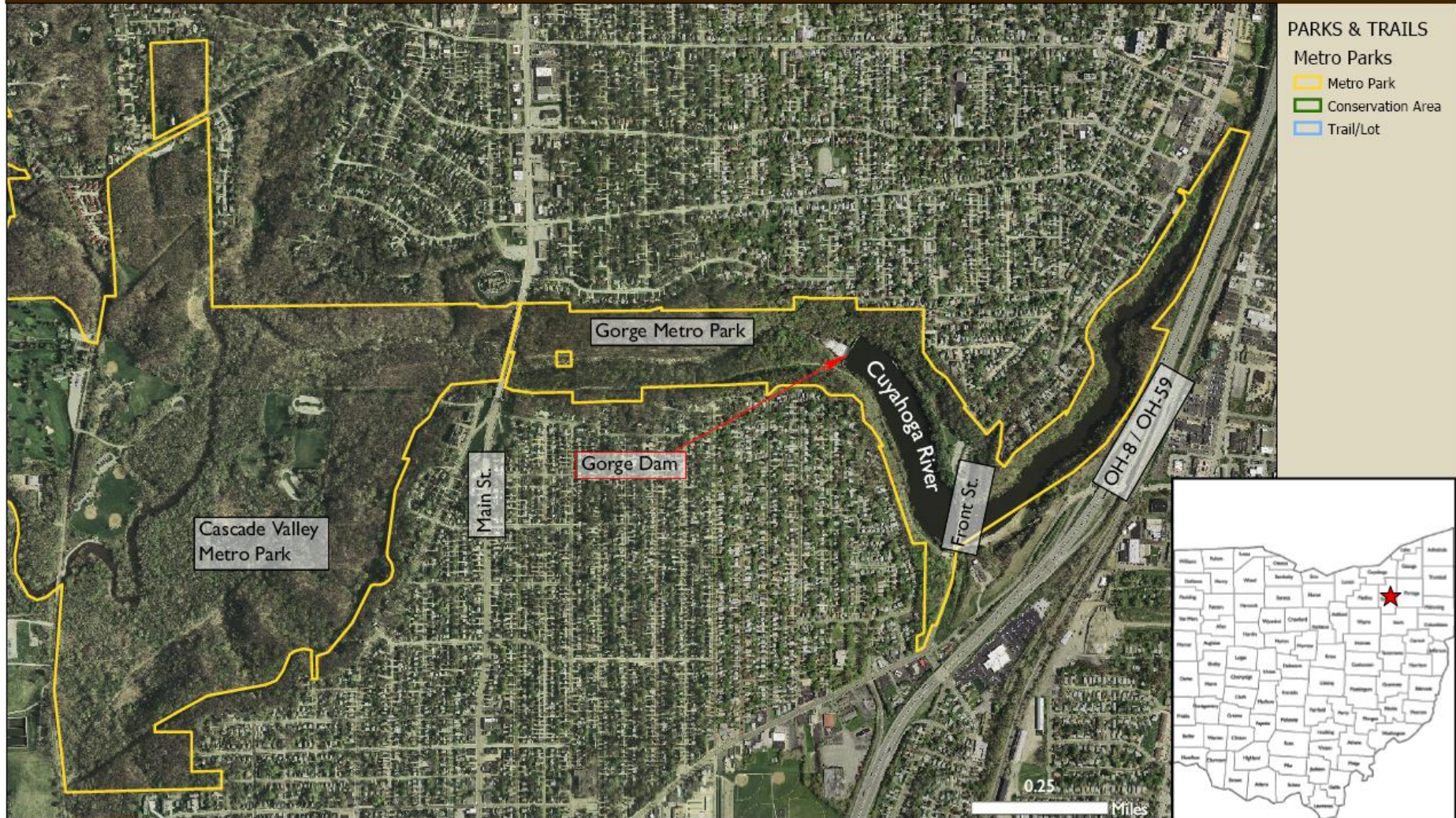
Gorge Dam Removal Project Area

Gorge Dam Removal Project Area

In Gorge Metro Park and Cascade Valley Metro Park



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Gorge Dam

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Gorge Dam



Gorge Dam: Constructed 1911-1912 by the Northern Ohio Light & Traction Co. (First Energy). Power-related use ceased in 1991.

