

Get Ready to Celebrate 200 Years Along The Crooked River in 2012

By David Hill



There have been a lot of activities going on recently with the Cuyahoga that will benefit paddlers all along the river for years to come. Like the Indian above running the Coppacaw Falls (before the Ohio Edison dam was constructed), we are moving closer to a free-flowing Cuyahoga.

Friends of the Crooked River continue to move the River Trail concept forward and stakeholders along the entire river are taking notice of what this could mean to both their individual communities and the region. Crooked River Adventures completed their 2nd year of operations in Kent and several triathlon-type events were held in the Portage County section of the river. These included the Black Squirrel Adventure Triathlon, Brady's Leap Adventure Race and the Headwaters Adventure Race

<http://www.kent.edu/news/announcements/success/crookedriveradventureraces.cfm>

The City of Cuyahoga Falls will be celebrating their Bicentennial in 2012 and they are planning to kick it up downtown and throughout the city. Hell, they may even light the river on fire for all we know! I have been participating in the committee meetings and there will be various events held throughout the year, with a 10 day celebration Aug 3-12

<http://cfo.cityofcf.com/web/bicentennial>. There is also talk of 3 craft beers being released throughout 2012 by a local brewery for those of you interested in such libations!

The City of CF is also looking to embrace the river during the 2012 celebrations and it will be interesting to see what the river will look like if (when) the 2 downtown dams are removed

<http://cuyahogafalls.patch.com/articles/hopes-to-bring-whitewater-rafting-to-cuyahoga-falls-still-afloat>.

While I don't think rafting this section will be an option, it will be beneficial to the Wednesday Night group and any others running this section to see what rapids are hidden below these dams.



Completed Mill/Sheraton Dam, post 1918, looking north



Construction photograph of Mill/Sheraton Dam, ca. 1914, looking south

This dam removal project will obviously uncover 200 years of industrial activities and it will be up to paddlers to ensure that the end result is a relatively debris-free river section for recreational usage. It has been stated that funds are available for restoration activities, but a paddler's idea of river restoration for

recreational use may be more aggressive than a politician's viewpoint. Therefore, I will be drafting a letter for club consideration and approval so that stakeholders understand the paddling communities concerns and appropriate funding can be allocated early in the project budget.

We have all heard the jokes that there is no whitewater in Ohio and the non paddling public will need to be educated on swift water safety. It is my opinion that the club should consider utilizing this local resource in order to educate the public on safe paddling. Maybe a local river rescue clinic in conjunction with area fire departments, regular outings on the water similar to the Wednesday Night Paddling gatherings, down river races, etc. Let's face it the River Trail will bring a wide variety of paddlers to the area and the local paddling club will be looked upon for advice and support. After all, the opening of this river segment could be a boon to the local economies and a new resource for stepping up the paddling scene without driving hours for our fix!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNFYyg1oatI&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL



Until next time, be safe out there and get your boof on!