

**Little Cuyahoga River
Balanced Growth Plan Meeting**

Friday, March 22, 2013
10:30 a.m.

Goodyear Branch Library
60 Goodyear Boulevard
Akron, OH 44305

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
 - Meeting Goals

- II. Balanced Growth Plan Update**
 - Website
 - Maps
 - Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Conservation Priority Areas
 - Missing or Needed Data/Mapping

- III. Work Session - Determining Priority Areas**
 - Questions to Ask the Communities - Survey
 - How to Best Engage Communities
 - General Priority Conservation, (Re) Development, and Agriculture Areas
 - Specific Priority Areas

- V. Watershed Updates**
 - Watershed Updates from Attendees

- VI. Next Meeting**

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Balanced Growth Plan Meeting**
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60 Goodyear Boulevard
Akron, OH 44305

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions; Eric Akin - NEFCO

- The meeting began with a review of what was covered at the February meeting.
- Introduction of all meeting attendees.
- NEFCO's Maia Peck was introduced. She will be assisting in the development of the Little Cuyahoga River Balanced Growth Plan. She recently completed the fully State endorsed Middle Cuyahoga River Watershed Action Plan.

II. Balanced Growth Plan Update

Website

- NEFCO said the information on the Balanced Growth Plan will be posted on the NEFCO website at http://www.nefcoplanning.org/little_cuy.html.
- The website will have the maps, meeting materials, presentations, and other documents produced for the Plan.
- An image of the current webpage for the Little Cuyahoga River plan was shown.

Maps

- NEFCO staff did a quick review of the maps 17 draft maps already produced for the Little Cuyahoga River Watershed.
- The draft maps are available for viewing on the website.
- NEFCO will be producing more maps and posting them as the Balanced Growth Plan proceeds.
- The maps will be used as a tool in determining priority conservation and (re)development areas.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Conservation Priority Areas

- Liz Mather from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) discussed their Mapping Conservation Value project they have completed.
- She provided maps of the probability of Natural Areas Conservation Value and Agricultural Conservation Value for the watershed.
- They worked with over 60 expert partners and participants to determine high-value areas for conservation. The effort also allows for coordinating efforts among the partners.

- NEFCO will incorporate this information into the Balanced Growth Plan mapping for the Little Cuyahoga River.

Missing or Needed Data/Mapping

- NEFCO asked the group what information is still need to assist in the Balanced Growth Planning efforts.
- Suggested data/mapping:
 - Summit & Portage County Wetland Data
 - Existing Protected Areas (publicly owned lands, conservations easement, etc.)
 - Vacant Housing/Demolished Houses
 - Land Bank Holdings
 - Natural Areas Along Camp Brook
 - Large Parking Lots
 - Large Storm Water Retention Basins
 - Areas with Comprehensive Plans
 - Trails and Greenway Plans
 - Hydric soils

III. Work Session - Determining Priority Areas

Community Survey

- NEFCO distributed a draft list of community survey questions for determining priority conservation and priority development areas.
- The group eliminated questions that were repetitive, not relevant to the watershed, and/or confusing.
- The group rephrased several questions for clarity and/or accuracy.
- The group decided the surveys should be written for a person with limited knowledge on watershed and land use planning. The technical terminology should be limited.
- It was suggested that the survey could be distributed before NEFCO speaks with a group or community representatives and then another have them complete another survey after NEFCO speaks with them to see if their priorities changed as the presented information.
- The group suggested providing some type of incentive for a stakeholder to complete a survey. Suggestions included coupons, gift certificates, or drawing for a prize.

Community Engagement

- The group discussed the best way to engage each community in the Little Cuyahoga River Watershed. NEFCO will highlight specific benefits of the Balanced Growth Plan for each community.
- NEFCO will attempt to meet individually with representatives from each city, village, and township in the watershed.
- For public outreach, organizing an event for River Day was suggested.

- The Sierra Club said they would like to hold another Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Festival. They are looking at potential locations. They held the inaugural event at Springfield Lake in 2012.
- Providing information to be included in a community's newsletter was suggested.
- Contacting Cascade Village Homeowner Association was recommended.
- In general, the group believed that linking with existing environmental events was the best outreach strategy.

General Priority Conservation, (Re) Development, and Agriculture Areas

- The group discussed including priority agricultural areas in the Balanced Growth Plan. Most believed it might be useful for the Portage County townships. There are few remaining agricultural areas in the Summit County portion of the watershed. The Summit County agricultural areas that do remain are probably not viable for long-term production due to development.
- Priority Conservation Areas can include both existing natural areas to be protected and natural areas to be restored.

Specific Priority Areas

- NEFCO had a large aerial photo map for the attendees to mark priority areas.

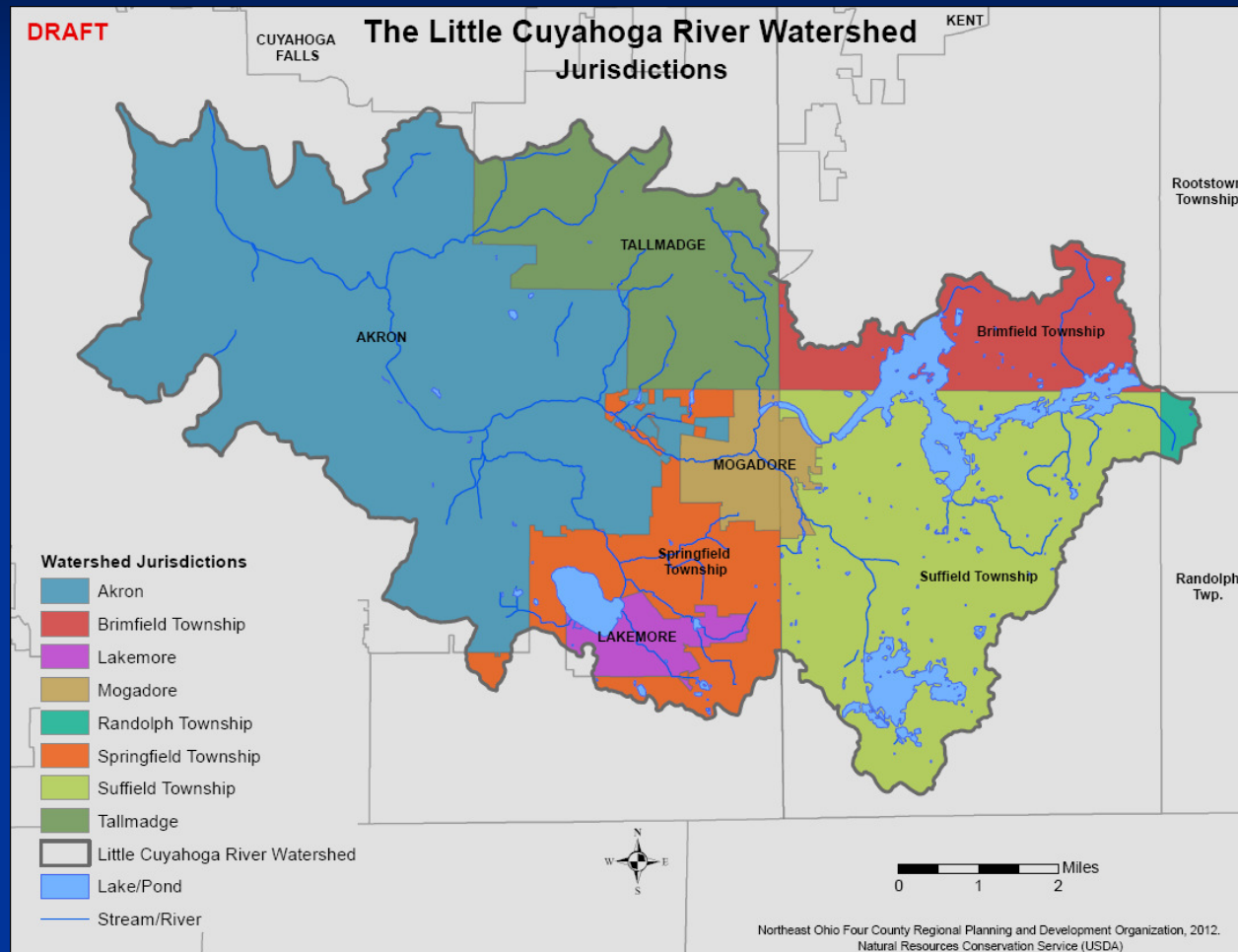
V. Watershed Updates

- This agenda item was skipped due to time constraints.

VI. Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be in late-April or May. NEFCO will send out an email of potential meeting dates.

