

CONSERVANCY

FALL / WINTER 2021, VOLUME 7: ISSUE 1

THE LAND ISSUE

AN INSIDER'S LOOK INTO THE CONSERVANCY

GROW:

In Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the multitude of plant species you'll see — wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, trees, aquatic plants — reflect a unique patchwork of species

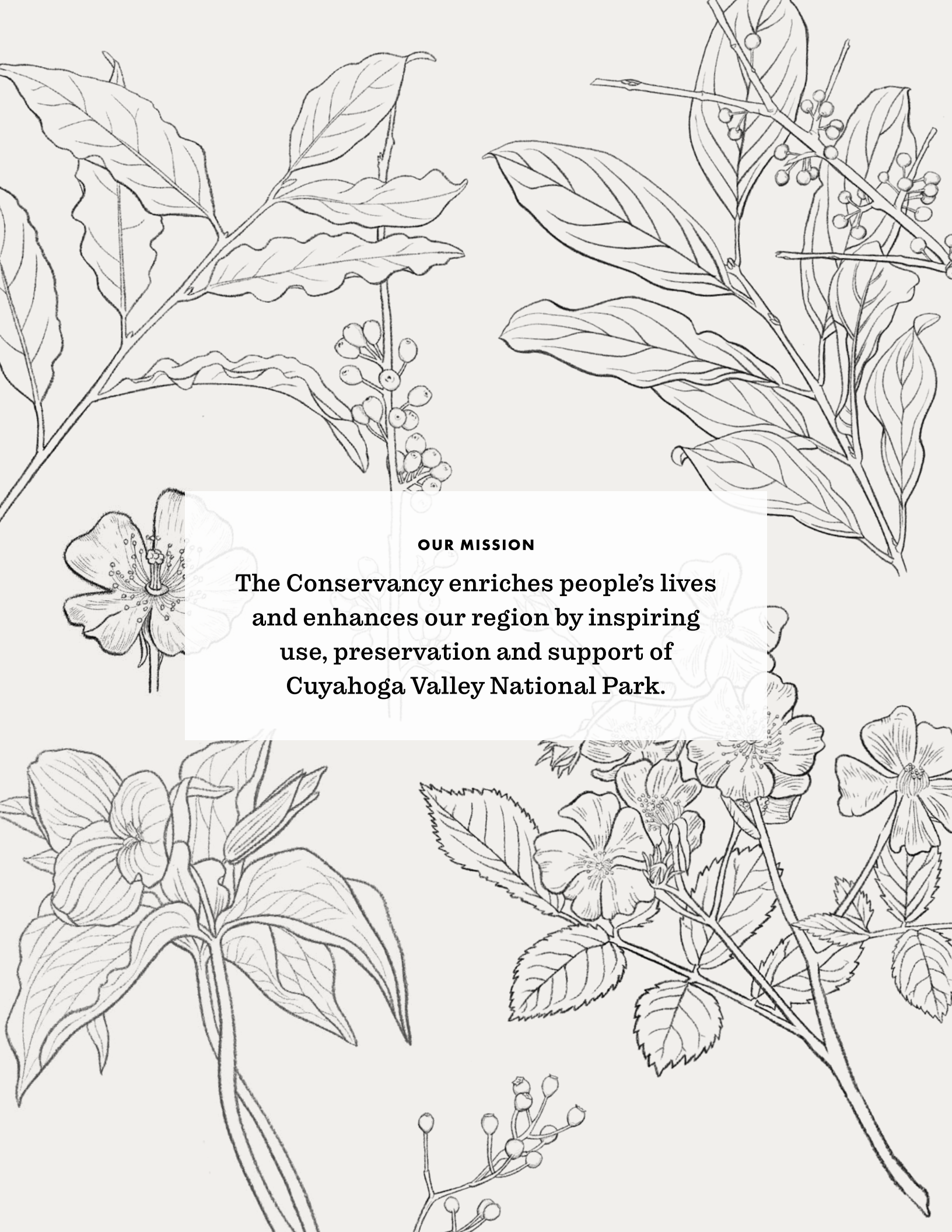
INTERVIEW:

Lisa Petit, *Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Park*

SCAVENGER HUNT:

Find Native Plant Species

AND MORE!



OUR MISSION

The Conservancy enriches people's lives and enhances our region by inspiring use, preservation and support of Cuyahoga Valley National Park.



