

## An ILLUSTRATED ANNUAL REPORT to the COMMUNITY | 2014

GUIDE

# CONSERVANCY for CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

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Gayle Agahi

Nora Jacobs

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Illustration & Design by Amy Breedon | Front and back cover photos by Tom Jones

## **A LETTER** from the **SUPERINTENDENT**

> As the new superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Park, I've been humbled by the warm welcome I've received over these past several months. The partnerships among park staff, the Conservancy, volunteers, our community, and donors are truly remarkable, and I look forward to continuing and strengthening our work together.

This past year has been one of planning and preparation. We've set the stage for several trail projects outlined in the 2013 Trail Management Plan, including new off-road bicycle trails and trail restoration work. The Conservancy's support has helped move these plans forward by coordinating trail volunteers and funding a mountain bike trail consultant through distributions from the TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund.

The National Park Service is also getting ready for an exciting centennial celebration in 2016, so you can look forward to a nationwide campaign highlighting our national parks.

The future is bright! We look forward to continuing our work with the Conservancy and its supporters to protect and preserve our national park.

**Craig Kenkel** Superintendent





#### A LETTER from the CEO & BOARD CHAIR

> The trails of Cuyahoga Valley National Park are the primary way to access its treasures. With that in mind, we invite you to **join us on a hike through the past year**, exploring the Conservancy programs and projects that you support.

The trail of this past year includes several noteworthy stops:

- > In 2014, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Over 100,000 youth have been introduced to their national park through CVEEC programs.
- > The restoration of **Trail Mix Boston** signifies our continued commitment to preserving the rich history of the Cuyahoga Valley. This centrally located shop in the Village of Boston serves as a gathering space for park visitors.
- > Through the TRAILS FOREVER initiative, we continue to partner with the National Park Service for projects that maintain, preserve, and enhance CVNP's trails. This year, we laid

**Deb Yandala** Chief Executive Officer



the groundwork for several important projects in the months and years to come.

> In 2014, we kicked off fundraising efforts for a proposed new central visitor center in the Village of Boston.

We continue to work toward the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan to welcome new members, grow our fundraising capacity, strengthen our programs, and engage with our community. Of course, as we grow and expand our reach, we always strive to maintain the quality of core Conservancy operations.

To our outgoing board members Gayle Agahi, Dick Ainsworth, Greg Kall, Chuck Mlakar, and April Walton, thank you for your passion and commitment over the years. We're also grateful for our close partners in the National Park Service, including Superintendent Craig Kenkel and the rest of the park staff with whom we work every day.

The path ahead has plenty of curves and hills, and **we look forward to sharing each step with you**. Happy trails!



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Fall 2012:

Project planning and design begins.

**Spring 2013:** Fundraising kicks off.

## Summer 2013:

Restoration of the woodframe garage behind Trail Mix Boston is completed.

#### Winter 2014:

Construction on the main façade, wooden porch, and patio begins, continuing through the chilly spring weather.

#### May 9, 2014:

The restored Trail Mix Boston reopens!

#### for **PRESERVING**

Doug and Noreen Powers loved seeing > the restoration of Trail Mix Boston during their bike trips on the Towpath.



#### TOWPATH TRAIL

> The Towpath Trail bustles year-round with bikers, runners, and hikers.

The backbone of Cuyahoga Valley National Park, it leads visitors through forests and fields—and gives them a glimpse of the park's rich history.

Noreen and Doug Powers bike the Towpath Trail nearly every week during the summer. Their favorite way to start the day is by hopping on the trail to grab breakfast in Peninsula.

Along the trail is one of the Towpath landmarks: the historic Village of Boston. As Doug and Noreen enter the village, they say, "It's like going back in time."

Here, you can experience the historic streetscape much as it appeared 100 years ago.

As you enter the village from the south, the Boston Store Visitor Center greets you, along with M.D. Garage, a preserved 1940s gas station. Crossing Boston Mills Road, you'll spot the park's Volunteer Center, which the Conservancy restored in 2009 in partnership with the NPS. A little farther north is the Stanford House, a gorgeous lodging space the Conservancy renovated in 2011.

Now, Trail Mix Boston, one of the Conservancy's two retail shops, can be counted among the restored buildings in the village.