Little Cuyahoga River



Little Cuyahoga River – Balanced Growth Meeting
Friday, March 22, 2013

Balanced Growth Planning

- Voluntary, incentive based strategy
- Goal: Long-term Economic Competitiveness, Ecological Health, and Quality of Life
- Reducing Urban Sprawl
- Protecting Natural Resources
- Encouraging Redevelopment
- Watershed Planning Partnerships
- FUNDING INCENTIVES for Endorsed Plans

Watershed Characteristics

- Little Cuyahoga River is 17.4 Miles Long
- Drains 61.7 mi²
- Springfield Lake, Wingfoot Lake, and Mogadore Reservoir.
- Primary Tributaries:
 - Ohio Canal*
 - Camp Brook
 - Springfield Lake Outlet
 - Roosevelt Ditch
 - Union Oil Tributary
 - Wingfoot Lake Outlet

Watershed Characteristics

- Four HUC 12 Watersheds
- Two Counties
- Two Cities
- Two Villages
- 4 Townships
- “The Little Cuyahoga River subwatershed drains the Akron metropolitan area and is among the most urbanized and densely populated in the state.” – *Ohio EPA, Cuyahoga River TMDL*

Website

- www.nefcoplanning.org/little_cuy.html
- Overview
- Maps
- Upcoming Meetings
- Previous Meeting Materials
- Past Reports
- Coming Soon: Links

Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Mapping

15 Maps to Be Used to Develop a
Balanced Growth Plan

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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Jurisdictions

CUYAHOGA FALLS

KENT

Rootstown Township

TALLMADGE

AKRON

Brimfield Township

MOGADORE



Springfield Township

Suffield Township

Randolph Twp.

LAKEMORE

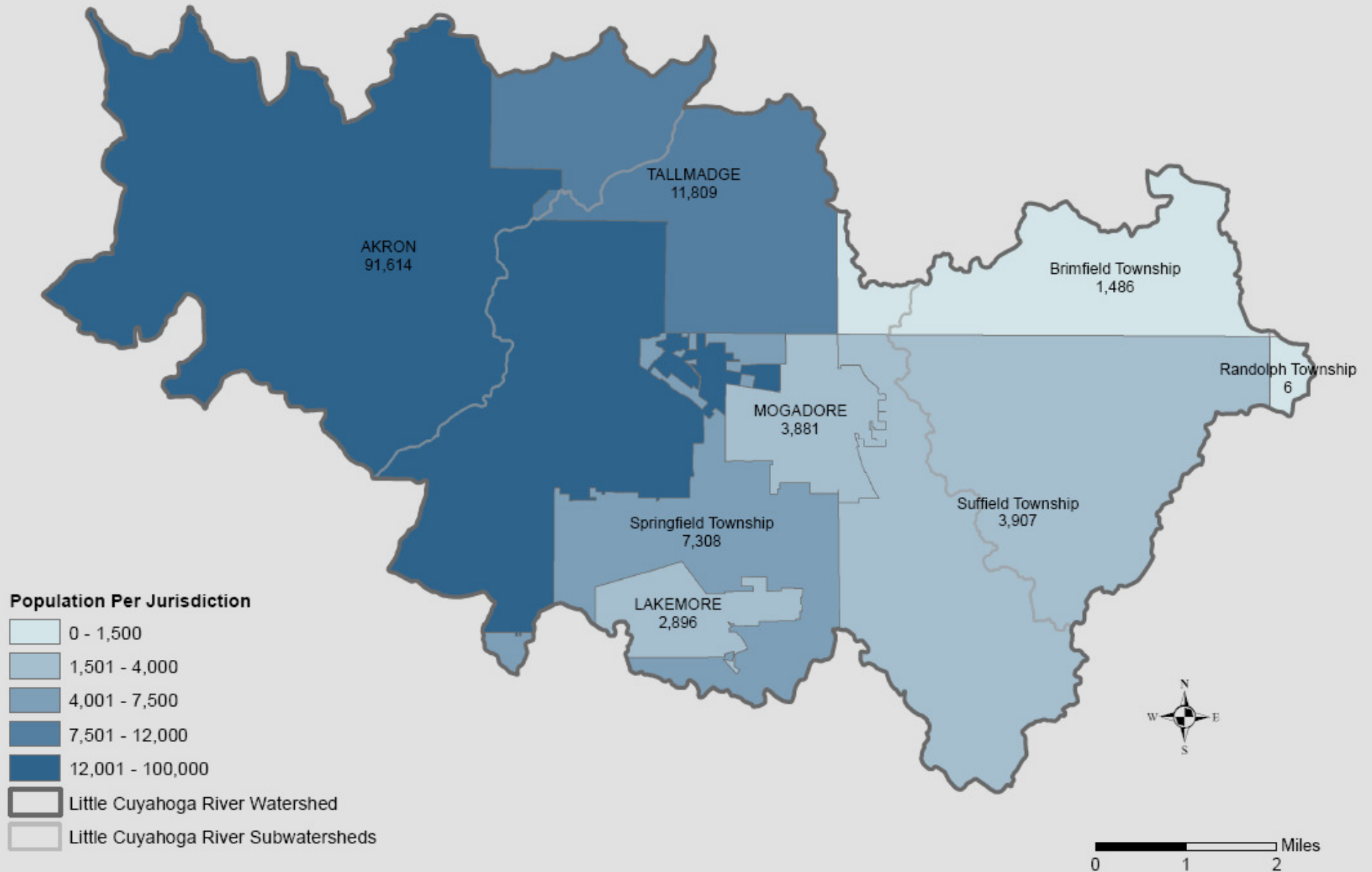
Watershed Jurisdictions

-  Akron
-  Brimfield Township
-  Lakemore
-  Mogadore
-  Randolph Township
-  Springfield Township
-  Suffield Township
-  Tallmadge
-  Little Cuyahoga River Watershed
-  Lake/Pond
-  Stream/River



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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Jurisdiction Population



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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Shaded Relief using Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and Hillshade



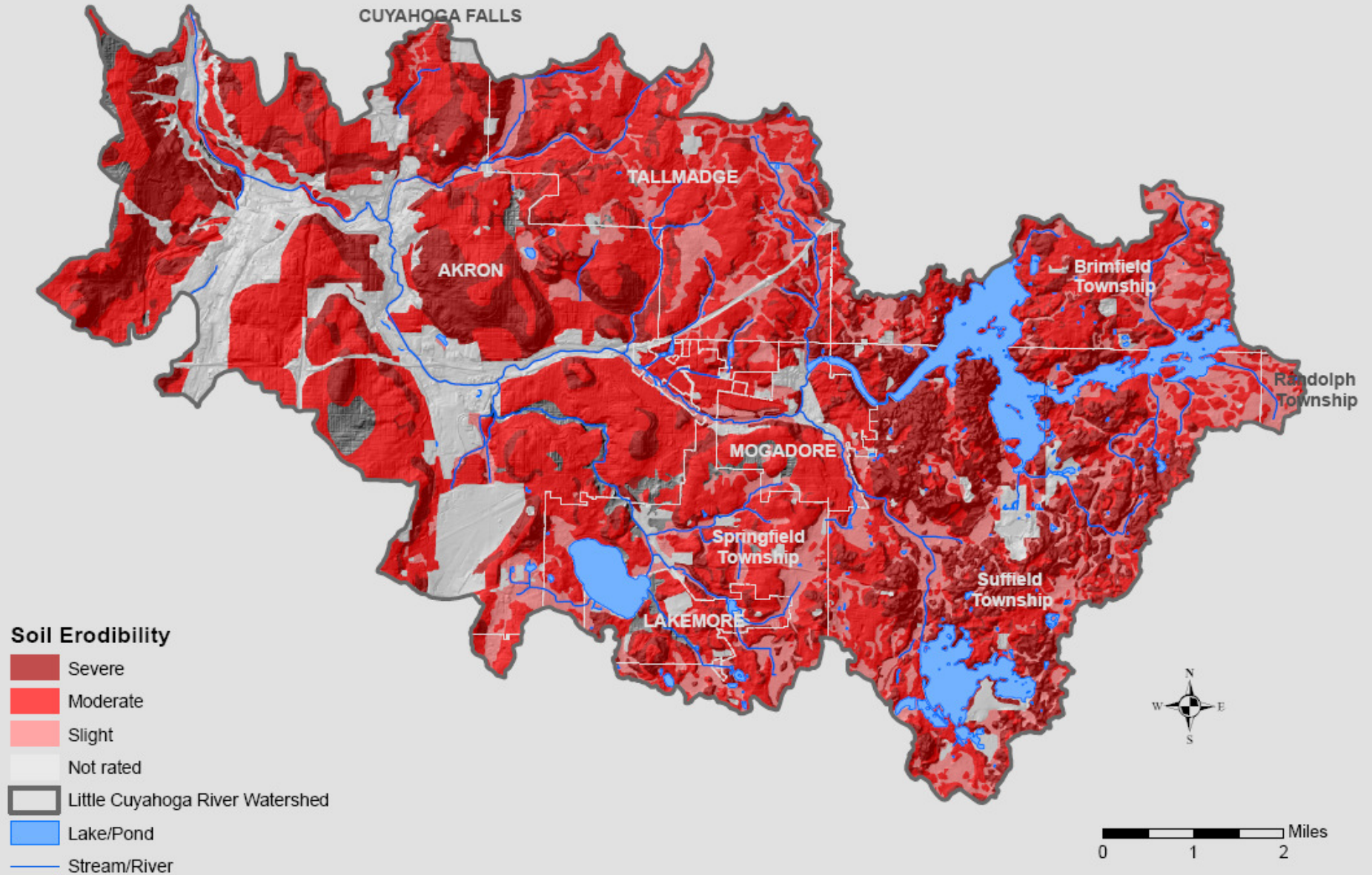
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Percent Slope



