

The Ohio and Erie Canal National Corridor Virtual Swim

The O*H*I*O Masters Swim Club invites you to journey back in time when travel was neither easy nor fast as is commonplace in today's world. And the most expedient way to get to one's destination often was to travel via water.



Where mules once hauled barges full of goods and new settlers, the Towpath today serves runners, hikers, families, and lovers as they find places of peace and tranquility, hidden views of wildlife, and artifacts of the original settlers. More than 60 miles of the Towpath has been developed for recreational use into a multipurpose trail.

This virtual swim will take place in the Ohio and Erie Canal which is now obsolete, but when it first opened in 1827, it served as the primary transportation artery between Akron and Cleveland. The original canal connected Lake Erie at Cleveland with the Ohio River at Portsmouth, Ohio, and measured 309 miles in length. Our virtual swim will be the 42 locks of the canal's northern section between Akron and Cleveland, a distance of 40.5 miles. You will start your swim at Summit Lake in Akron - this is the north-south continental watershed divide. Waters flow north from this point. The swim will be entirely "downstream" as Akron's elevation is 395 feet above Lake Erie.



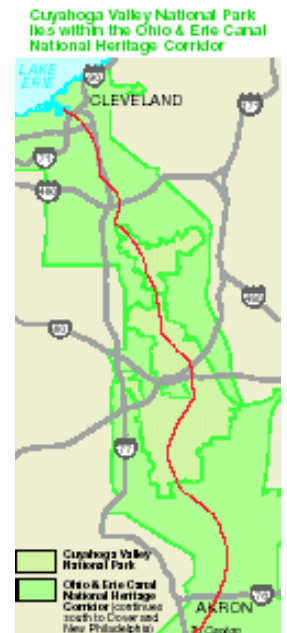
The Canal flows through downtown Akron.



That was the good news, as the last 7 miles of your swim will be in the Cuyahoga River. In 1969, Time Magazine described the Cuyahoga as a river that "oozes rather than flows" and in which "a person does not drown but decays." Oil slicks on the river's surface had again caught fire and the river became a stark symbol of water pollution. The burning river captured the attention of the nation and became a rallying point for passage of the Clean Water Act.



The final leg of the swim takes you under a variety of bridges and into the heart of downtown Cleveland.



Red line marks canal path.

During your swim you will pass through the Akron Metropolitan area, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Recreation area, and Cleveland Metroparks Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation to finish at historic Settler's Landing in Cleveland. Information is available at the following websites: www.ohio-eriecanal.com and www.nps.gov/cuva.