Noreen and Doug are two of the donors who made the Trail Mix Boston project possible. "We wanted to donate to something you could see," said Noreen—and you certainly can see the changes that restore the building's historic and architectural character.

#### "It's like going back in time."

The project included reconstructing the classic rectangular façade and wooden porch, adding a stone patio and wheelchair-accessible ramp, and rebuilding the wood-frame garage. "As we rode our bikes on the Towpath, it was so much fun to see Trail Mix Boston in progress," said Doug. From the trail, they watched everything from the removal of the old cement porch to the final touches of paint.

Since its original construction over a century ago, the Trail Mix Boston building has served as a place for viewing motion pictures, a post office, and a general store. Residents gathered here to laugh with friends, send love letters, or pick up a dozen eggs.

Now, with the help of 47 donors, as well as major support from Doug and Noreen Powers, the Jean Thomas Lambert Foundation, the Katherine & Lee Chilcote Foundation, and Ohio & Erie Canalway Association, future generations can continue to experience this restored gem in our national park's cultural history.

#### May:

Trail internships begin. Spring storms cause heavy damage to trails, requiring trail closures and serious repair.

#### June:

Continue clean-up work from spring flooding. Identify and clear fallen or dying trees from trails. Master safety precautions.

## July:

Get familiar with trail equipment, like steamrollers and wood chippers. Shadow expert park staff on the job.

#### August:

Control invasive species in Terra Vista Natural Study Area. Perform regular trail maintenance.

## September:

Wrap up internships. Bring new experience back to school! NPS trail crew members use a power wheel- > barrow to clear debris from a flooded trail.



#### TREE FARM TRAIL

> If you ask trail intern Kelli Baxstrom about the importance of CVNP's trail crew, she gets straight to the point.

"The trails will be closed unless we get out there," she said.

That's what drives many of the members of our national park's trail crew: a love for the trails and a desire to keep them open for park visitors.

This summer, Kelli was one of four summer interns on the trail crew. CVNP's TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund distribution funded their positions.

These four college students joined seasoned National Park Service employees, as well as groups of dedicated volunteers, for an extraordinary summer experience. As part of CVNP's trail crew, they provided critical help to maintain the park's trails.

As trails were damaged by storms or heavy use, the crew resurfaced the tread, removed

fallen trees, and made sure the trails were in good shape all summer.

Aaron Kline, another intern, talked about keeping the park's trails safe. For example, "You want to make sure you remove any dangerous trees," he said. "You don't want limbs to fall into the trail and hurt somebody."

#### "The trails will be closed unless we get out there."

Clint Belcher, a trail crew member and intern supervisor, said, "While the interns were giving us much needed help on trails, they also gained experience and knowledge of our sustainable trail guidelines. They were able to network with other areas of the park such as resource management to gain knowledge in those areas as well."

Being an intern in a national park means you have plenty of places to explore on your free

time, too. Kelli's favorite trail was Tree Farm Trail, with its distinctive rows of Christmas trees opposite a hardwood forest.

"I went running on the trails almost every other day," she said. "There are just so many trails to experience!"

Today, there are more than 100 miles of trails in CVNP—and counting. Beyond funding trail interns, the TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund has funded rehabilitation for many of these trails, as well as trail crew positions and maintenance. The Fund's \$10 million goal will ensure that future generations of trail enthusiasts—like Kelli—can continue to support a world-class trail system in the Cuyahoga Valley.



## Day 1:

Learn to identify birds in the wild using binoculars and field guides. Take a night hike in the moonlight.

#### Day 2:

Travel the trails in the Cuyahoga River watershed. See which birds live in different habitats. Simulate bird migration across the CVEEC campus.

## Day 3:

Test water quality in the Cuyahoga. Connect river health to bird health.

## Day 3: (cont.)

Collect bird data at the Beaver Marsh. Present data from the week as art or theatre.

## Day 4:

Discuss the future of birds in CVNP. Receive a Jr. Ranger badge during the Closing Ceremony. Rangers help students identify birds using > electronic field guides on an iPad.



#### PONDS TRAIL

> Sixth-grader Jude stands on Ponds Trail at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC), looking through a pair of binoculars.

