



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park unveil new Boston Mill Visitor Center

A fully renovated historic site in the heart of the valley, the new visitor center is the park's first true "front door," and will be open for a public grand opening celebration on Oct. 25.

PENINSULA, Ohio (Oct. 22, 2019) – The U.S. National Park Service (NPS) and the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park are proud to unveil the new Boston Mill Visitor Center this October, marking the first centralized location where park visitors can orient themselves, discover what Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) has to offer, and begin their experience.

The visitor center will be officially open to the public on **Oct. 25 at 10 a.m.** with a grand opening celebration. The public is welcome to attend, along with members of the community who've made the new center possible.**

*****A full agenda for the grand opening celebration is included at the end of this release. Attendees will park at the Boston Mills Ski Resort, 7100 Riverview Rd. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place under the large tent nearby, after which, attendees will be officially welcomed inside the new Boston Mill Visitor Center*****

"Cuyahoga Valley has existed as part of the national park system for 45 years, and this is the first time we've been able to welcome guests at a centralized visitor center—a true 'front door' for our park, like those found at national parks around the country," said CVNP Superintendent Craig Kenkel. "This is an important milestone for our park, and we hope it will allow visitors old and new to discover all we have to offer and deepen their appreciation for this special place."

The Boston Mill Visitor Center sits near CVNP's—and the region's—most cherished assets: The Cuyahoga River, the Ohio & Erie Canal and Towpath Trail, and the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. This location, as well as the center's interior and exterior spaces, are both scenic and symbolic, highlighting the park's natural beauty and its rich history as the heart of conservation efforts in Northeast Ohio.

The project was completed in partnership between the NPS and the Conservancy. The Conservancy funded the majority of the project, raising more than \$7 million through community and corporate support, and oversaw construction in collaboration with NPS.



The center's main building—a large gable roof structure—has been fully rehabilitated. Originally built around 1905, it has lived numerous lives, first as a company store for the Cleveland-Akron Bag Company, and more recently as a private residence. The Conservancy had the opportunity to purchase the property in 2009, which was then donated to the NPS. Throughout renovations, careful attention was paid to every architectural detail. It is a fully modernized structure that honors its past inside and out and maintains the historic fabric of the Village of Boston. The entire project was designed and built in alignment with the CVNP's mission of environmental conservation and stewardship, utilizing high-performance building materials to ensure energy efficiency. The project will be submitted for Silver Level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, one of the most widely used green building rating systems in the world.

In conceptualizing the new visitor center, the Conservancy and the NPS worked to ensure inclusivity and relevance to all visitors. For example, the visitor center has been designed based on universal design guidelines with an elevator, oversized doorways, and tactile elements included in many of the exhibits. Planners also worked with local community groups and organizations to gather input toward making the CVNP experience appealing to the diverse populations of Northeast Ohio.

“It is CVNP's and the Conservancy's mission to be a park for the people, connecting the region's community to the meanings and values of the park itself,” said Deb Yandala, CEO for the Conservancy. “We worked to ensure that the visitor center experience, and the experience of the park, is broadly appealing and representative of the region.”

The visitor center also highlights CVNP's unique proximity to major urban hubs. While the park contains the hallmarks of a national park—natural wonders that include deep forests and rolling hills, a refuge for native plants and animals—the Cuyahoga Valley has always bustled with human activity. The visitor center was designed to preserve and highlight that heritage, and to make the Boston Mill Visitor Center a true gateway of discovery for the entire region.

“From start to finish, this project was a collaboration between the Conservancy, the National Park Service, the architects, construction crews, exhibit designers and a variety of other vendors,” said Yandala. “It takes a cast of thousands to make something like this work, and it's been a magical experience.”

Once open, the Boston Mill Visitor Center's fall hours will be 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For more information about the Conservancy and CVNP, visit www.forcvnp.org or www.nps.gov/CUVA.

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About Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Cuyahoga Valley National Park encompasses 33,000 acres along the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. Managed by the National Park Service, CVNP combines cultural, historical, recreational, and natural activities in one setting. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/cuva, www.facebook.com/cuyahogavalleynationalpark, or call 330-657-2752.

About the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park

The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park is the official friends group and philanthropic partner for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) – Ohio’s only national park. With a mission to enrich lives and our communities by inspiring use, appreciation and support of CVNP and ensure its preservation, the Conservancy offers cultural and educational programming, operates a year-round environmental education center, comanages the park’s volunteer program, provides venues for weddings, meetings and special events, and operates three park retail spaces.

Boston Mill Visitor Center Grand Opening

Friday, Oct. 25, 2019

10 a.m.

The grand opening will feature a ceremonial ribbon-cutting and speeches and addresses from key figures from throughout the community who helped make the new Boston Mill Visitor Center a reality. Speakers include:

- ❖ **Dione Alexander**, board chair for the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park and MC for the event
- ❖ **Craig Kenkel**, Cuyahoga Valley National Park Superintendent
- ❖ **Tom Medema**, Acting Associate Director for Interpretation, Education & Volunteers
- ❖ **U.S. Senator Rob Portman**
- ❖ **U.S. Rep. David Joyce**
- ❖ **Kim Smith Woodford**, Journey on Yonder
- ❖ **Ryan Ainger**, Park Guide
- ❖ **David Hassler**, Director, Wick Poetry Center from Kent State University
- ❖ **Deb Yandala**, CEO, Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park