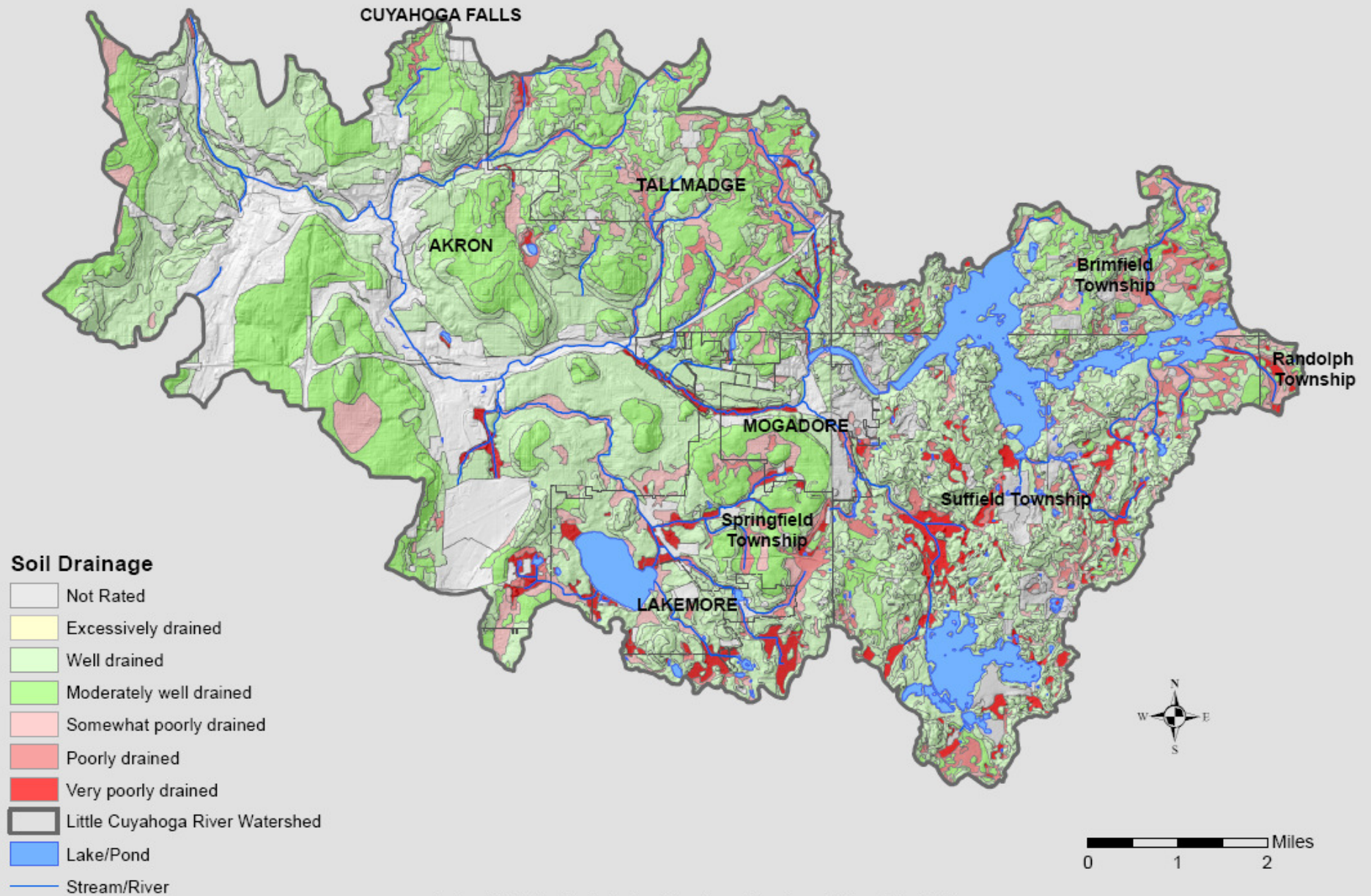
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Soil Erodibility



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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Soil Drainage

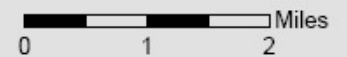
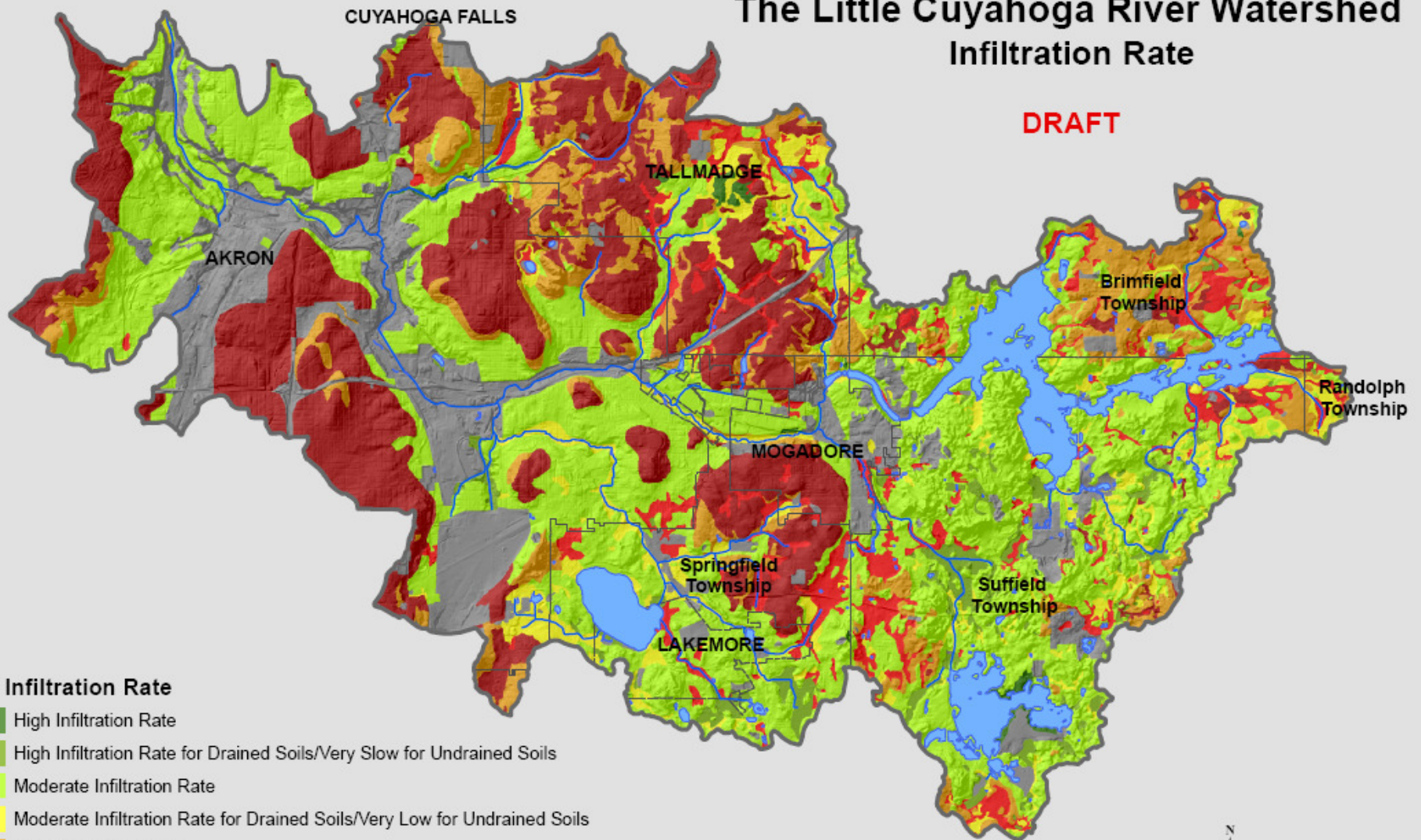


