

Event Overview



What is “A Day in the Life”?

“A Day in the Life of the Buffalo River” is an event that celebrates the Buffalo River watershed and educates participants about the river’s connection to their history, community and environment, and to themselves. Participants explore, observe, and collect scientific data to create a “snapshot” of the river at their unique sample site. Data is then compiled on the Web so participants can see how their site fits into the larger Buffalo watershed picture.

There are four main parts of the Buffalo River picture:

The Historical River: How has the river shaped the development of Buffalo?

The Physical River: How is each sample site unique? How might weather conditions and the area around the sample site affect water quality?

The Zoological River: What animals live in the river? What can they tell us about the water’s health?

The Chemical River: Are the oxygen and pH levels of the water healthy enough to support life?

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land where all living things are linked by a common water source. All water in that area drains to a common waterway, such as a stream, lake, or ocean. The Buffalo River Watershed encompasses 447 square miles, mostly in Erie County (see map). Water drains into the Buffalo River system, and ultimately Lake Erie.

Historical Timeline:

1825: Erie Canal completed, linking the Buffalo River with Lake Erie and opening Buffalo to development and trade.

1900s: Buffalo experiences huge industrial and economic growth along the waterfront. Industries dump toxic chemicals into the river.

1965: Buffalo River declared functionally dead and “devoid of life.”

1966: President Lyndon Johnson visits Buffalo to review pollution problem. The public gets involved in water conservation efforts.

1968: Buffalo River catches on fire.

1987: Buffalo River named an “Area of Concern” (AOC) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

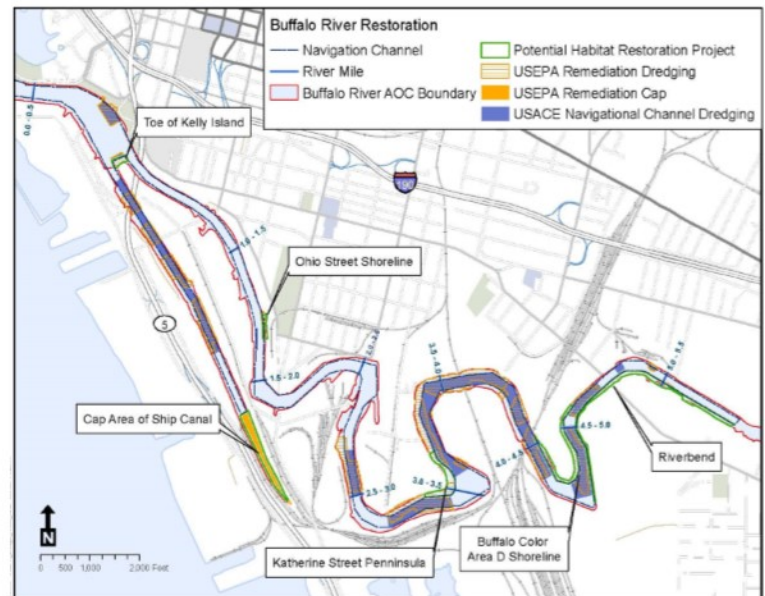
An AOC is an area that has experienced environmental degradation.

2011: The Buffalo River Restoration Partnership begins major efforts to remove contaminated sediment from the river (dredging), restore habitats for wildlife, and improve safe public access to the river.

2014: Final phase of the dredging project begins.

2019: Buffalo River no longer an Area of Concern (?)

Area of Concern/Buffalo River Restoration



Map: Ecology & Environment

10 Cool Facts About the Buffalo River Watershed



1. The river became so polluted by industries that it caught on fire in 1968!
2. Instead of spending thousands of dollars to remove barnacles from their hulls, ships would sit in the Buffalo River and let the acidic water burn them off.

3. The round red house in Lake Erie is the Buffalo Water Intake Crib, where water filtration for our drinking water begins.



4. General Mills, the manufacturer of Cheerios, has property that borders the Buffalo River. The facility still uses the Buffalo River to bring in grain shipments, which are stored in the grain elevators.