He's trying to identify a bird nearby. "It's blue, with some black and white marks!" he exclaims. "And it has a pointy head, and a

black beak." The blue jay flies away, but not before Jude has identified it with help from a park ranger. He runs up the trail to confirm his findings on an iPad and enter it into the CVEEC's data collection website.

This budding *Soar into Science* program, one of several residential programs, brings youth of all backgrounds to the CVEEC. There, the trails of the national park provide a gateway for learning about the birds of northeast Ohio. Children also use the trails for a place-based learning experience exploring human impact on the environment and the interconnectedness of natural systems.

The program emerged in the fall of 2012 to meet new science standards for data collection and analysis. *Soar into Science* makes it easier for teachers to incorporate these education goals and gives students a unique outdoor learning opportunity.

"At Soar into Science, children can connect to the natural world while doing academic work," said Stacey Heffernan, director of the CVEEC. "They have fun while learning! The residential program encourages social and emotional growth as well."

#### "The most important thing to being a scientist is just to observe."

During his week in the national park, Jude used the CVEEC's trails to learn about bird anatomy, behavior, and identification firsthand. He also learned about sustainability in the Cuyahoga River watershed.

"The most important thing to being a scientist is just to observe," said Jude.

By counting bird species in one area and comparing that data with birds on different trails and from different days, Jude can spot trends and make connections—just like a real scientist.

After the four-day program ends, teachers bring back a bin of binoculars, field guides, and book lists to their classroom. With these supplies, Jude and his fellow students continue learning and growing.

Last year, Jude was one of nearly 10,000 students to attend programs at the CVEEC. The Conservancy operates the CVEEC in partnership with NPS and raises scholarship funds to ensure that students like Jude can experience their national park first-hand.









## Top Left:

Children at Jr. Ranger Day Camp, a program of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Photo by Melanie Nesteruk

## Top Right:

Volunteers at a Day of Service plant trees to celebrate Earth Day. At five Days of Service throughout the year, volunteers help maintain trails, remove invasive

## **Top Right:** (cont.)

species, plant native trees and wildflowers, and pick up litter. Photo by NPS DJ Reiser

#### **Bottom Left:**

Park visitors enjoy a relaxing evening of chamber music at Music By Nature, a summer concert series in Happy Days Lodge.

#### **Bottom Right:**

Brittany and Steve Krajewski were married at Happy Days Lodge with a dazzling winter ceremony. Photo by Ken Love Photography Horseback riders on Wetmore Trail follow > old logging roads through woodlands and pastures. Photo of riders by Sara Guren



## CONSERVANCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**100,000+ youth** have attended programs at the CVEEC since it opened 20 years ago.\*

**16,000 native plants** were nurtured in CVNP's native plant nursery by park volunteers.\*

**10,293 visitors** attended cultural arts events in CVNP this year, including Lyceum lectures, Cuyahoga Valley Photographic Society events, and Heritage Series, Music in the Meadow, and Music By Nature concerts. \*

**9,886 children & adults** experienced nature at CVEEC programs, including the residential All the Rivers Run program, summer camps, Jr. Ranger programs, Soar into Science, Environmental Education Academy, and more.\*

**8,275 Mitchell's ice cream cups** were sold at Trail Mix Peninsula or Trail Mix Boston,

with Black Raspberry Chocolate Chunk the top flavor.

**5,682 volunteers** donated 208,858 hours to their national park.\*

**1,766 students** received scholarships this year to attend programs operated by the CVEEC.\*

**705 donors** attended Elevation and Topography to support TRAILS FOREVER.

**154 meetings & retreats** were held at the Hines Hill Conference Center and Happy Days Lodge for corporate and non-profit groups.

**81 couples** tied the knot in CVNP this year in one of the park's Extraordinary Spaces, up from 50 weddings last year.

**52% of products** sold at Trail Mix stores were made in the United States. 34% of Trail Mix products were made locally.

**5 countries** were represented by guests of the Music in the Meadow concert during the Gay Games 9, including Israel, Germany, Norway, and China, in addition to the U.S.\*

**1 mountain bike trail consultant** was funded by TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund distributions to evaluate new off-road bicycle trails in CVNP.

