

# Flooding shuts down Towpath Trail

Cuyahoga Valley park's main attraction to undergo repairs for several weeks

LEILA ATASSI  
AND APRIL MCCLELLAN-  
COPELAND  
Plain Dealer Reporters

A soupy Cuyahoga River flowed smugly alongside Jack Norman and his crew as they worked steadily to repair long stretches of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail that washed away during last week's flooding.

"I guess we're kind of like ants," said Norman, who works for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. "If someone squashes our anthill, we get right back in there and start rebuilding it."

A 9-mile section of the Tow-

**INSIDE:** Government help for homeowners likely will be limited. **B5**

path, from Rockside Road in Cuyahoga County south to the Red Lock Trailhead near Highland Road in Summit County, could be closed until July 21, said Mary Pat Doorley, a spokeswoman for the National Park Service.

As Norman and his crew toiled with shovels and rakes, dignitaries gathered 25 miles downstream for the opening of a new \$4 million section of trail.

That section meanders from the Lock 3 Park in downtown

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Akron nearly one mile north through Cascade Locks Park to a trailhead parking lot on North Street. At North Street, it picks up the existing 74-mile trail, which runs north through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and into Cuyahoga County.

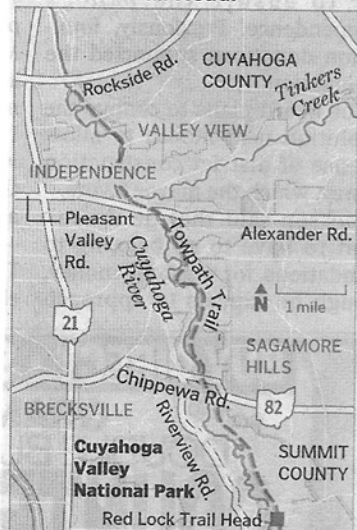
The Cascade Locks Park Association, the city of Akron, the

Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Summit County Metroparks and the National Park Service collaborated on the project.

The Towpath is the main attraction at the park, which is visited by 2 million people a year. Doorley refers to the trail as "our Old Faithful."

SEE TRAIL | B5

Flooding closes Towpath Trail from Rockside Road to the Red Lock Trail Head.



SOURCE: ESRI THE PLAIN DEALER

## TRAIL

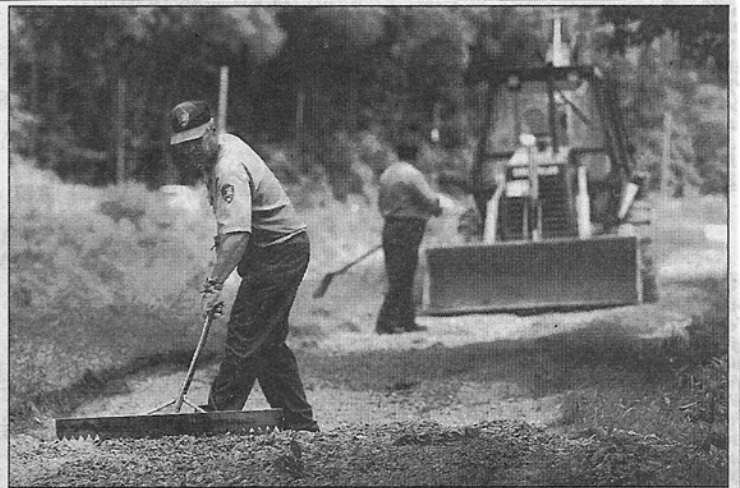
FROM B1

### Cuyahoga Valley path closed down by flooding

Park officials hope to reopen the entire Towpath as soon as possible. But engineers still are surveying the damaged northern portions and have yet to determine how much repairs will cost, Doorley said. Flooding in 2003 did more than \$1 million in damage to the trail, rendering sections unusable even today.

Last week's flooding turned a visitor center parking lot into a lake and filled the center's basement with nine feet of water. The water also brought down giant trees and submerged portions of the mostly gravel towpath.

On Wednesday afternoon, remnants of the trail could be found among the downed trees alongside the river and foliage trampled by the fast-moving flood waters.



MARVIN FONG | THE PLAIN DEALER

Jack Norman from the National Park Service helps repair some of the damage along the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail a week after flood waters decimated long stretches of the path.

Dozens of Park Service workers were pulled from their daily duties cutting grass or maintaining bridges to pitch in on the towpath. Dump trucks unloaded mounds of gravel onto the trail and workers smoothed several layers of the rock with shovels, rakes and backhoes.

"The motto right now is, 'Work hard and work fast,'" Norman said between scoops of gravel, "That came from the top."

To reach these Plain Dealer reporters: amcclellan@plaind.com, 216-999-4852 latassi@plaind.com, 216-999-4549