5. The Buffalo River boasts the world's oldest working fireboat, the *Edward M. Cotter*.

6. The Buffalo Sabres arena, Canalside, and the Naval & Military Park are all located on the Buffalo River.

7. Cayuga Creek is a popular fishing destination because of its steelhead trout population.



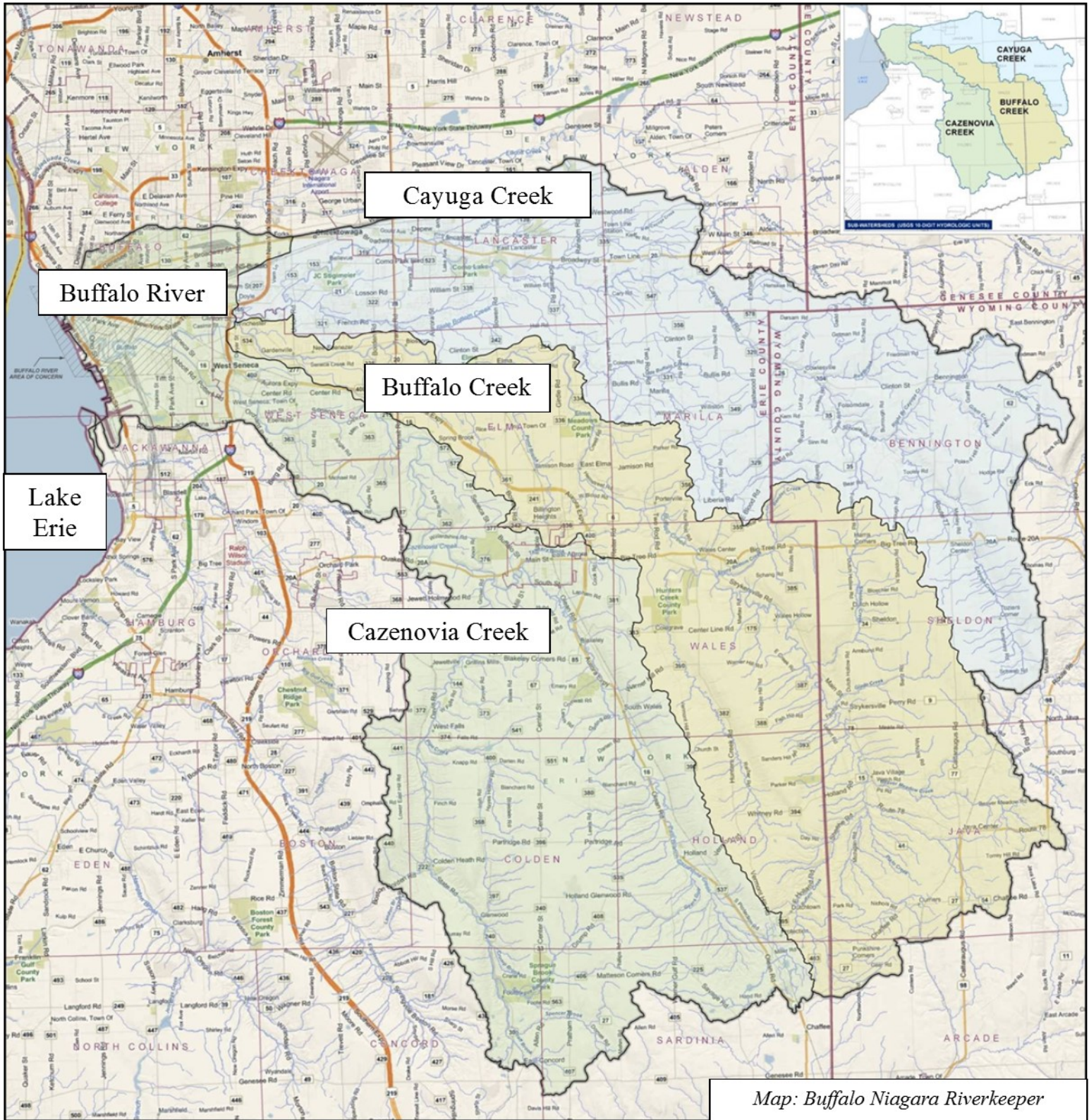
8. Red Jacket Riverfront Park was named after the Seneca chief "Red Jacket," who got his name from a coat given to him by the British for his services during the Revolutionary War.

9. The City of Buffalo is named after Buffalo Creek. The name "Buffalo" Creek was used as early as 1764.

10. Cazenovia Creek was named after Theophilus Cazenove, an agent of a land surveying company. Cayuga Creek was named for the Cayuga Native Americans. However, there is much debate as to how Buffalo Creek got its name. It may come from the French *beau fleuve*, meaning "beautiful river," from the bison that may have historically roamed here, or from a resident Seneca Native American named "De-gi-yah-goh" ("Buffalo").

