
City of Cuyahoga Falls

Kelsey Creek Stream Restoration Design-Build Phases I & II

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio



Building on the success of the first phase of an urban stream restoration, the City of Cuyahoga Falls restores the entire length of a creek that runs through a popular park, adding four acres of native habitat, enhancing public safety, and creating new opportunities for community education and stewardship.

SERVICES

Construction
Design-build
Ecological Restoration
Nature Based Solutions
Water Strategies

In 2013, Biohabitats helped the City of Cuyahoga Falls restore 1,000 linear feet of Kelsey Creek, a tributary to the Cuyahoga River which had become degraded after the removal of a dam in 2009. Based on the success of that effort, Biohabitats helped the City secure an Ohio EPA Section 319 grant to restore an additional 800 linear feet of the Creek located immediately upstream of the first project. Together, the two projects restored stability and ecosystem function to the entire reach of Kelsey Creek flowing through the City's popular Kennedy Park.

The restoration also enhanced public safety, protected the park's ballfields, and provided an outdoor learning lab for an adjacent community conversion school and a showcase for the City's Bicentennial Arboretum located nearby.

The stream was restored by extensive excavation to create new floodplain benches, making minor alignment adjustments to avoid eroding banks, and grading eroding banks to stable angles. The project created floodplain and riparian forests where turf grass used to grow and converted a half-acre patch of turf grass to meadow to provide more stormwater storage and reduce the need for mowing. New riffles, pools, and woody deflectors were added to the stream to increase in-stream habitat.

Construction included two volunteer planting efforts with students from the nearby Schnee Learning Center and Cuyahoga Falls High School. The restored stream is now an environmental education centerpiece for an adjacent school and in the future Bicentennial Arboretum.