\* Partnership program of the Conservancy and the National Park Service







#### Left:

In areas where failing dams were removed, park staff and volunteers have planted native wildflowers and grasses, including aster, milkweed, vervain, and goldenrod.

#### **Top Right:**

At the renovated Canal Exploration Center, visitors can navigate a canal boat through a lock using touchscreens, eavesdrop on canal conversations, and more.

#### **Bottom Right:**

Park trail crews and volunteers helped maintain and repair trails all across the park. Photo by NPS DJ Reiser

#### **Our Partners:**

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and Countryside Conservancy are key partners who join us in providing program support for Cuyahoga Valley National Park.





CVNP's volunteer program is co-managed > by the Conservancy and NPS and brings volunteers of all ages to the park.



#### **CVNP ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**1 historic canal**, the Ohio & Erie Canal, was dredged to remove accumulated debris and allow a free flow of water into the centuries-old channel.

**1 wooden deck** on Virginia Kendall Lake was replaced, allowing park visitors to safely experience the lake and its historic structures.

**5 dams** were removed by NPS maintenance staff due to deterioration: Heartbreak, Fink, Oscada, Pittenger, and Harpham dams. Resource Management staff and volunteers have begun planting native wildflowers, trees, and grasses to revegetate the areas.

#### 110 Adopt-a-Trail monthly trail sweeps

were performed this year throughout the park. During a trail sweep, volunteers pick up litter, trim branches, clear culverts, and report trail conditions. **200 feet of trail** were rerouted on Langes Run this summer to avoid future flooding and washouts.

**285 trail maintenance projects** helped improve 10,864 square feet of trail in CVNP, including new drainage features, elevated stone crossings, staircases, trail resurfacing, and more.

**3,150 feet of trail** at the CVEEC were repaved with permeable asphalt, which allows water to soak into the ground and prevents harmful runoff.

**8,000 railroad ties & 3 railway bridges** were replaced on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad to ensure safe and secure passage for rail passengers.

19,092 park users visited the newly

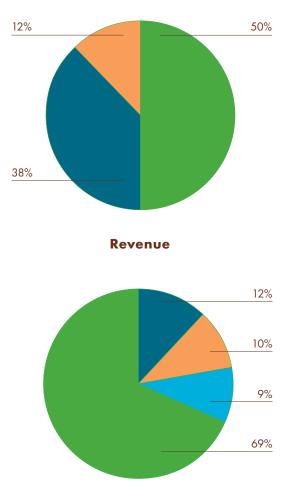
reopened Canal Exploration Center this year to discover new multimedia and interactive exhibits about the Canal Era in the Cuyahoga Valley.

**185,912 train riders** enjoyed a trip on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad.

**\$1 million** worth of local fruits, vegetables, and more was sold this year at the Countryside Farmers' Market, which is run by Countryside Conservancy. The market also celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2014.

### FINANCIAL REPORT





Expense

Donations (50%)	
Individuals	\$970,747
Foundations	\$689,260
Corporations	\$241,393

#### **Earned Income (38%)**

CVEEC (Net of \$150,835 Scholarships)	\$703,054
Extraordinary Spaces	\$332,130
Retail	\$306,386
Other Program Revenue	\$103,701

#### **Other (12%)**

NPS Program Support	\$316,690
Investment	\$115,784

#### Total Revenue | \$3,779,145

Total revenue includes unrestricted, temporarily restricted and permanently restricted funds.

Programming	\$2,267,414
Special Events	\$310,624
Administration	\$332,414
Fundraising	\$391,317

#### Total Expense | \$3,301,769

#### FISCAL YEAR 2014

> The Conservancy continued its solid record of financial performance this past year, moving from \$3.3 to \$3.8 million in total revenues from FY13 to FY14, an increase of 14%.

#### Highlights of growth:

- > A 577% or \$300,000 increase in TRAILS FOR-EVER contributions, driven in large part by a significant \$250,000 gift.
- > A 21% or \$87,000 increase in membership revenue.
- > A 6% or \$27,000 increase in revenue achieved from special fundraising events Topography, Elevation, and Clambake.
- > A 4% or \$12,000 increase in revenue achieved in the Extraordinary Spaces facility rental and catering program.

