



Preserve the Valley honors and remembers the life of Akron Ward 1 Councilman Rich Swirsky, who died on May 26. To honor Rich is to support his wish for the conservation of the Cuyahoga Valley and the protection of the Cuyahoga River. He spent a lifetime advocating for, and helping others to advocate for, our region's environmental causes.

During his tenure with Ohio Citizen Action, Rich championed environmental causes in Uniontown, Ohio and Akron's Right to Know legislation which protects workers and communities. He advocated for countless other issues over the course of decades. His creation of Tikkun Village on the property of the Shaw Jewish Community Center combined his two passions of education and the environment by creating a spot for contemplation and communion with nature where he posted the environmental Ten Commandments.

As Akron's Ward 1 Councilman, Rich asked for the creation of a Green and Sustainability Committee and was its chair. It became the Public Utilities & Green Committee which he chaired during his entire tenure on council. It serves as a forum for environmentally-friendly ideas and acts as a catalyst for implementation of green practices including the city's green infrastructure.

Rich made his voice very clear about protecting the Cuyahoga River and establishing riparian setback rules -- zoning that would place setback boundaries on developments near the river to protect water quality. He spoke passionately on this issue during the Riverwood Development hearings. With his wishes in mind, we ask the City of Akron to move forward with the Ordinance for Akron which has been written following the guidelines of the Ohio EPA, ODNR, USEPA, Ohio SWCD's, and vetted by local organizations and regional planning organizations.

To honor the lifelong work and wishes of Rich Swirsky, we urge the City of Akron and his colleagues on City Council to approve the Riparian Setback Ordinance.