

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Kay Carlson, Program Manager  
Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization  
(216) 241-2414, ext. 253

**CUYAHOGA RIVER DESIGNATED AS AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVER**

CLEVELAND, OH - The Cuyahoga River will be designated by President Clinton as one of fourteen *American Heritage Rivers* on Thursday, July 30. The President will be making the announcement at noon via satellite from North Carolina. A local event, hosted by the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP), will be held on Thursday starting at 11 a.m., at Cuyahoga Community College's Unified Technologies Center on Woodland Avenue in Cleveland. Cabinet member Donna Shelala is expected to represent the President at this event.

The Cuyahoga has been selected as one of fourteen rivers to gain American Heritage Rivers status out of 126 applications submitted to the President's advisory committee for review. The designation recognizes the significance of the Cuyahoga as a symbol of the recovery of urban rivers and the hard work that has been done by numerous organizations, community groups, and private interests to revitalize the river. The plan for the future is to use this designation to strengthen collaboration among river stakeholders for further improvements to the river and its surrounding landscape; leverage additional resources for protecting and preserving natural, historic and cultural resources; and to foster sustainable economic development within the watershed. Mr. Ted Esborn, Chairman of the Task Force which assembled the application, says that "our vision for the Cuyahoga River is a renewal and renaissance of the river by integrating it back into the everyday life of the community. This vision is focused on sustainable development of the Cuyahoga River watershed through balanced planning of the economic and environmental uses of the river and the surrounding landscape."

The Task Force of local interests was spearheaded by the Cuyahoga River RAP in May, 1997, to compile the application for designation. The 15-page application was submitted to Washington for review in December, 1997. Over 600 letters were received in support of the nomination. The individuals and organizations supporting nomination of northeast Ohio's well-known "crooked river" are focusing on the abundant natural resources, economic, scenic and recreational features and historic qualities that make the Cuyahoga so unique. The Federal application process stresses the importance of the different uses of the river that range from supporting economic growth to providing a place for people to retreat from their daily activities.

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