The Conservancy concluded a successful capital campaign for the restoration of Trail Mix Boston, raising an additional \$19,000 in FY14. This contribution brought the total funds raised to \$74,000 over two years for architectural and accessibility improvements to the property.

A \$368,000 net increase in growth of the Conservancy's TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund was achieved in FY14, the most significant annual growth since its inception in 2009. Total fund balance at FY14 end is \$893,000 in cash, plus \$380,000 in known planned gift commitments.

Operating expenses of the Conservancy exceeded Unrestricted Operating Revenues for FY14, reflecting long-term investments in organizational capacity. The operating deficit was \$18,000 or 0.5% of the Conservancy's annual \$3.3 million Unrestricted Operating Revenues.

The Conservancy strives to keep administrative and fundraising expenses as low as possible, and to expend our valuable financial resources by supporting the national park with funding and delivery of high-quality programs and services that benefit national park users.

> Our complete audited financial statement for FY14 ending August 31, 2014 can be found on our website at www.conservancyforcvnp.org/ about/financials.



#### **Ledges Trail**

A year-round favorite, this 2.2 mile loop trail features hemlocks and yellow birches and the giant rock garden of the Ritchie Ledges. Many park visitors enjoy watching the sunset at the west-facing Ledges Overlook, a popular destination in the park — and gathering point for Topography guests. Photo by Tom Jones



## Thank You

Listed on the following pages are the individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations who made gifts during the Conservancy's Fiscal Year 2014 (9/1/2013 - 8/31/2014). Our thanks to all of our donors who make possible the many and varied programs, projects, and services highlighted in this report.

#### LEGACY SOCIETY

We thank the following individuals who have remembered the Conservancy through a bequest or other planned gift:

Anonymous (10) Susan Abramson Stanley & Hope Adelstein **Richard & Joan Ainsworth** Peter & Barbara Avrea Mary Bevan John & Nicky Bloodworth David & Sheila Bly **Robert Briggs** Jim & Eve Brown William Busta & Joan Tomkins William & Mary Ellen Carroll Pamela A. Carson Joe & Lisa Cellura John & Cyndee Debo Gerry & Ann Findlan Mike & Marti Hardy Henri Pell Junod, Jr.

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Left: Topography guests at the Ledges Overlook. Photo by Doug Charnock

Middle: Elevation guests taking a break after their hike. Photo by Brian Hunsaker

Right: Marti & Mike Hardy, Jim Nash & Joanne Kim. Photo by NPS Ted Toth

**Richard & Joan Ainsworth** Tuni & Lee Chilcote Marie & Chuck Grossman George & Sue Klein Stephen Morris & Amanda Ford Morton & Iris November CORPORATE PARTNER



Morris

LIFETIME \$100,000+

#### **EAGLE SOCIETY** \$5,000+

Anonymous (5) **The Abington Foundation Richard & Joan Ainsworth** Akron Children's Hospital Akron Community Foundation Howard Atwood Family Fund of the Akron Community Foundation **Bokom Foundation** Cargill Inc. **Cascade Auto Group** Lee & Tuni Chilcote The Katherine & Lee Chilcote Foundation Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation

**Cleveland Clinic** Cohen & Company The Community Foundation of Lorain County Chris & Sara Connor **Deborah Cook** Ray & Jan Dalton Rav & Jan Dalton Foundation Darden Restaurants. Inc. **Davey Tree** John & Cyndee Debo **Dominion Foundation Fairmount Santrol FirstEnergy Foundation** Forest City Enterprises ForTec Medical **GAR** Foundation Thomas Green & Manju Gupta Marie & Chuck Grossman Mike & Marti Hardv Sandra Haslinger Sandra L. & Dennis B. Haslinger **Family Foundation** Heidelberg Distributing Company Martha Holden Jennings Foundation The Louise H. & David S. Ingalls Foundation, Inc. The J.M. Smucker Company Elizabeth Juliano Henri Pell Junod, Jr. Kastner Westman & Wilkins, LLC Kurtz Bros. Inc./K.B Composting Services KeyBank

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Jeremy & Roxanne Long

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