The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Infiltration Rate

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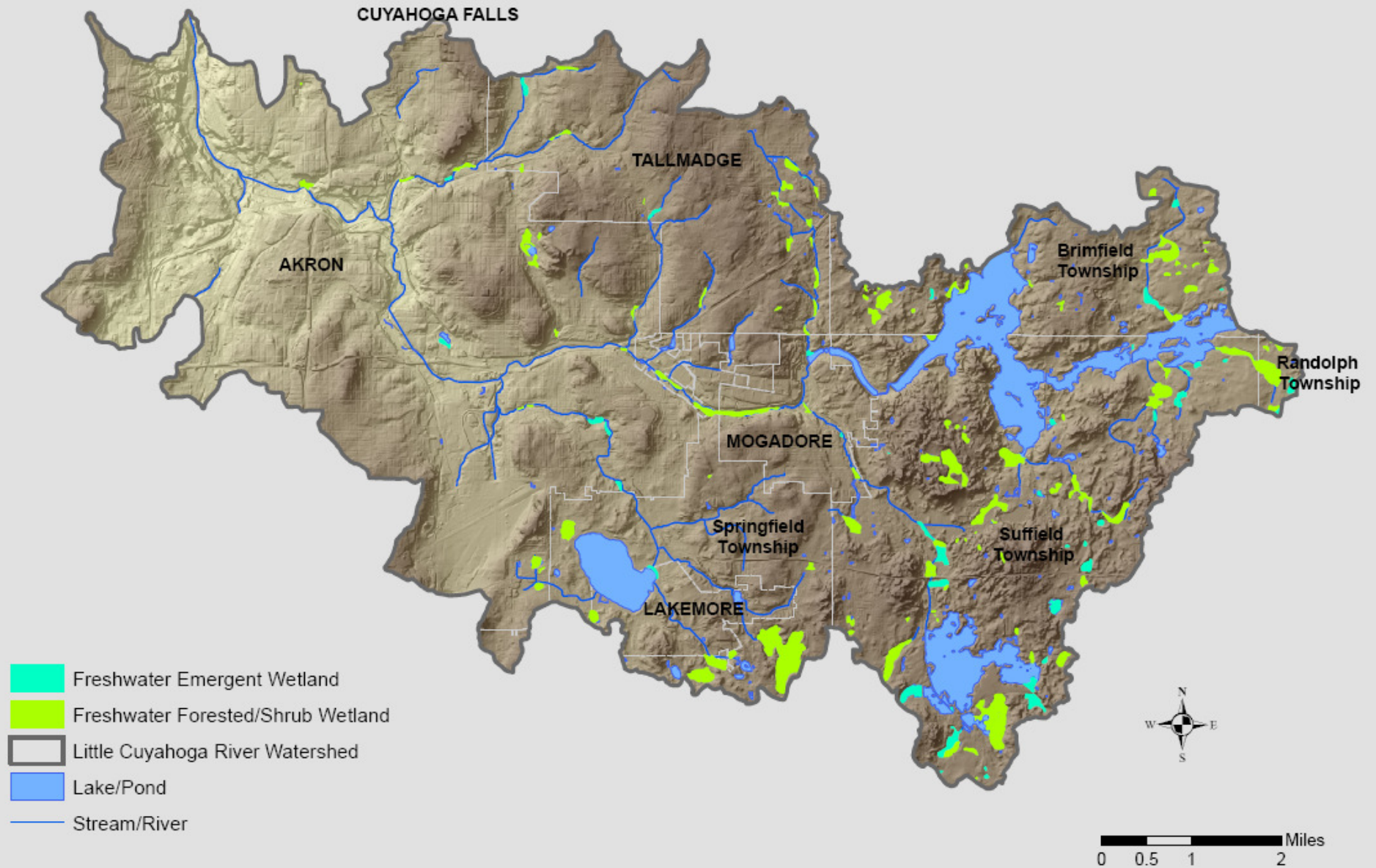
Soil Infiltration Rate

-  High Infiltration Rate
-  High Infiltration Rate for Drained Soils/Very Slow for Undrained Soils
-  Moderate Infiltration Rate
-  Moderate Infiltration Rate for Drained Soils/Very Low for Undrained Soils
-  Slow Infiltration Rate
-  Slow Infiltration Rate for Drained Soils/Very Slow for Undrained Soils
-  Very Slow Infiltration Rate
-  Not Rated
-  Little Cuyahoga River Watershed
-  Lake/Pond
-  Stream/River



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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Wetlands



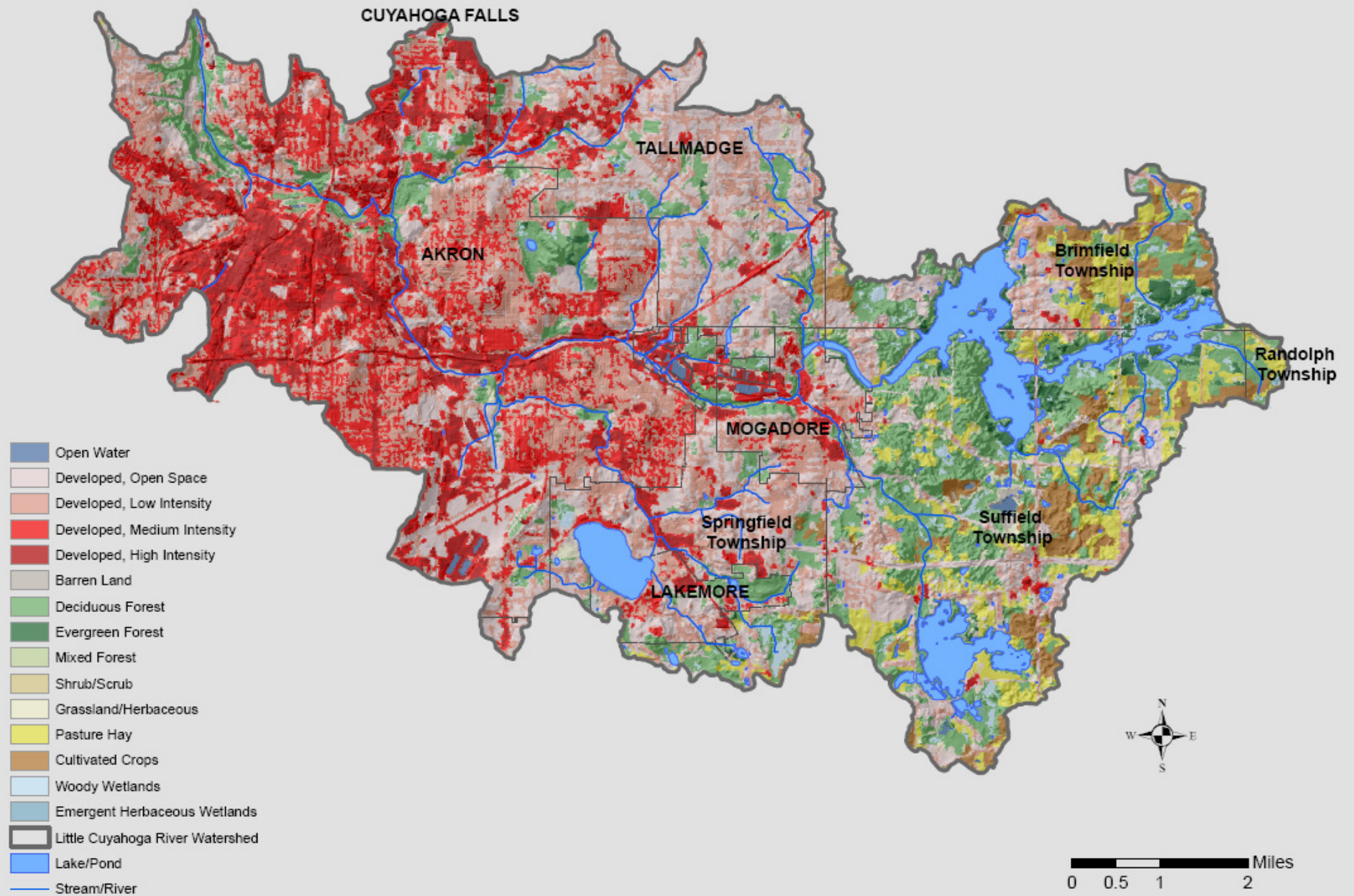
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Riparian Setback



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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Land Cover