Impacts:

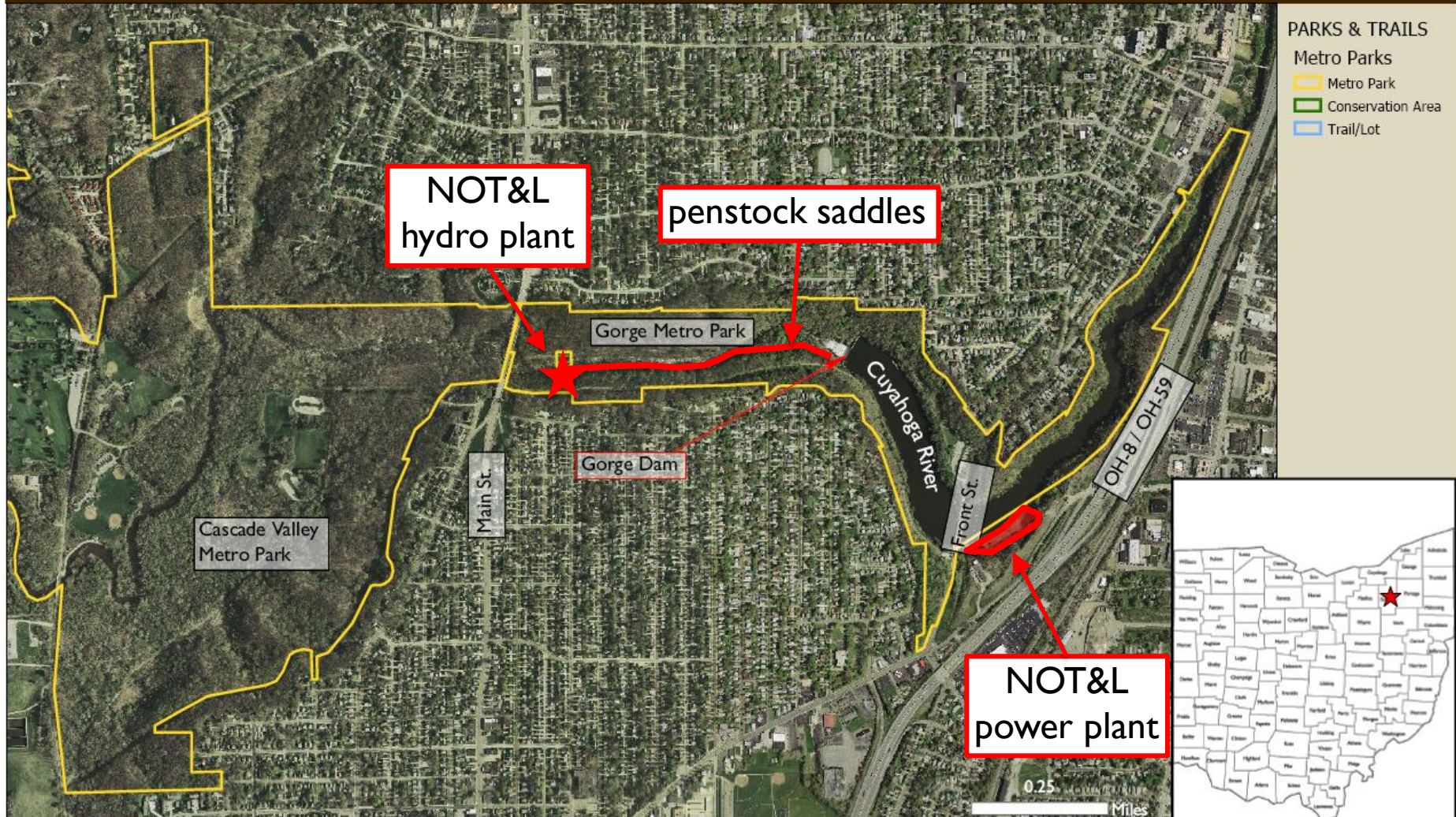
Physical removal of structure

Related Power Features and Structures

Gorge Dam Removal Project Area In Gorge Metro Park and Cascade Valley Metro Park



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Related Power Features and Structures



- Features related to Dam:
 - Hydro plant: Turbine generation plant downstream, 1915-1958. Currently in ruins.
 - Penstock: 8' diameter pipe with concrete supports, 1915. Pipe removed.
 - Power Plant: 1911 coal-fired plant demolished in 2009.



Related Power Features and Structures



Impacts:

Hydro plant:

- no expected impacts

Penstock:

- no expected impacts

Power plant:

- exposure of retaining wall as water recedes
- No expected impacts

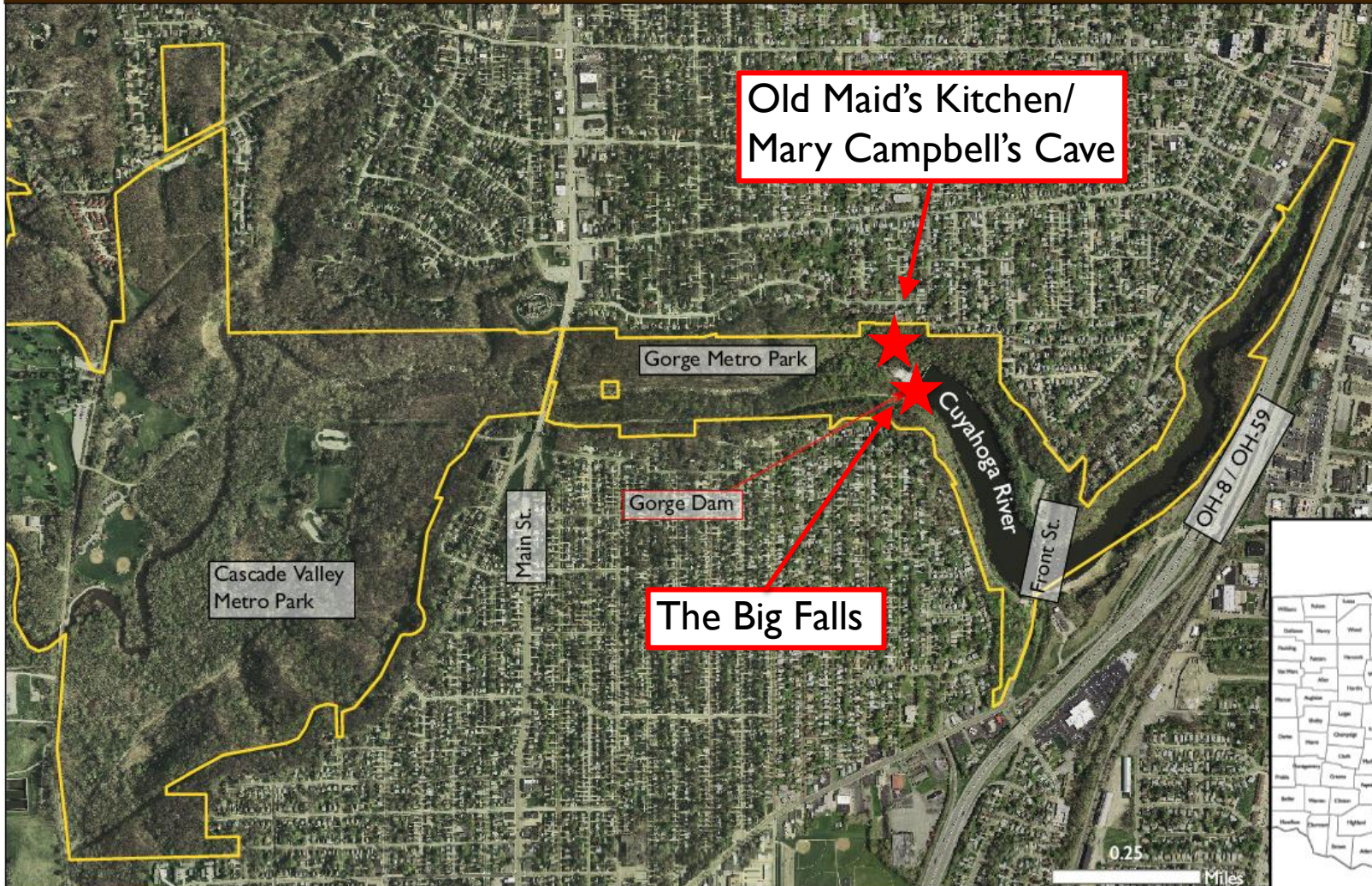
Natural Features

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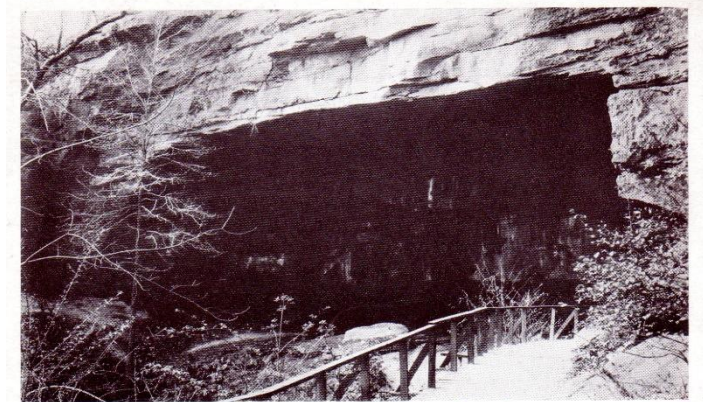
PARKS & TRAILS
Metro Parks
Metro Park
Conservation Area
Trail/Lot



Natural Features



- Natural Features
 - Big Falls: currently covered by dam
 - Caves/shelters, rock formations



Old Maid's Kitchen, Cuyahoga Falls, O.

Natural Features



Impacts:

Big Falls

- Removal of dam may reveal Falls

Other natural features

- Change in viewshed (closer to original?)