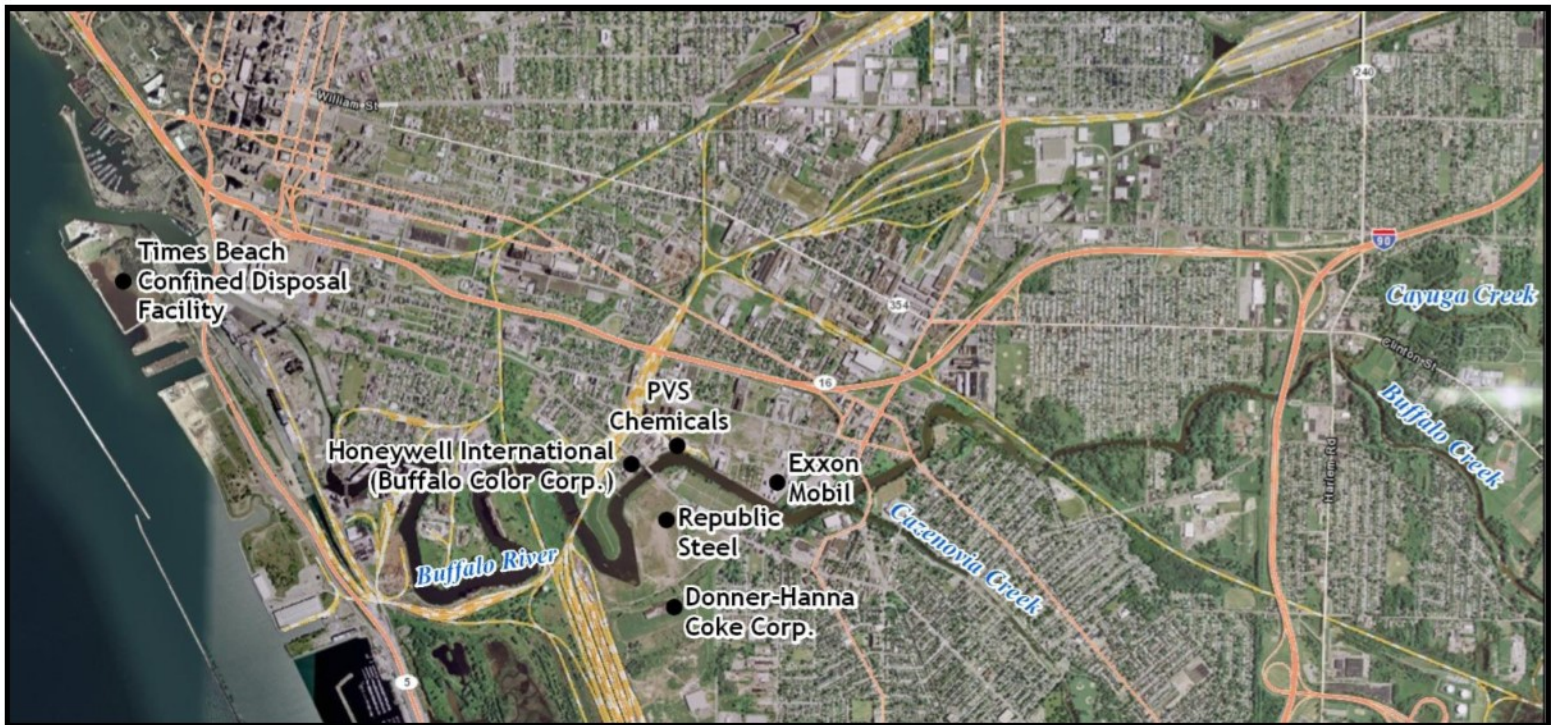


Buffalo River Watershed

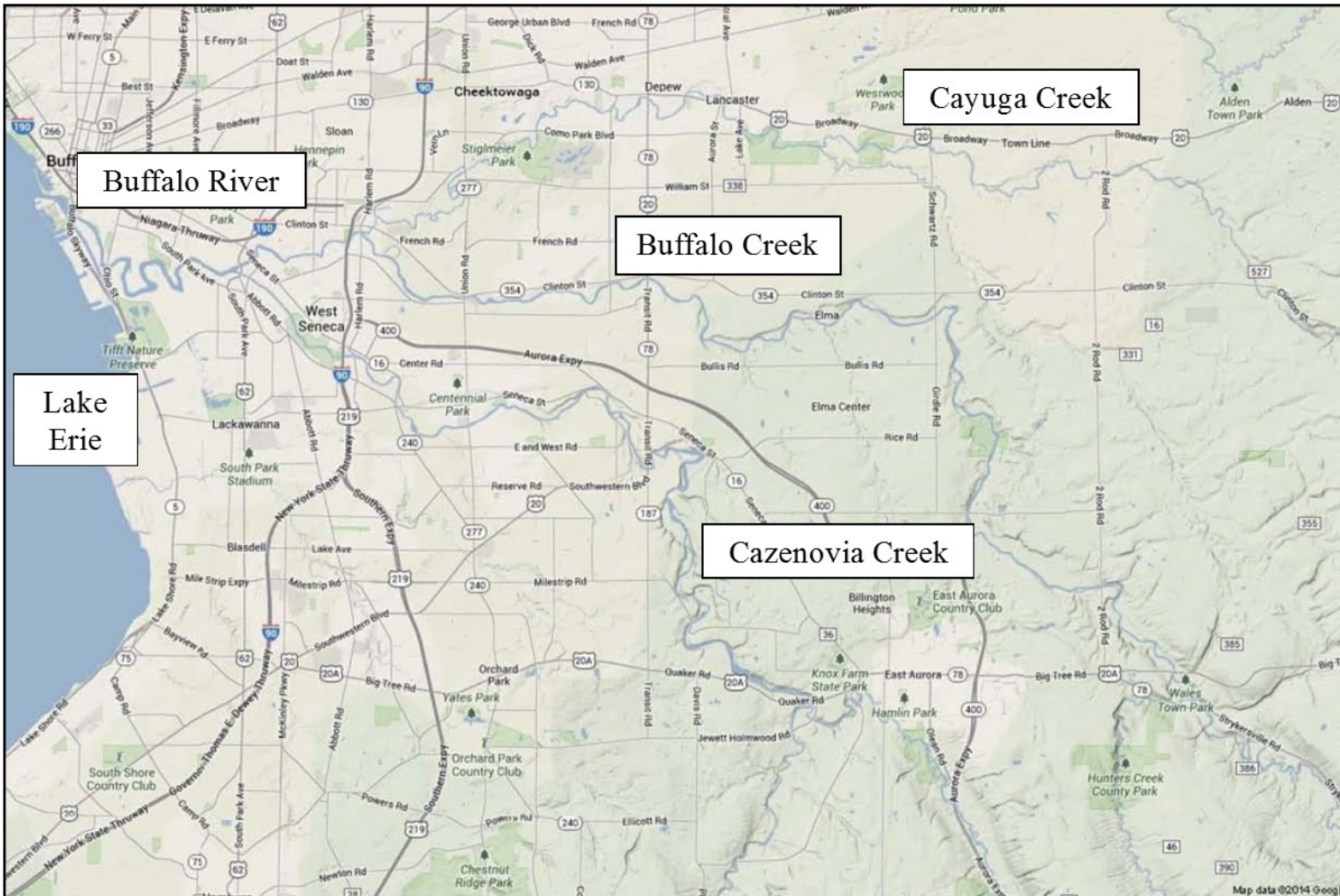


The **Buffalo River** is 8.7 miles long and flows to the west, emptying into Lake Erie. It is fed by three tributaries: Cayuga Creek, Buffalo Creek, and Cazenovia Creek. All tributaries join together at various points. **Cayuga Creek** is the northernmost tributary, which passes through Lancaster, Depew, and Cheektowaga before joining with Buffalo Creek in West Seneca. **Buffalo Creek** has two branches: one in the Town of Holland and the other in Java. These branches join together in Wales. From there, the creek flows through Elma and West Seneca. **Cazenovia Creek** also has two sources: one in Sardinia and the other in Concord. These branches join together in East Aurora. The creek flows through Aurora, Elma, West Seneca, and the city of Buffalo, where it joins the Buffalo River. The entire **watershed** encompasses 447 square miles.