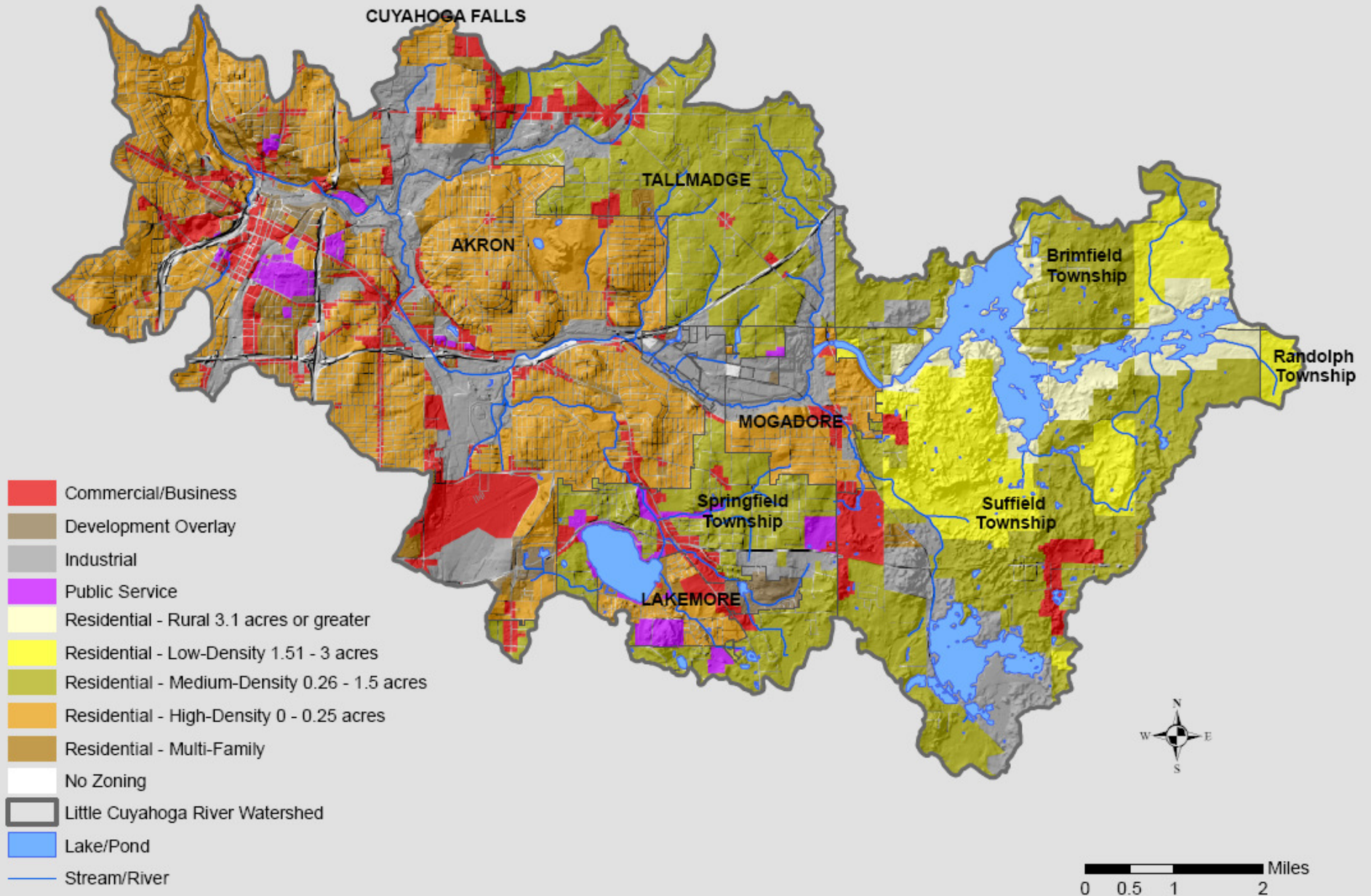
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Changes in Land Cover From 2001 - 2006



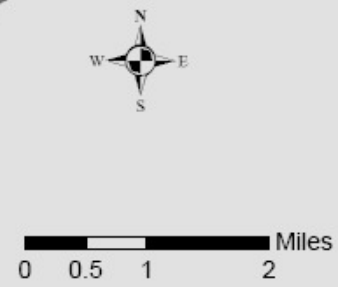
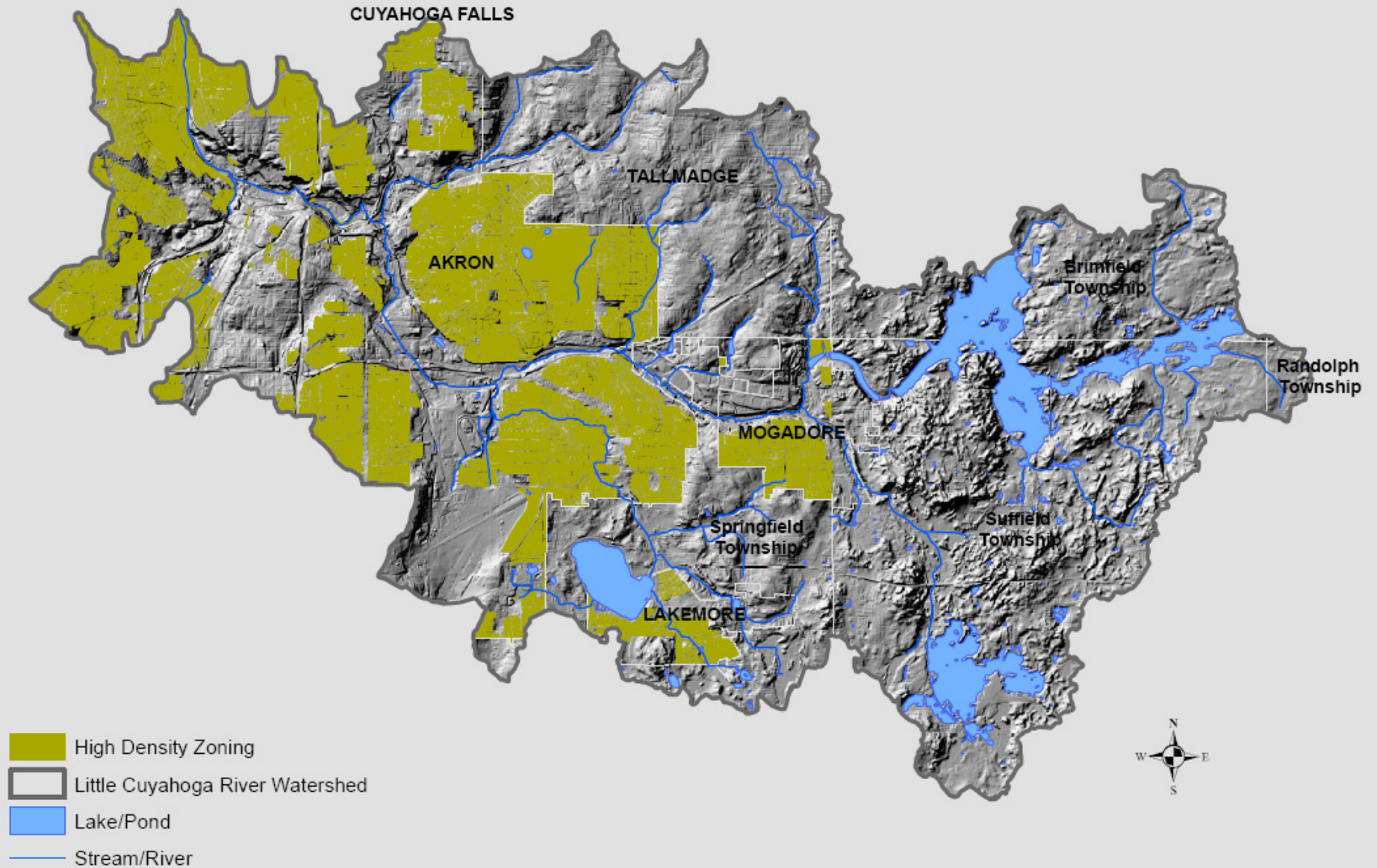
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Zoning