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IN MEMORY OF KATRINA HAAS

BY: DEB YANDALA

Katrina served as the Conservancy’s Director of Development and directed our marketing and communication work for a time. She came to us with experience in development with several other organizations and a master’s degree in environmental education. She was a perfect fit for our organization. She was passionate about protecting our planet and dedicated to giving people experiences in nature.

Katrina was beloved by our staff team and by the donors with whom she worked. She was witty, smart, positive and charming. She had a magical and spiritual sense about her. A special kinship with animals, especially dogs, was amazing to watch.

Katrina’s playfulness and joy made her a pleasure to be around. She was incredibly dedicated to her work while never missing a chance to be in the woods and be with her friends and colleagues.

Katrina stopped working two years ago when a cancer diagnosis led to a difficult prognosis. She died in August and left us much too soon. We are grateful for her work, her friendship, and for the many ways she touched our lives.

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A LETTER FROM THE CONSERVANCY PRESIDENT AND CEO

Who are your heroes? Health care workers come to mind as well as other essential workers who have helped us get through this past year and a half. Perhaps your heroes are older friends and relatives who have paved the way for you. Heroes are people with courage who give of themselves for the benefit of others.

Our park has many heroes—volunteers, staff and park partners who work hard to provide us with a park that is well maintained, safe, enjoyable and protected. There are a few specific heroes that I’d like to tell you about.

In 2019, the Conservancy was approached by leaders of Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Trust for Public Land, asking if we could finish what they started—negotiations to purchase the former Brandywine Golf Course. They ran up against federal requirements that would have taken a long time to complete, and due to other interested potential buyers of the property, someone needed to move faster than they could.

Another hero of the Conservancy is former Board Chair **Dick Ainsworth**, who passed away in August. Dick served on the Board of Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center and when it merged with the park’s historic friends group and became the Conservancy, he moved into a leadership role. Dick brought business savvy, a dedication to national parks, and a kind spirit to our organization. He understood the value of philanthropy and both donated and raised tens of thousands of dollars in support of CVNP. I admired him deeply, learned a lot from him, and miss his wisdom and his friendship.

The Chair of our Board of Directors at the time, **Jim Nash**, had already convened a group of local leaders to advise us on how we might assist with protecting this incredible property. When fast decisions were needed, Jim courageously took a recommendation to our Board to sign a purchase agreement and make a commitment to buy the property, without knowing where funding would come from. Jim’s confidence and leadership were exactly what we needed to move forward and our full Board bravely made a commitment to protect this land.

Dione Alexander followed as Board Chair and six months into her term, the pandemic shut down most of our operations. She immediately began more frequent Executive Committee meetings and provided skilled and wise guidance until the end of her two-year term in August. Throughout her time of leadership, she remained laser focused on two things: Keeping the Conservancy afloat to support the park and completing the purchase of the former golf course. Our success in both of these areas is due in good part to having a strong Board of Directors and a wise Board Chair to guide us through uncharted waters.

Current Board Chair **Phil LiBassi** led the efforts on designing a vision for the property, overseeing the complicated purchase and advising the Board on moving to a master planning process. He never wavered from a path that led to finalizing the purchase in September.

Which leads me to you. **Our donors** have stepped up in a remarkable way to get us to the place where we could complete the purchase. You will hear more next spring about how you can help us activate the property and turn it into beautiful park land. We would not be at this point without your partnership and support. You are heroes—you have supported the Conservancy and in doing so you have helped us save precious land to become part of a national park. This is a rare opportunity, to protect land for all time. Thank you for being part of this heroic success story.

DEB YANDALA, PRESIDENT AND CEO



fig. 1 Amur Honeysuckle
Invasive Species

fig. 2 Glossy Buckthorn
Invasive Species

BY: SAM HARSH

GROW

grow (verb): to spring up and develop to maturity.

fig. 3 Trillium
Native Species

Growth is good. We have grown, our children have grown, and maybe for some of us, even our grandchildren have grown. Growth is learning, developing, transitioning to something better and stronger than before. When we see our windowsill or garden plants growing, we look upon them with a smile.

In the natural world, growth can take different forms and have a variety of impacts. In Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), the multitude of plant species you'll see — wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, trees, aquatic plants — reflect a unique patchwork of species, some of which are native to this area, and others that come from places throughout the world.