Bridge Remnants

Gorge Dam Removal Project Area In Gorge Metro Park and Cascade Valley Metro Park



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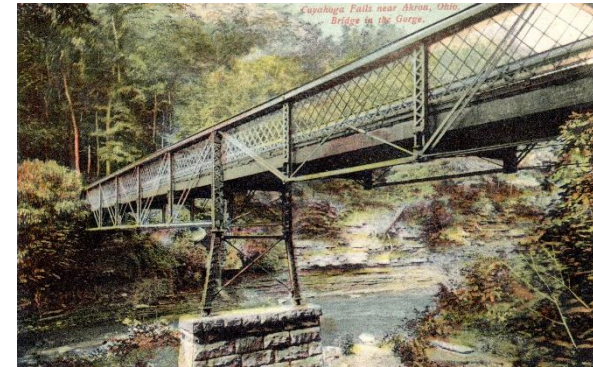
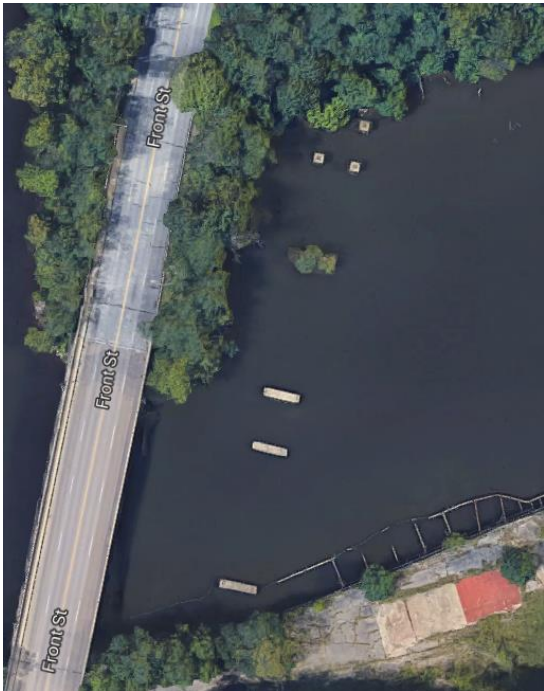
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Bridge Remnants



- Footbridge remnants: constructed ca. 1890 for amusement park. Only south abutments remain.
- Akron, Bedford & Cleveland Bridge (streetcar). 1903. Demolished in 1980; piers/abutments remain submerged.



Bridge Remnants



Impacts:

Footbridge remnants

- No impacts

The Akron, Bedford, and Cleveland Bridge

- Existing piers exposed

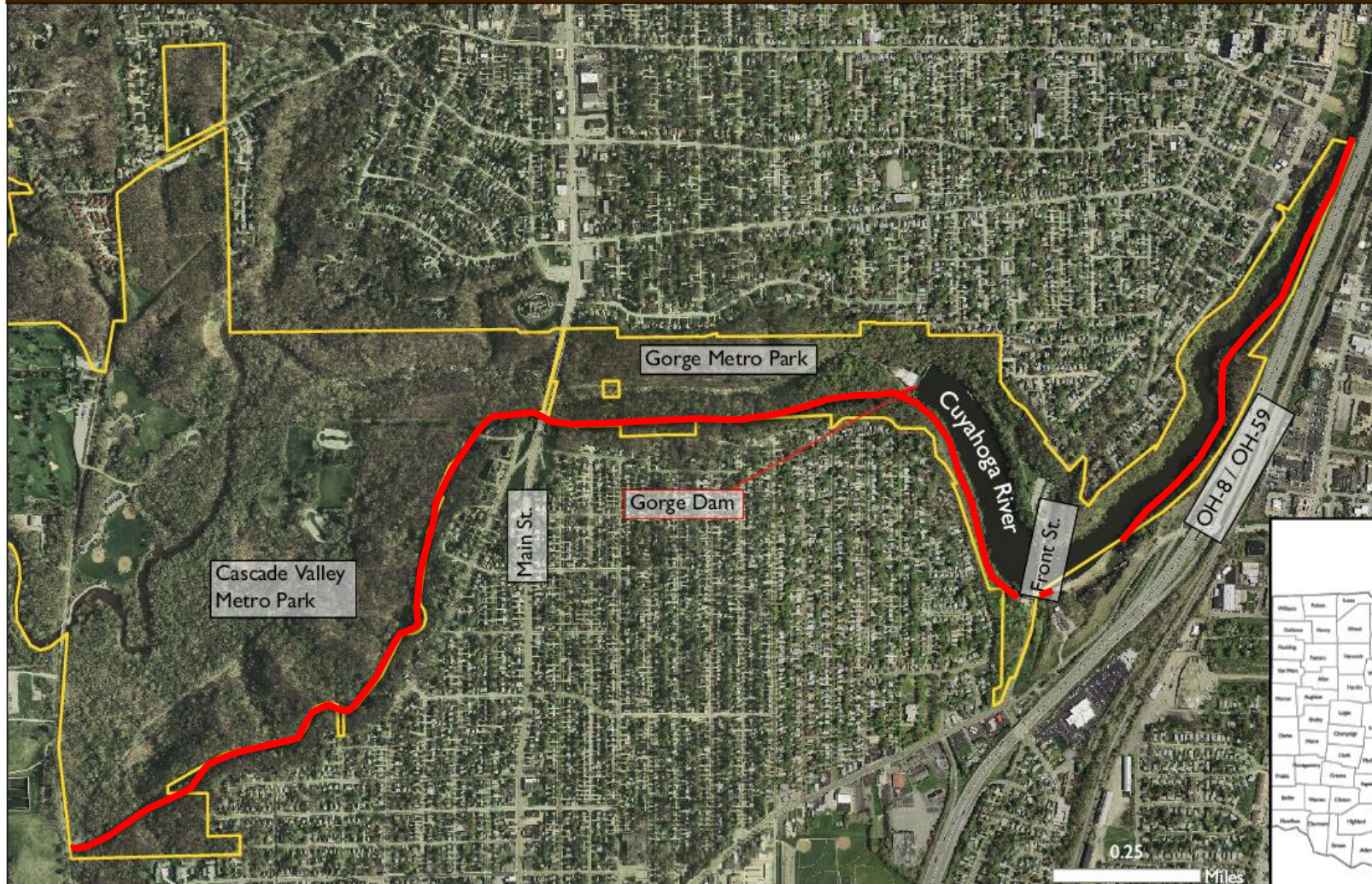
The Chuckery Race

Gorge Dam Removal Project Area In Gorge Metro Park and Cascade Valley Metro Park

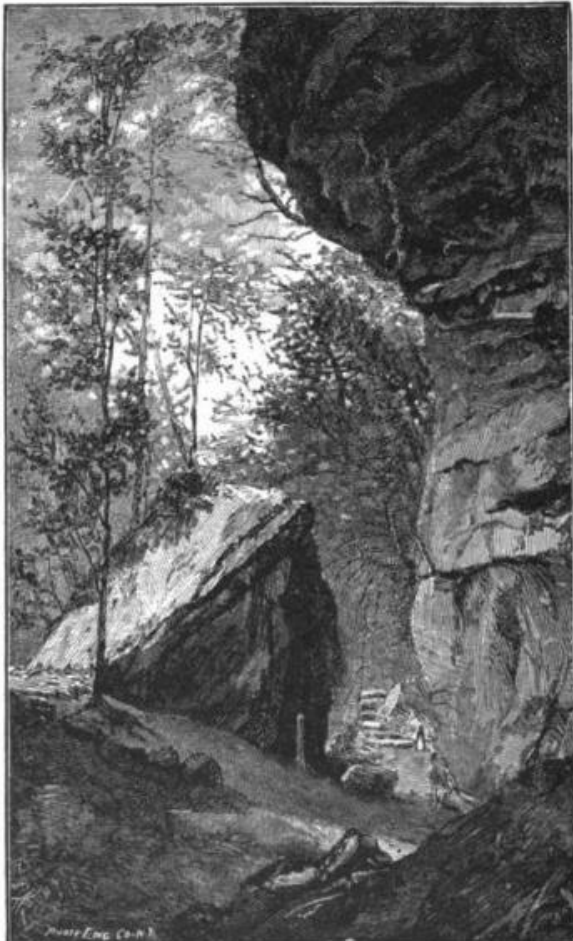


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The Chuckery Race



Scene on the celebrated "**Chuckery**" Race, in the Glens, below Cuyahoga Falls.

- Chuckery Race
 - Waterway built 1843-1844 intended to provide water power to industries
 - Parallels the Cuyahoga River for approximately 4 miles downstream from Prospect Street
 - Listed in National Register in 1973
 - Generally extant with varying levels of integrity along its length.

Photo from *Fifty Years and Over of Akron and Summit County* by Samuel A. Lane, 1892

The Chuckery Race



Impacts:

- On National Register of Historic Places, so this is a known historic property
- Removal of dam, exposure of riverbed, change in viewshed should not adversely impact this feature

Picnic Shelter, Skating Area

Gorge Dam Removal Project Area
In Gorge Metro Park and Cascade Valley Metro Park



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Picnic Shelter, Skating Area



- Gorge Picnic Shelter, 1933. Constructed by CCC. Historically significant.
- Ice Skating area, first used in 1947. Minor extant features.