Historic Industries along the Buffalo River

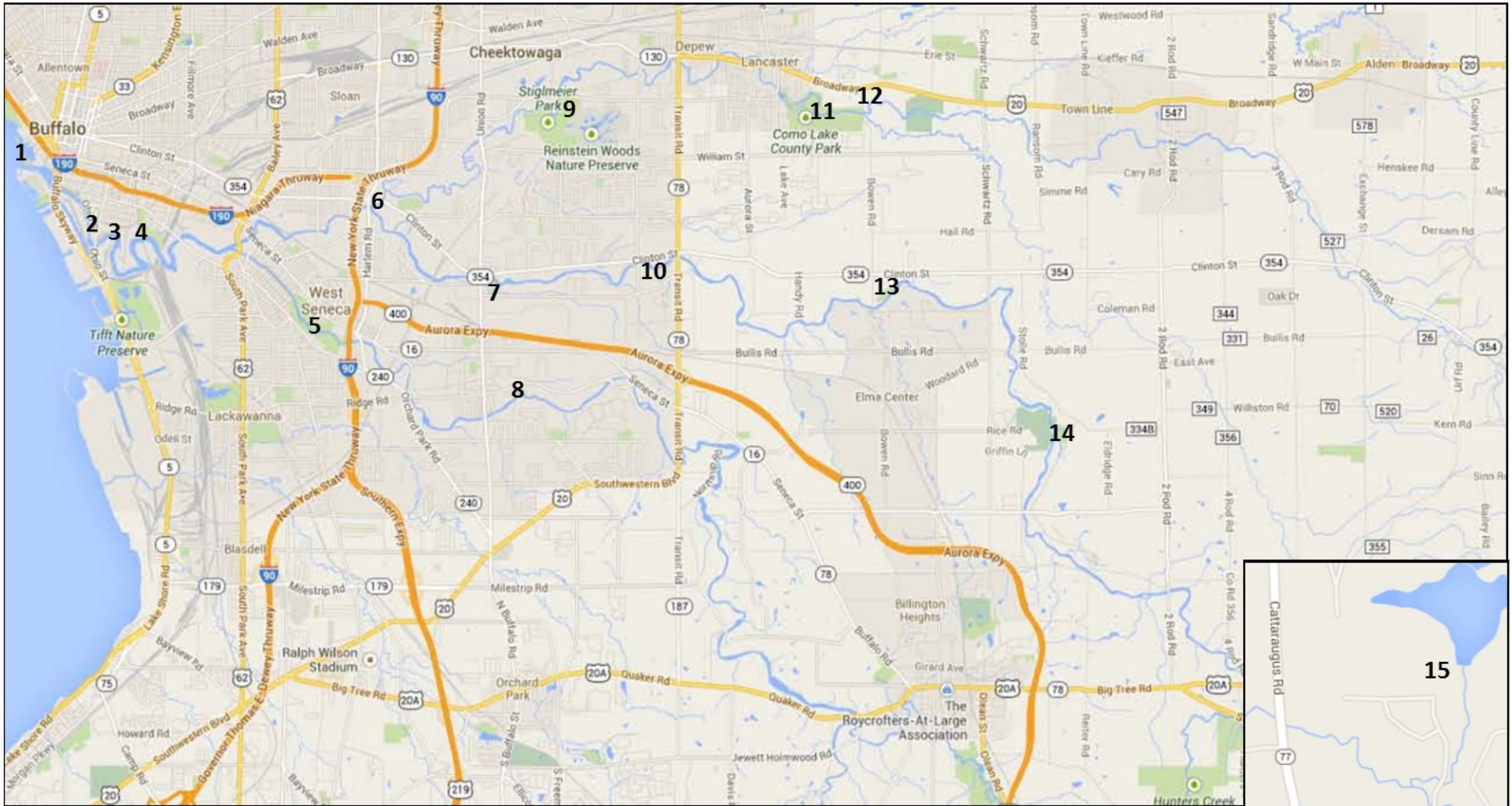


Buffalo River & Tributaries



"A Day in the Life of the Buffalo River" Sample Sites

Google Maps, 2014

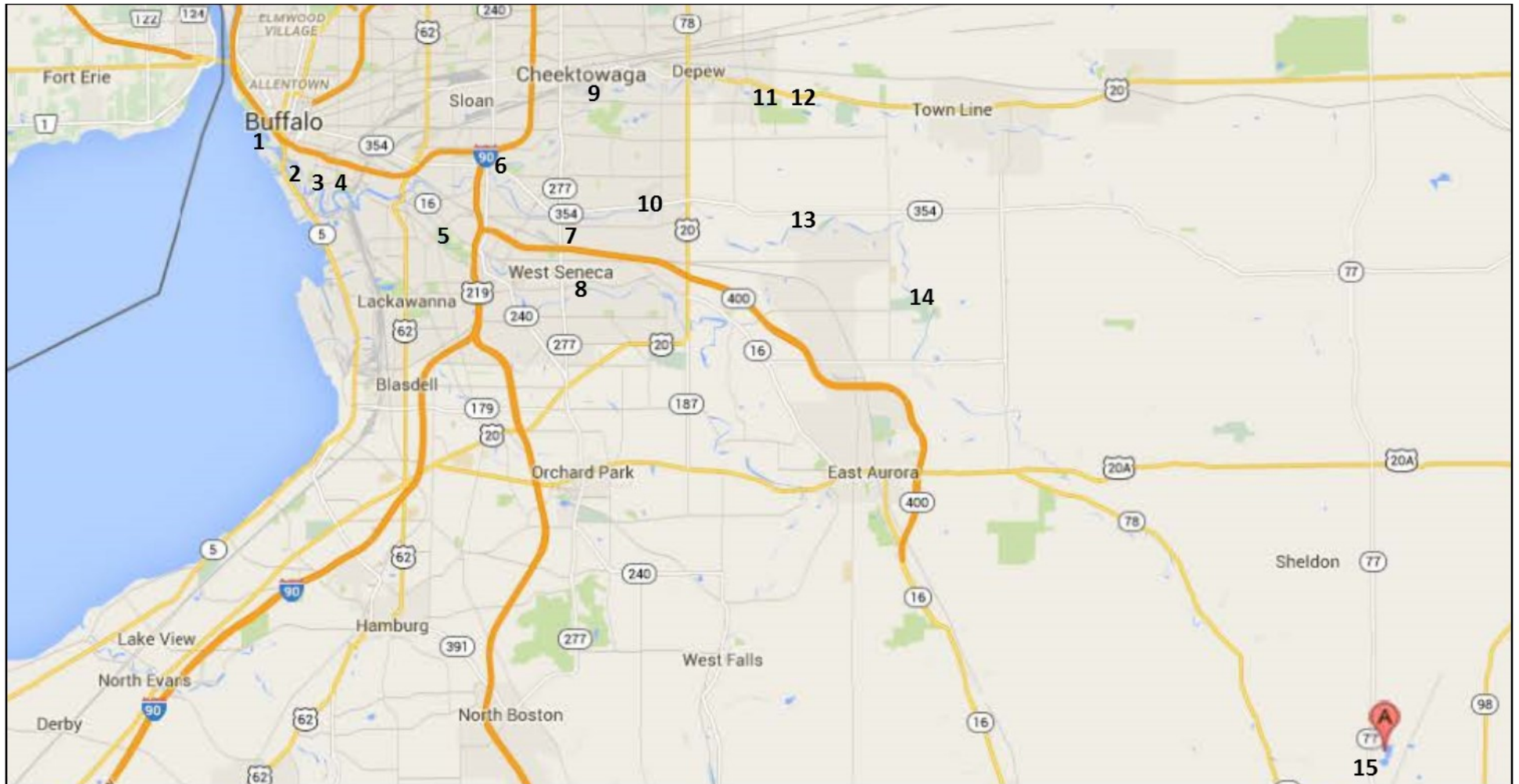


- 1 = Erie Basin and Marina Gardens (mouth of Buffalo River)
- 2 = Ohio Street Fishing Access (Buffalo River)
- 3 = Mutual Riverfront Park (Buffalo River)
- 4 = Red Jacket Riverfront Park (Buffalo River)
- 5 = Cazenovia Park (Cazenovia Creek)
- 6 = Harlem Road Fishing Access (Buffalo Creek)
- 7 = Burchfield Nature Center (Buffalo Creek)
- 8 = Mill Road Park (Cazenovia Creek)

- 9 = Stiglmeier Park (Cayuga Creek)
- 10 = Borden Road Access (Buffalo Creek)
- 11 = Como Lake Park (Cayuga Creek)
- 12 = Bowen Grove (Cayuga Creek/Little Buffalo Creek)
- 13 = Elma Village Green (Buffalo Creek)
- 14 = Elma Centennial Park (Buffalo Creek)
- 15 = Beaver Meadow (headwaters of Buffalo River - map inset)