Invasive exotic species, commonly called invasive species, are plants that are exotic and cause ecological or economic harm. Invasive species are considered to be exotic because they are usually transported from other continents for use in agriculture, gardening or erosion control (or sometimes even by accident).

Nearly twenty percent of the park's plant species are exotic, or not native to the area. Sixteen of these species are invasive. The high quantity of invasive plants in CVNP is a result of the generations of human activity we've had in the valley. Examples of human activity that have resulted in the introduction of invasive species include agricultural activity, residential areas and golf courses. The presence of invasive species to such a degree is something that is unique to CVNP, as we are one of the few national parks with a history of human-modified landscapes.

These species of plants can have a huge impact on native flora, fauna and habitats. Invasives can decrease biodiversity, or the variety of plant and animal life. Biodiversity is crucial to maintaining the healthy ecosystems we see in the park today, such as forests and meadows. If left unmitigated, invasives can even create a monoculture, an area where only that one species of plant exists.

Native plants often get crowded out by invasives. Since invasive plants usually have few, if any, natural controls such as herbivores or insects, it can take very little time for these plants to put a severe dent in the number and diversity of native plants. With the reduction in native species, native insects and other animals begin to rely on these invasive species for food. Often, invasives are a lower-quality form of sustenance than their native counterparts.

As if that weren't enough, invasive plants can also alter the soil and water chemistry in a given area, which can then impact food sources for wildlife and the growth of other native plants.

Invasive exotic plants are plants introduced to an ecosystem by human interaction

Native plants are a part of the balance of nature that has developed over hundreds or thousands of years in a particular region or ecosystem.