Picnic Shelter, Skating Area



Impacts:

Gorge Picnic Shelter

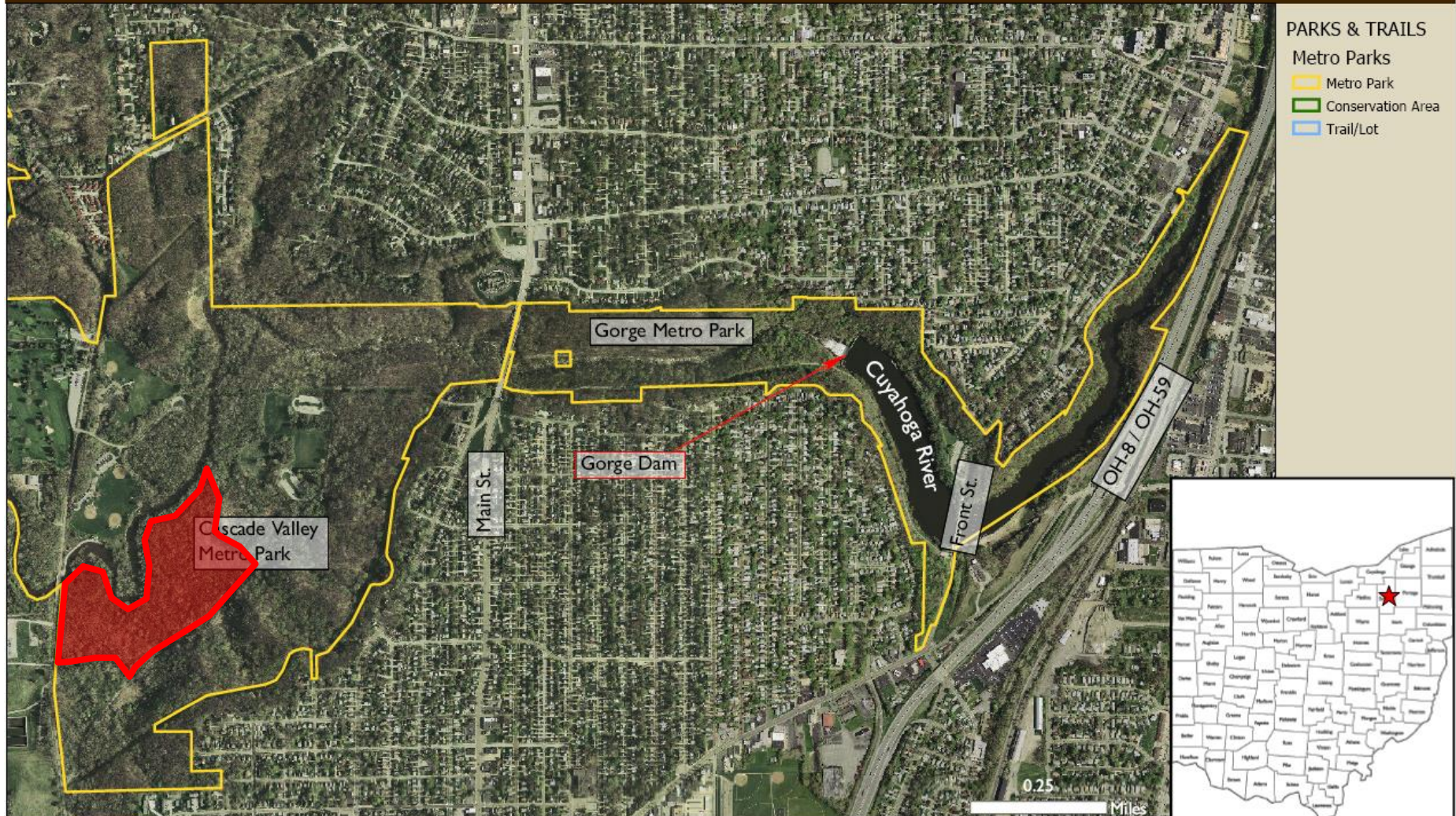
- Change in original viewshed

Skating area

- Change in original viewshed

Sediment Placement

Gorge Dam Removal Project Area In Gorge Metro Park and Cascade Valley Metro Park