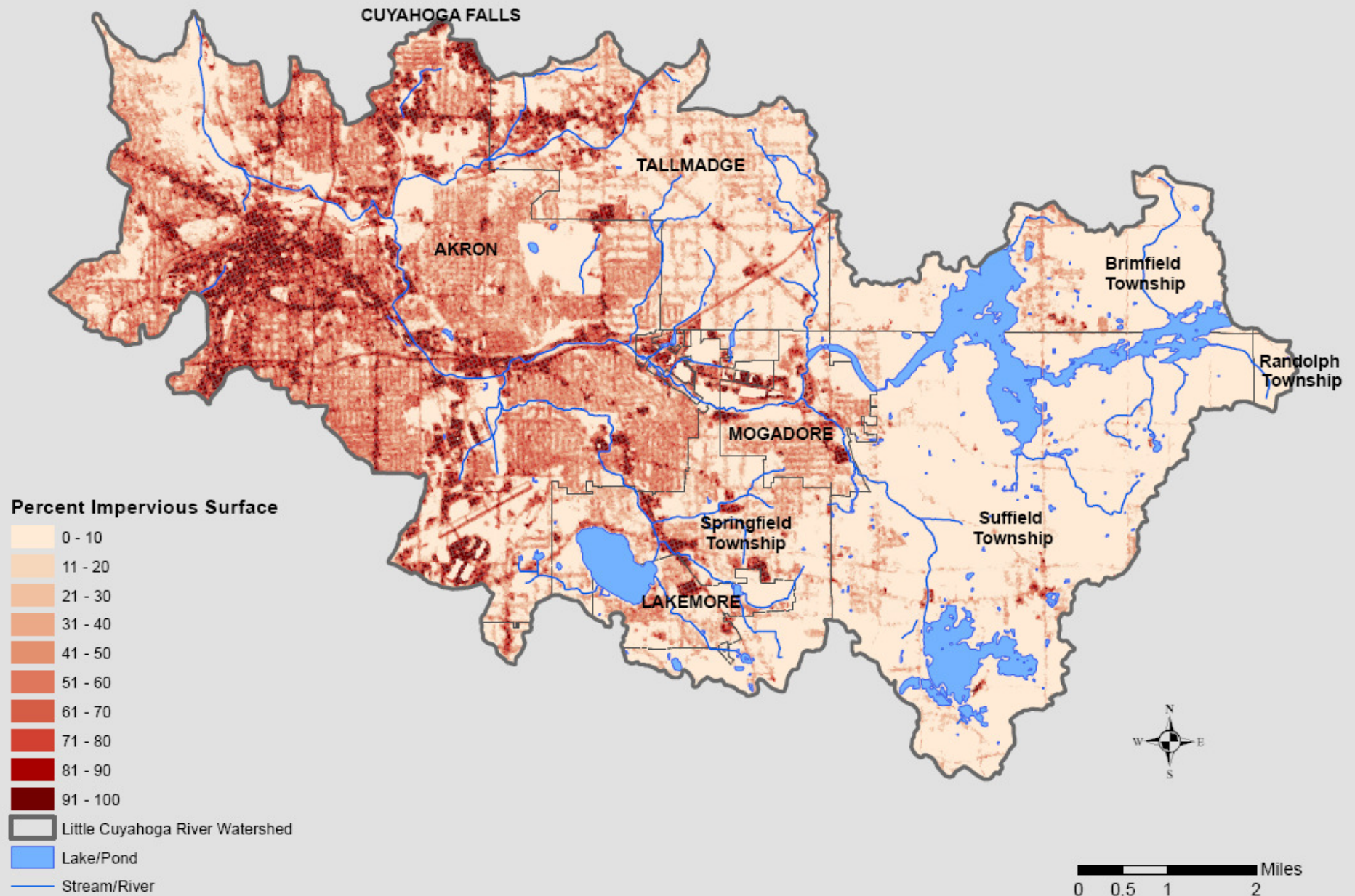
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed High - Density Zoning



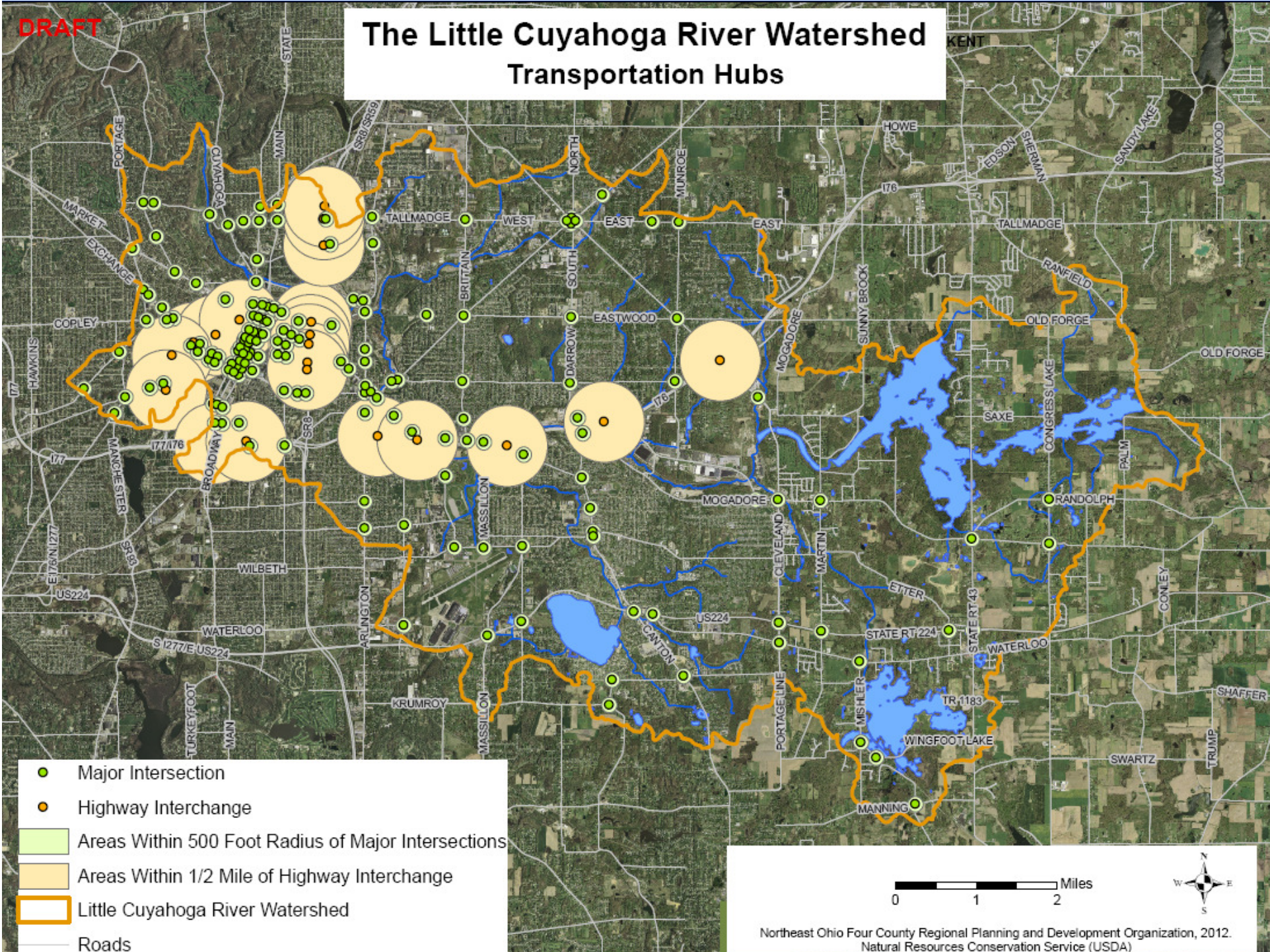
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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Percent Developed Imperviousness, 2006



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The Little Cuyahoga River Watershed Transportation Hubs



Information Still Needed

- Areas with Comprehensive Plans
- Trails and Greenways
- Areas with Sewers and Water
- Additional Wetland Data from Summit and Portage Counties
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Others?

Community Survey

- The Watershed Community Determines what is Important in the Watershed
- Survey is to Assist NEFCO in Determining these Priorities
- What Are the Conservation and Development Priorities?
- NEFCO will Map Results for Use in Determining PCAs and PCDs

Community Survey

■ Conservation Priorities?

- Open Space, Riparian Areas, Wetlands, Stream Bank Erosion, Stream Restoration, Floodplains, Recreation, Storm Water Runoff, Etc.

■ Development Priorities?

- Brownfields, Public Water/Sewer, Population Density, Highway Interchanges, Recreation, Reduced Flood Hazards, Land Availability, Redevelopment, etc.

Community Survey

■ Survey Review

- Reviewed by the Stakeholder Group before distribution

■ Distribution

- Internet
- Meetings
- How Large of a Sample Size

Community Engagement

- How Do We Reach Out to Each Community in the Watershed?
- Who Do We REALLY Need to Talk To?
- What are the Issues for Each Community?
- Is There a Hook?
- One-on-One Meetings?
- Public Meetings?

Balanced Growth Planning – Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs)

- Locally Designated Areas for Protection and Restoration
- No Change in the Owner's Property Rights
- Property is Still Subject to Local Land-Use Regulations.
- State Policy Decisions would Recognize the Property as a Conservation Area
- State Would NOT Encourage or Provide Funding for Development of the Area

Balanced Growth Planning – Priority Agricultural Areas (PAAs)

- Protection within Priority Conservation Areas
- Criteria Specific to Agriculture Production
- Open Space and Economical Value Provided by Agricultural Production
- Contributor to Clean Water and Quality of Life
- Maximizes the Viability of Farming and Support Businesses
- Consider prime soils, other natural farming features, local interest to maintain agricultural industry, etc.
- Farmer Involvement Needed

Balanced Growth Planning – Priority Development Areas (PDAs)

- Locally Designated Areas for Growth and/or Redevelopment
- Maximize Development Potential
- Efficient Use of Infrastructure
- Promote Revitalization of Existing Cities and Towns
- Contribute to the Restoration of Ohio's Waters
- Land May Be Eligible for State Policy and Funding Incentives
- Not Like an Urban Growth Boundary – Development Can Occur Outside of the PDA, But Would NOT Be Encouraged Through State Investments