INVASIVE VS. NATIVE

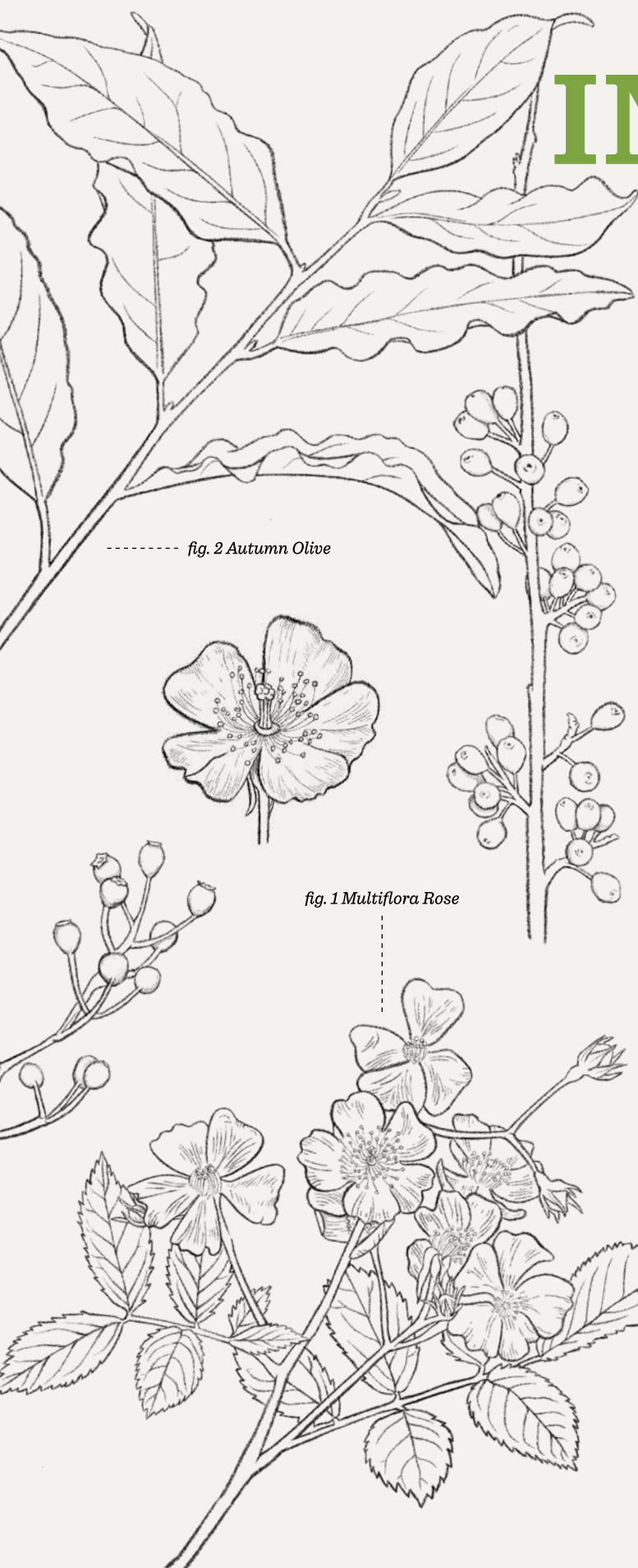


fig. 2 Autumn Olive

fig. 1 Multiflora Rose

So, what's the big deal? National parks exist to preserve and protect all kinds of plant life, right?

The answer is not as clear-cut as you'd think.

Park biologists have a lot of factors to consider when deciding how to manage invasive species within their park's boundaries. The origin of the species, the harm it causes to park resources, and the harm the removal of the plant causes to park resources are just some of the factors taken into account. They also weigh the prudence and feasibility of the plant's removal and management. Prudence refers to the practicality of the entire process, whereas feasibility refers to how difficult it would actually be to manage and reduce the species in the park.

Since the complete eradication of an invasive is impossible, park biologists try to focus their efforts on removing invasives from sensitive areas such as rare plant habitats, wetlands, or stream corridors.

Park biologists also use data to inform their plant management decisions. To determine the number of a given plant species, they divide the park into transects. Transects are essentially imaginary lines drawn across the park. The entirety of CVNP is separated into transects, which park biologists then transpose onto maps for reference in the field. Field scientists will walk along these transects, recording the number of invasive species they encounter. This requires an immense amount of skill in plant identification, along with the ability to differentiate between different subspecies of the same plant.

Not only does this process help determine the number of invasive plants in the park, it also helps determine where invasive plant management is most needed. Invasive plants in CVNP are managed in a few different ways. With larger populations of invasives, herbicides are used in a limited capacity; they are also not used in ecologically sensitive areas. Park biologists also use prescribed burns to control invasive plant populations.

Park volunteers also play a role in helping CVNP manage its invasive species. Anyone can register for an invasive plant volunteer program, helping pull out or cut down a variety of

these plants. These programs happen regularly throughout the summer and fall. Working directly with park biologists, some long-term volunteers also monitor and manage invasives in specific areas of the park.

Native plants are also fundamental in re-mediating areas impacted by invasive plant activity. These species are the ideal food sources for local insects and other animals. In places where a habitat has sustained damage from invasive removal, planting native species helps restore a healthy plant population and gives the habitat a new start.

Large-scale habitat restoration projects also employ native plants. In places like Wetmore and Stanford Run in CVNP, native species are planted to enhance wildlife habitats and provide additional erosion control. Native tree plantings are a common element in these habitat restoration projects. Throughout the park, you may see tall white tubes in open field areas - these "tree tubes" keep the native trees that were planted safe until they grow large enough to survive being munched on by deer and other animals. Over months, and sometimes even a couple of years, volunteers and staff work together to plant hundreds of trees to bring these projects to fruition.

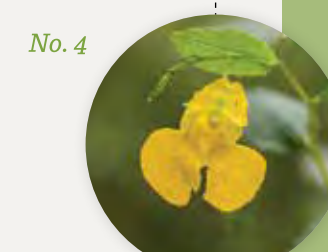
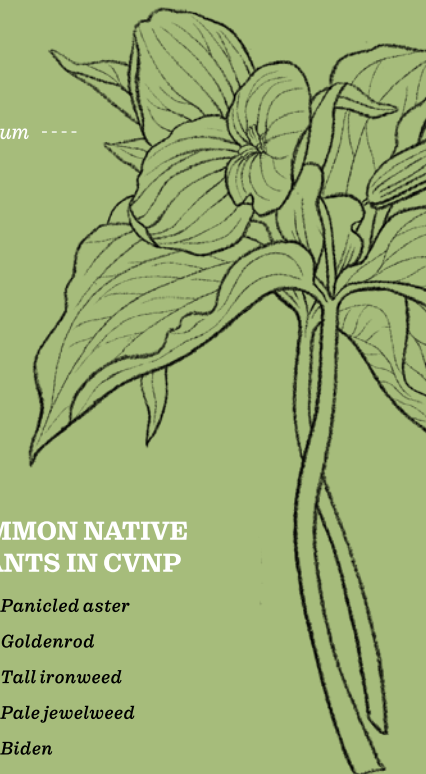
All in all, we continue to grow. Park biologists grow in their understanding of how plants interact with the ecosystems we explore. Volunteers grow in their service to the park and rehabilitating these special places. When we visit CVNP, we grow each time we spot a tree or a wildflower that speaks to us. With each increment of growth, our appreciation and understanding of the park grows too.