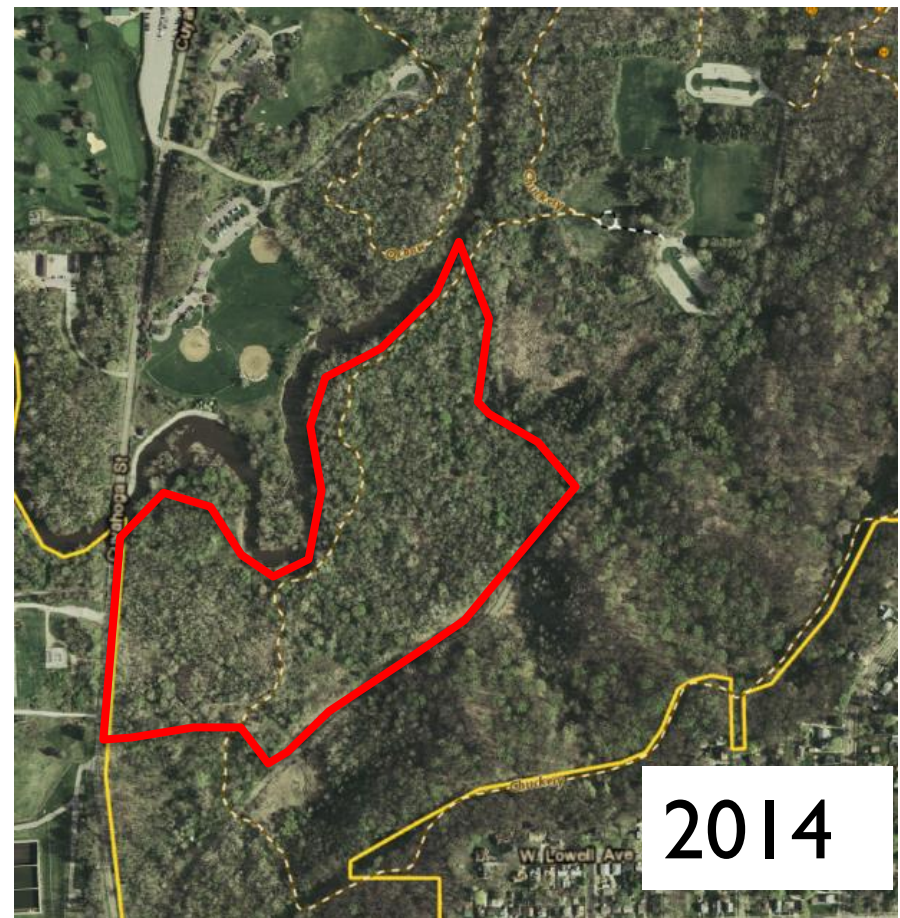
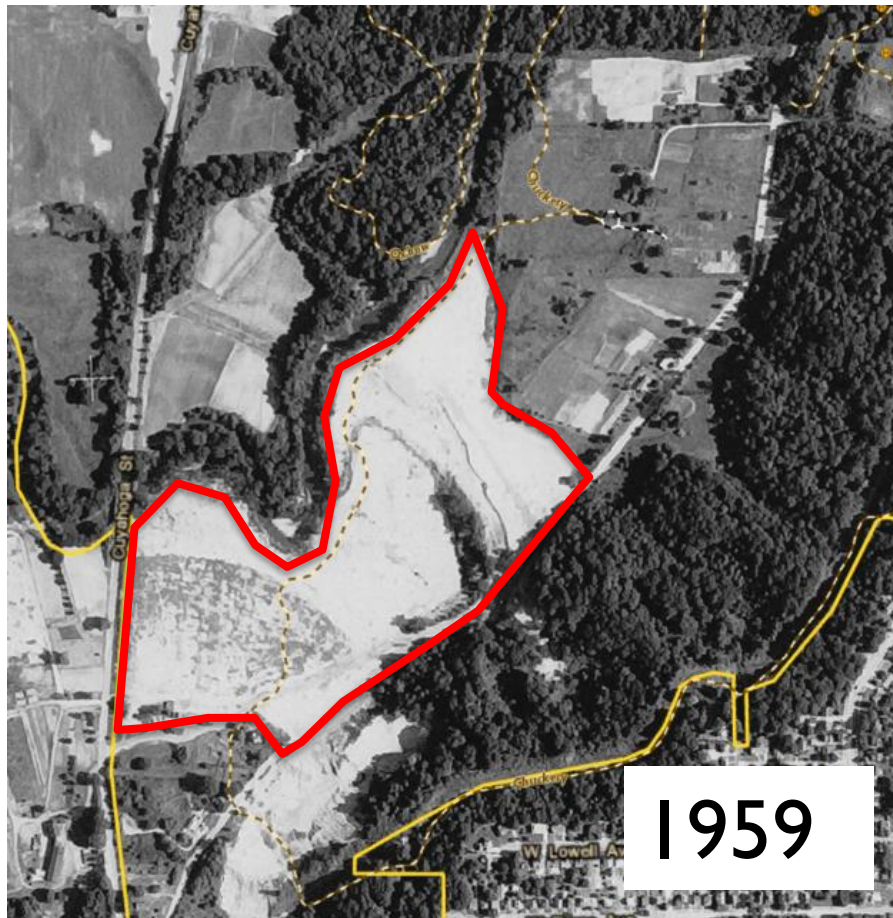


- PARKS & TRAILS
- Metro Parks
 - Metro Park
 - Conservation Area
 - Trail/Lot

Sediment Placement



Disturbed by human dumping activity, earthmoving
No impacts to cultural resources