Group Discussion



Eric Akin

EAkin@nefcoplanning.org

www.nefcoplanning.org

330-252-0337

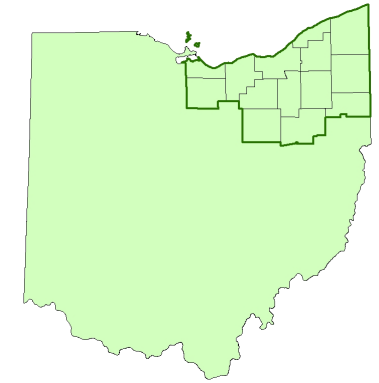


Western Reserve
Land Conservancy

OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

Mapping Conservation Value

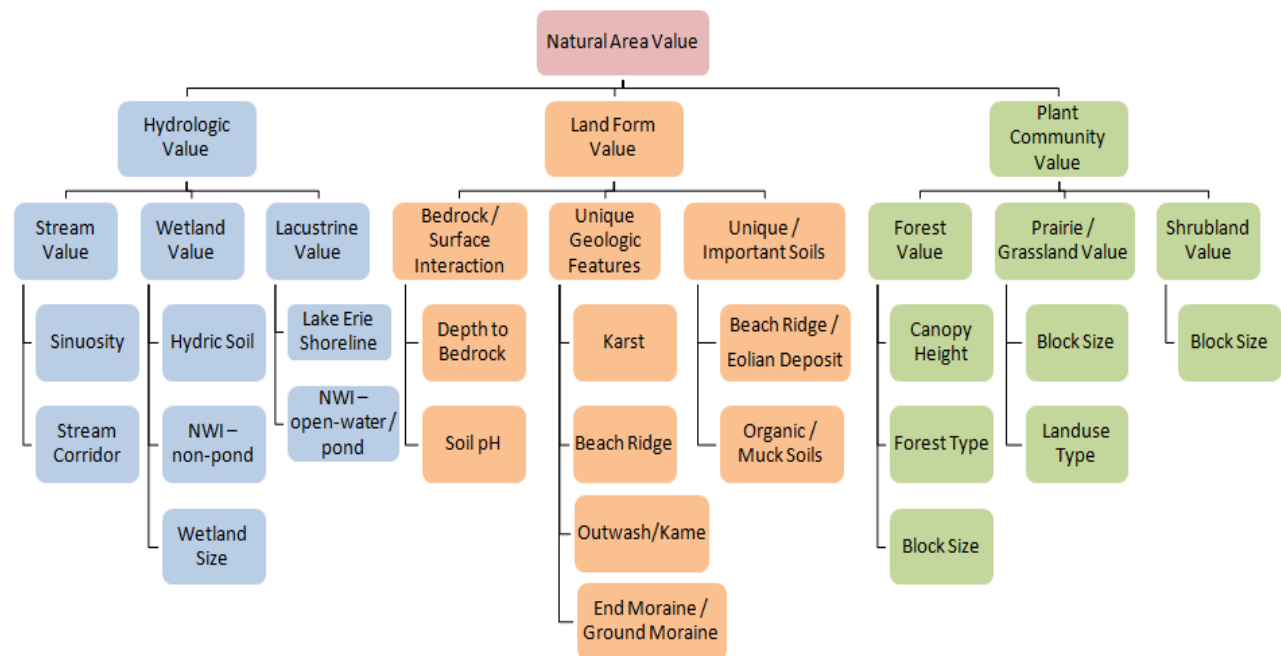
*for the
Western Reserve Region of Ohio*



In the Fall of 2009, the Western Reserve Land Conservancy’s Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan that called for an update to the approach that the Land Conservancy uses to compare and prioritize conservation projects in its service area. The updated approach needed to be science-based, and needed to incorporate the priorities of partner organizations, since the Land Conservancy works in concurrence with partners as it progresses toward a vision of hundreds of thousands of protected acres across Northeast Ohio. The approach needed to be continuous, so that all areas of the region could be measured using the same criteria. It also needed to be spatially-specific, but not parcel-specific, so that it could be a public resource.

The Land Conservancy’s GIS and Conservation Planning team worked with a National Park Service Ecologist to develop a methodology that utilizes a Bayesian Belief Network (BBN) approach. The BBN approach allows for the incorporation of expert opinion in place of missing data, or data layers with relationships that are uncertain, unpredictable or imprecise. Experts assign probability values to simple parts of a more complex model (e.g., probability of high or low conservation value for forest blocks in different size classes, stand heights, etc.) and then feed those opinions into a framework that can be represented spatially. In this way, maps can be developed that depict the consensus of what a group of local experts "believes" are areas with a high probability of conservation value.

When crafting the methodology, the team recognized the need for two distinct models that correspond to different types of conservation in the region. The characteristics of high-value natural areas are typically quite different from the characteristics of quality farmland, but the preservation of both is important for the region.



Partners & Participants:

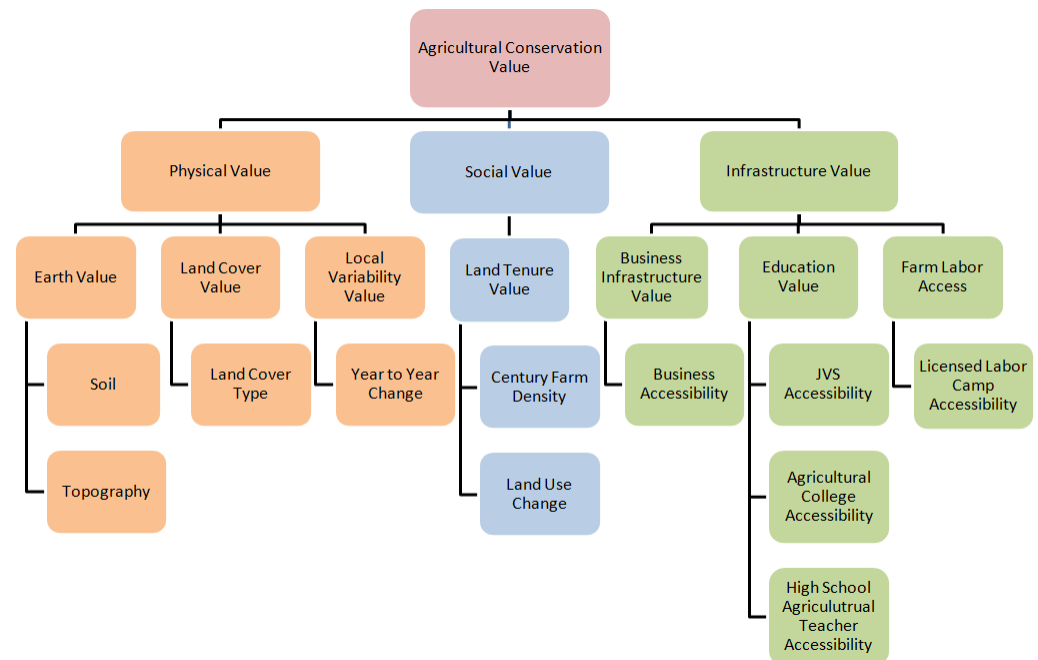
- Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau
- Ashtabula Metroparks
- Ashtabula SWCD
- Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland
- Beech Creek Botanical Gardens
- Ben Miller
- Brian Smith
- Countryside Conservancy
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- City of Youngstown
- Cleveland Botanical Gardens
- Cleveland Metroparks
- Cleveland Museum of Natural History
- Cuyahoga River RAP
- Cuyahoga SWCD
- Davey Resource Group
- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
- EnviroScience Inc.
- Erie Metroparks
- Farm Bureau
- Firelands Audubon
- Floyd Brown Group
- Geauga Park District
- Geauga SWCD
- GreenCityBlueLake
- Hiram College
- Holden Arboretum
- Jim Patterson
- Kent State University- Stark
- Lake County Planning
- Lake Metroparks
- Lake SWCD
- LEAP for Biodiversity
- Medina County Park District
- Medina SWCD
- Metroparks Serving Summit County
- Mill Creek MetroParks
- Meadow Environments, LLC
- National Park Service
- Native Plant Society of NE Ohio
- Nature Center at Shaker Lakes
- Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization (NEFCO)
- Norwalk Parks and Recreation
- USDA-NRCS
- ODNR – Division of Wildlife
- ODNR – Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
- ODNR – Scenic Rivers
- Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition
- Ohio EPA
- Ohio Outdoor News
- Ohio Wetlands Foundation
- Ohio State University
- Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center
- Portage Park District
- Stark County Park District
- Summit SWCD
- Trumbull SWCD
- Trumbull Metroparks
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wilderness Center
- Trout Unlimited
- Trumbull County Auditor
- Trumbull County Commissioners
- Trumbull County Planning
- Trumbull County Treasurer
- U.S. EPA
- Firelands Coastal Tributaries
- Western Reserve RC&D