"A Day in the Life of the Buffalo River" Sample Sites - Large View

Google Maps, 2015



Buffalo River Facts

Length of Buffalo River : 8.7 miles (from where Buffalo and Cayuga Creeks meet)

Depth: 23 feet

Headwaters: Ghost Pond at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, North Java (#15 on map)

Mouth: Lake Erie (#1 on map)

Width of river mouth: 1600 feet

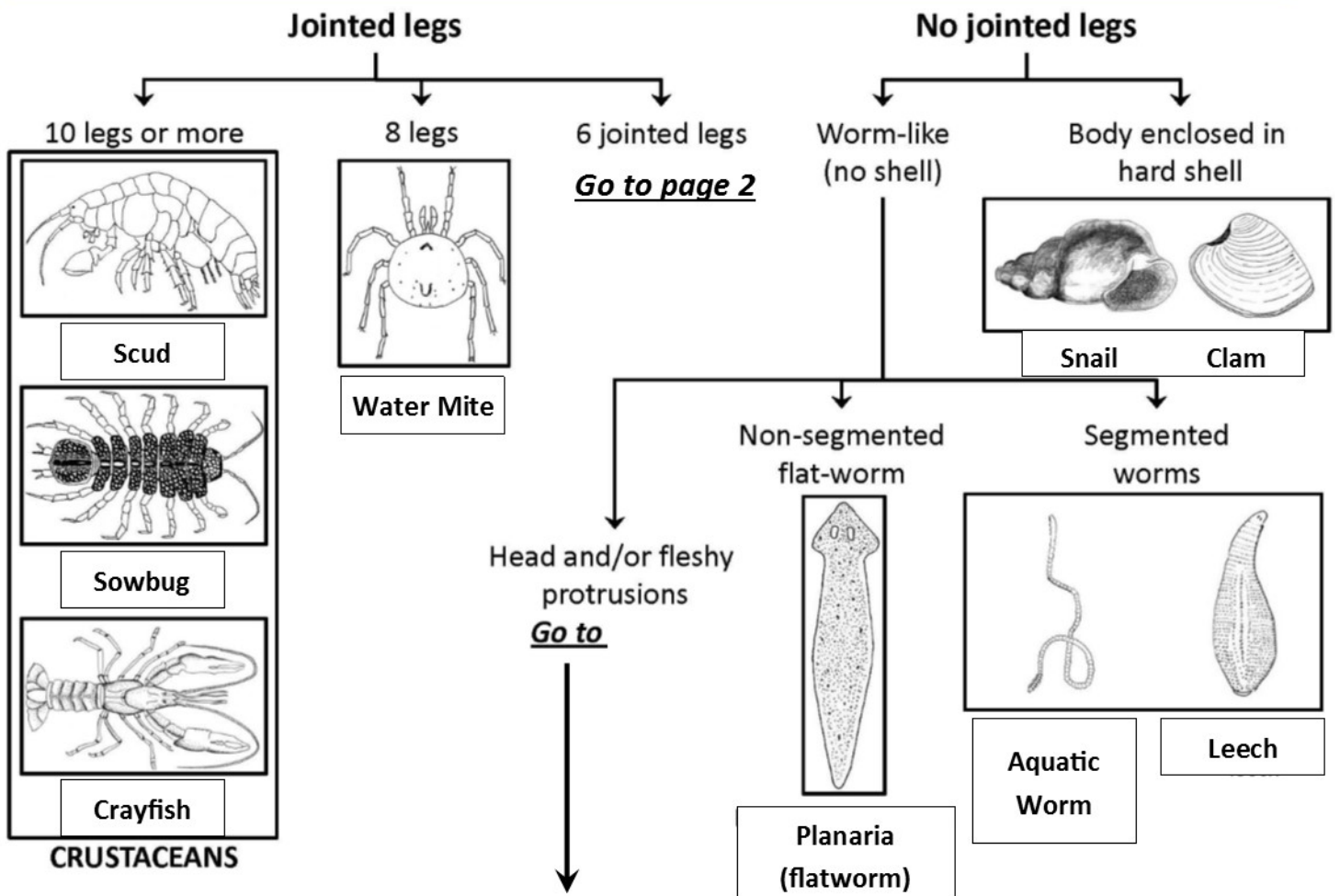