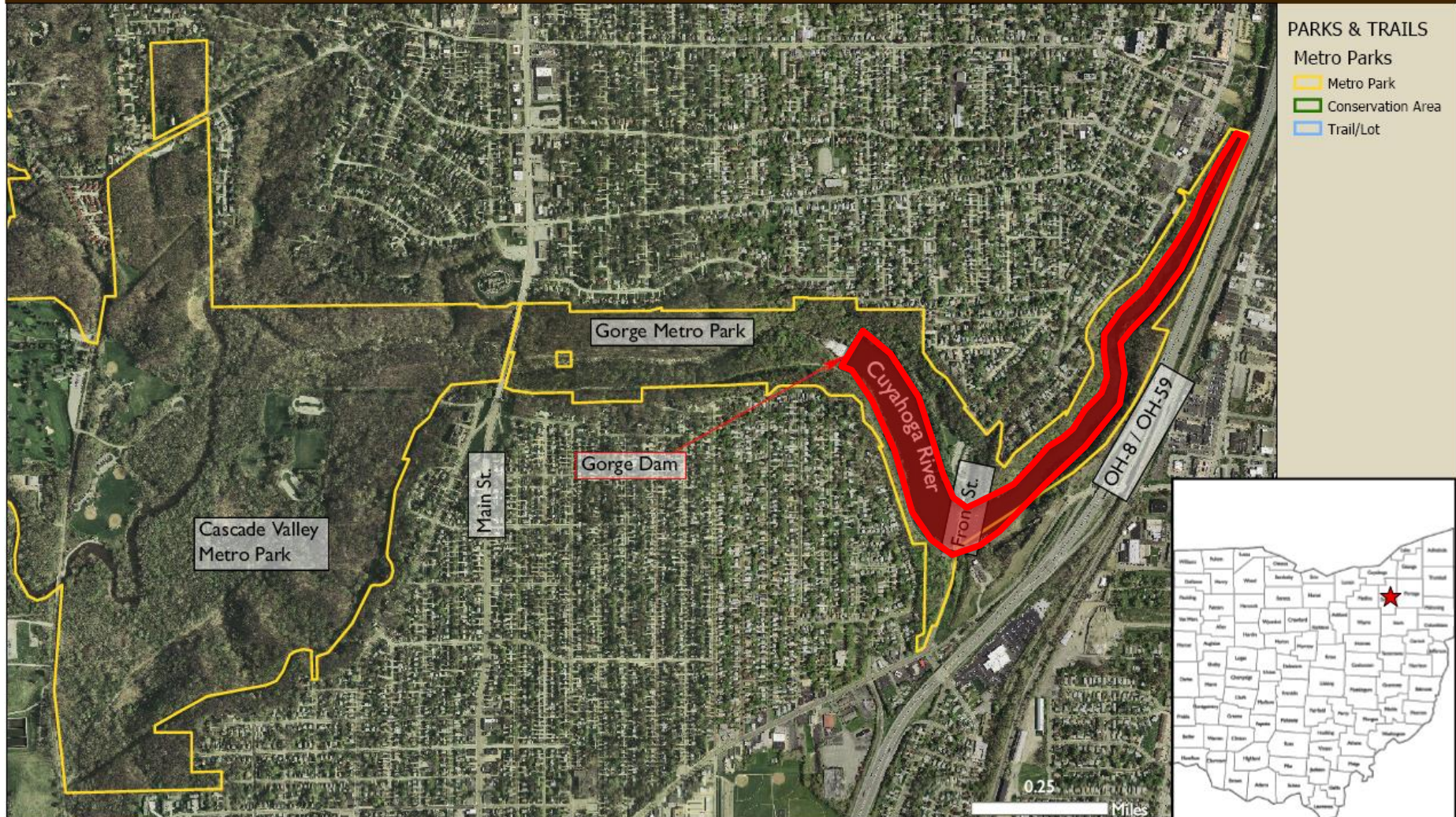


Underwater Resources?

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Underwater Resources?



Are there cultural resources under the water?

Caves? Trails? Stairs, benches? Artifacts?

- Monitor as water level goes down and river banks are exposed
 - Field checks
 - Drone?
- Coordinate to identify, document, conserve, protect, interpret!

Planning for Cultural Resources



- Assessment of resources
- Formalized agreement noting impacts and recommendations for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation
 - Likely a programmatic agreement
- Consulting parties such as American Indian tribes and local historical societies

Comments about Cultural Resources



- In writing during public involvement meeting
- In person at public involvement meeting
- On the Great Lakes Mud website at:
<https://www.greatlakesmud.org/gorge-dam---cuyahoga-river-aoc.html>
- By email: mshaeffer@summitmetroparks.org
- By mail: Megan Shaeffer, Cultural Resources Supervisor,
975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44313

Thank you!



Conservation Department
Summit Metro Parks
975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44313

Megan Shaeffer, Ph.D.
Cultural Resource Coordinator
330-865-8057 ext. 225
mshaefter@summitmetroparks.org