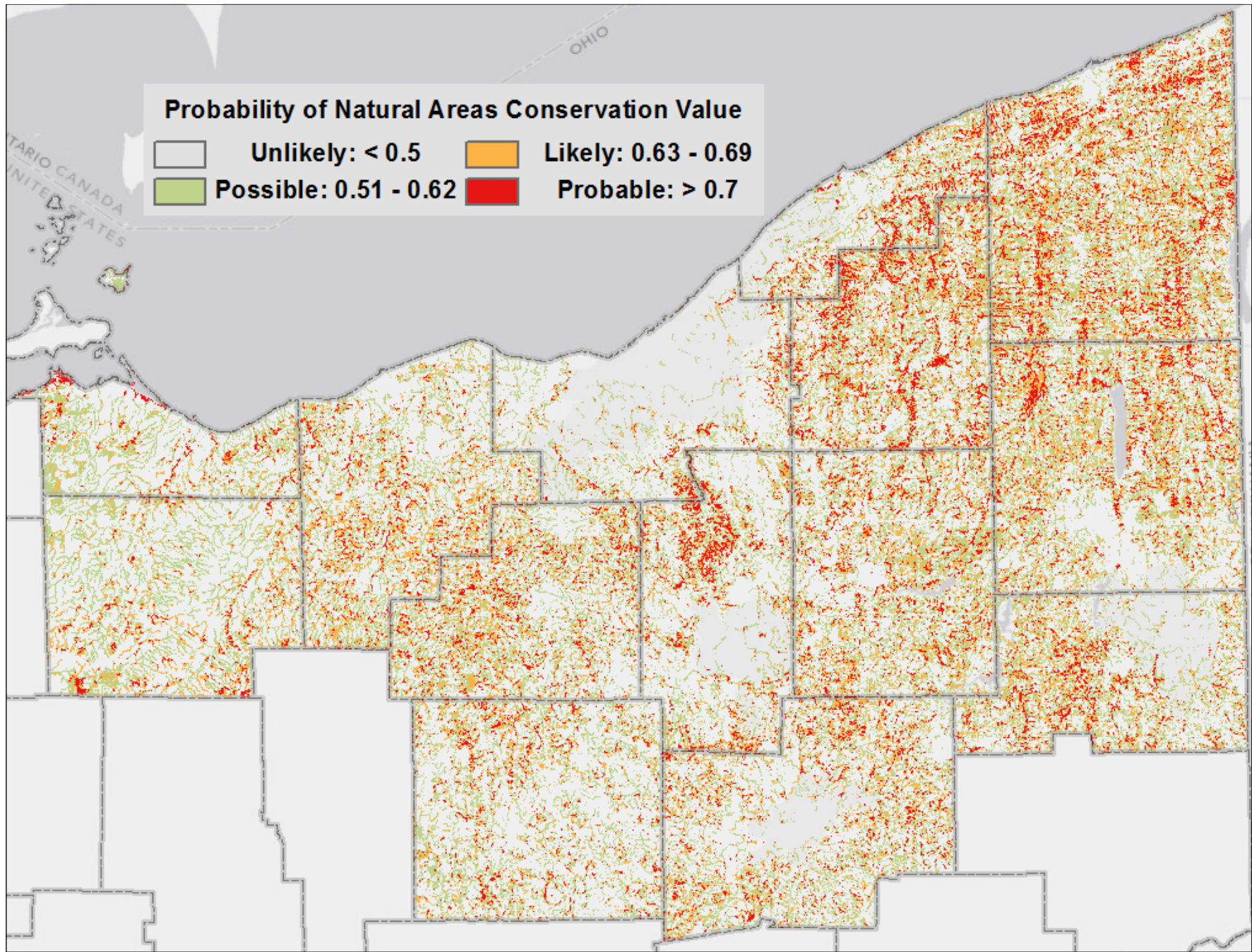
To develop the natural areas model, a series of 14 county and two regional meetings were held to help determine what local stakeholders and partners felt defined high conservation value, and what data layers could be used to describe it in a model. Expert opinions were obtained when the Land Conservancy convened an advisory group comprised of specialists from Northeast Ohio's conservation community. Land Conservancy staff worked with these experts to reach consensus on the value of each of the input data layers that were represented in the model.

Once appropriate component data layers (seen in the included charts) were identified, values representing the consensus opinion of probability of conservation value for each were entered into the belief network. Probability values for each data layer cascade through the network of relationships to arrive at a final probability of conservation value for each combination of component data layers. When represented spatially, these values form a continuous surface that can be mapped using GIS software.

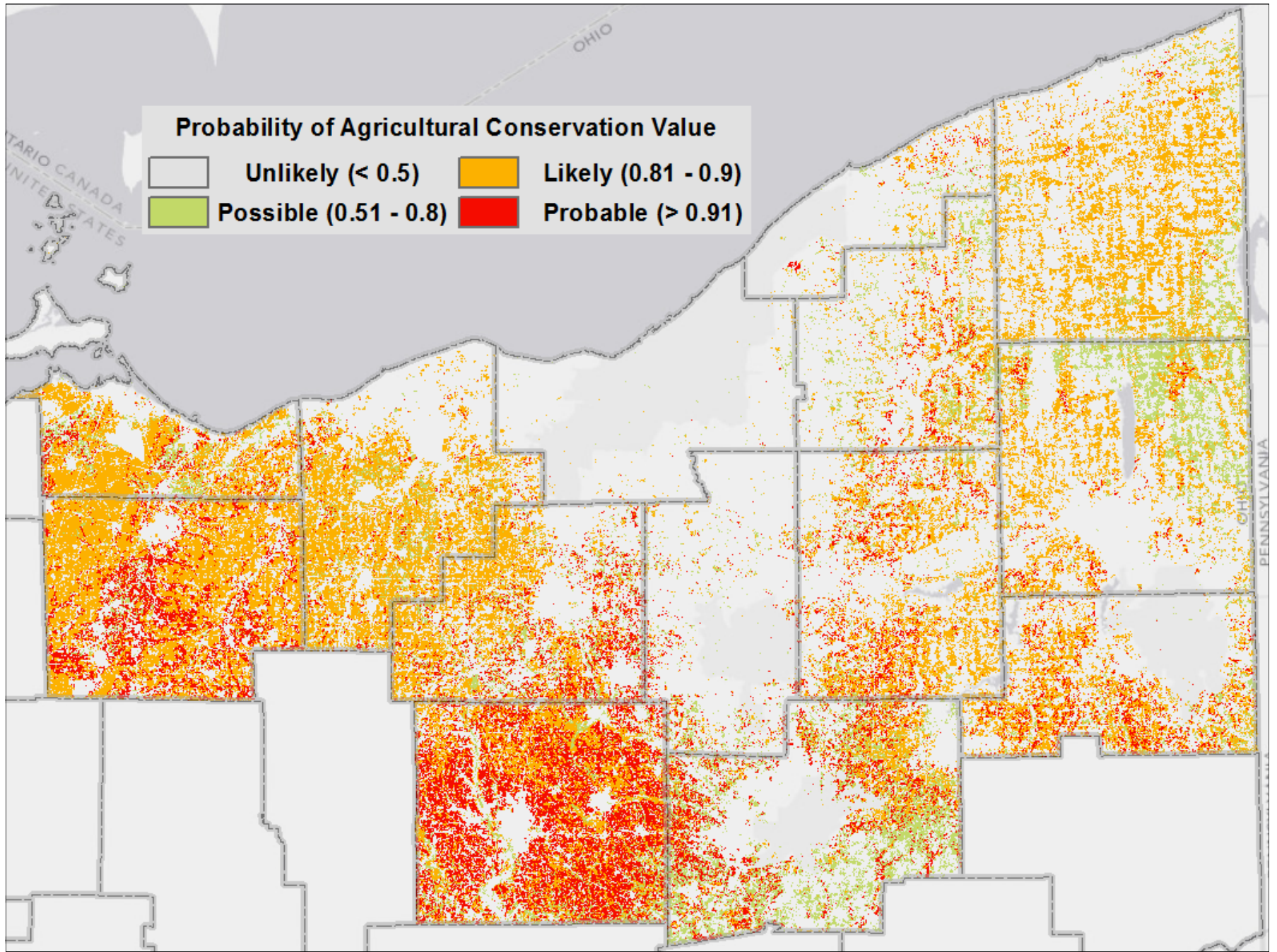
When the natural areas model was complete, the process was reprised to develop a working lands model. The Land Conservancy gathered an advisory group of agricultural practitioners and industry specialists to identify important data layers and assign the likelihood of conservation value associated with each.

The results obtained from these processes were mapped in a surface of 30-meter square units for the entire service area of the Land Conservancy. These results are seen in the included maps, and are available to be shared with partner organizations so that conservation of high-value areas can be pursued in a coordinated way.





To obtain a copy of this data, please contact Elizabeth Mather by email: emather@wrlandconservancy.org
Western Reserve Land Conservancy seeks to preserve the scenic beauty, rural character and natural resources of northern Ohio. www.wrlandconservancy.org



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