Length of Cayuga Creek: 40 miles

Length of Buffalo Creek: 43 miles

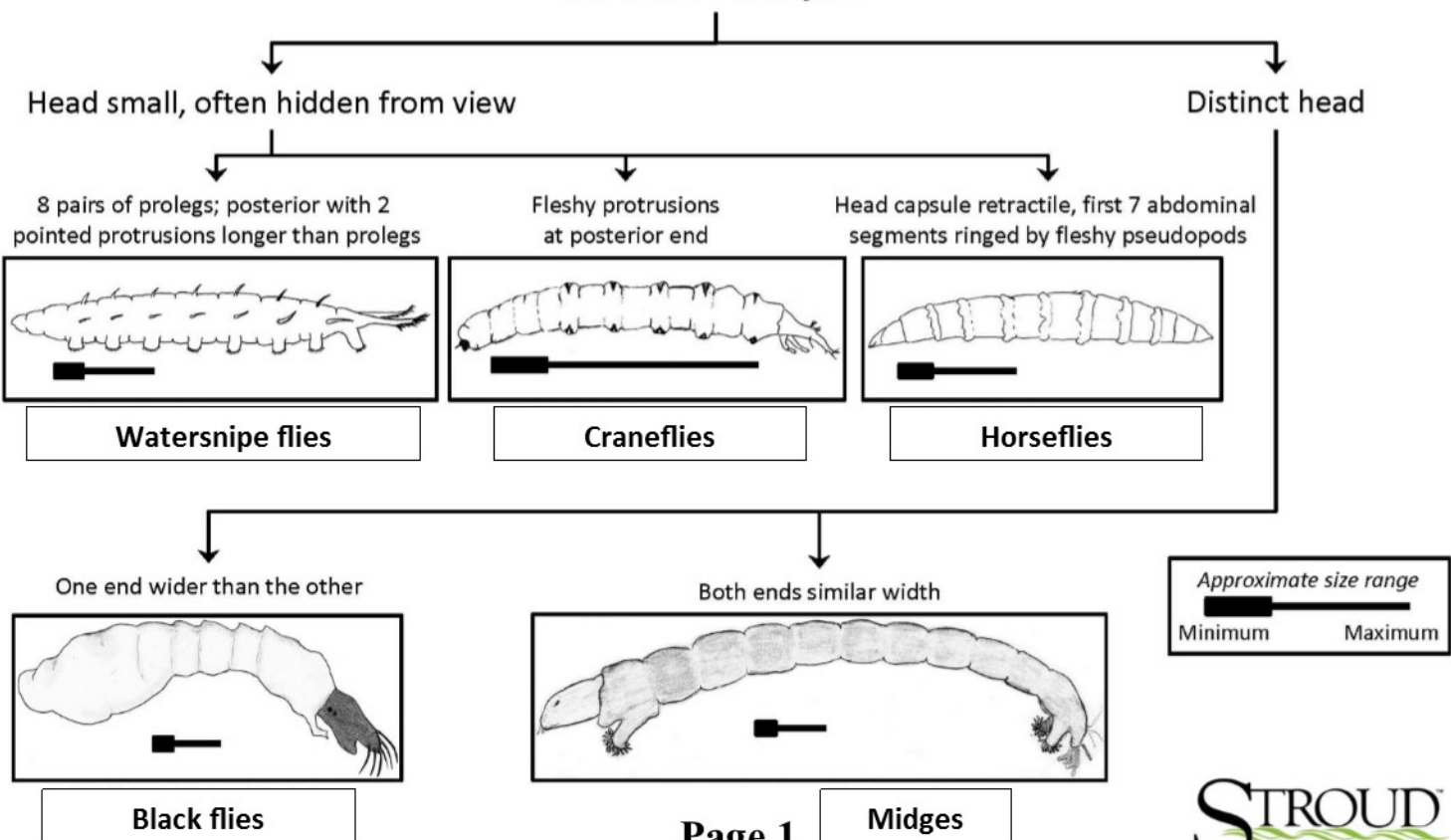
Buffalo River Watershed: 447 square miles

Fish: more than 30 species, including Brown Bullhead, Large- and Smallmouth Bass, Yellow Perch, Rainbow Trout, White Sucker

Identification Guide to Freshwater Macroinvertebrates



Worm-like with distinct head or fleshy protrusion
DIPTERA – true flies



Six jointed legs