Growth is, indeed, good.

The Volunteer-In-Park (VIP) program is co-managed by the National Park Service and the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. There are many types of volunteer opportunities you can participate in, including invasive plant removals where you'll help remove invasive vegetation and improve habitat for native plants and animals.

To learn more about volunteering in CVNP, visit forcvnp.org/volunteer.

fig. 3 Trillium



COMMON NATIVE PLANTS IN CVNP

- No. 1: *Panicled aster*
- No. 2: *Goldenrod*
- No. 3: *Tall ironweed*
- No. 4: *Pale jewelweed*
- No. 5: *Biden*

BENEFITS OF NATIVE PLANTS

Native plants improve the habitat of native wildlife species.

In habitat restoration projects in the park, native plants can also provide improved erosion control from the Cuyahoga River.

Can help restore habitats degraded by previous human activity (such as areas that were previously farmed or forested).

Native plants can help restore areas impacted by invasive plant removal, and help rehabilitate them into healthy habitats.

Examples of areas being planted with native species: Wetmore and Stanford Run.

INFORMATION & SOURCES:

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SEND YOUR PICTURES TO
INFO@FORCVNP.ORG OR TAG
US ON SOCIAL MEDIA USING
#FORCVNP TO SHARE YOUR VICTORIES
AS YOU FIND THEM!

NATIVE SPECIES SCAVENGER HUNT

BY: KIM SHUMAN

THE NEXT TIME YOU ARE OUT IN CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, WHY NOT INCLUDE OUR SCAVENGER HUNT AS PART OF YOUR ADVENTURE? USE THESE TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING THEM IN CVNP AND ENJOY SOME FUN FACTS YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE KNOWN.

This scavenger hunt may take several months to complete! Winter is around the corner and as the park defrosts after a long season, it comes alive with many diverse types of wildflowers. The most activity occurs from April to May, while the flowers try to soak up as much sun as possible before the tree canopy shades the ground. This is the perfect time to visit the park and capture this beautiful display of nature!

Please remember to follow **Leave No Trace** guidelines while you're searching for native species in CVNP. Preserve our beautiful national park by examining, not touching. Leave rocks, plants, and natural objects as you find them.

• Start your search here!

1



□ SMOOTH BLUE ASTER¹:

DESCRIPTION: Herbaceous perennial that grows between 2 to 4 feet tall. Produces a dry, one-seeded fruit tipped with red bristles. Flowers are violet-blue rays with yellow disc flowers in the center.

WHERE: Found in mesic black soil prairies, hill prairies, savannas, rocky open woodlands, sandy woodlands, woodland edges, thickets, limestone glades, and roadside embankments.

WHEN: Early September through late fall

FUN FACTS:

The Greek word aster means "star" and describes the star-like flower heads.

The flowers attract many butterflies and other insects for pollination.

2



□ SHOWY GOLDENROD²:

DESCRIPTION: A perennial forming an upright clump of stiff, narrow-leaved, reddish stems. Blooming for about a month from late summer to fall, they bear dense, pyramidal, terminal clusters, up to 12 inches long, packed with tiny, bright yellow flowers.

WHERE: All throughout the park, especially in meadows.

WHEN: August through October

FUN FACTS:

Goldenrods are used for the manufacture of dark-colored, delicious honey.

Native Americans chewed leaves of Goldenrods to alleviate symptoms of toothache.

Thomas Edison made tires for the car (Ford Model T) using the rubber extracted from the leaves of Goldenrods.

3



□ RED MAPLE TREE³:

DESCRIPTION: Leaves of Red Maple are opposite with fairly long petioles, and may occur with a five-lobed character, where the two basal lobes are much smaller, or with a three-lobed, trident-shaped structure, which is more common. In either case, each lobe also has small serrations.

WHERE: Found naturally in areas of open woodlands and more commonly along creeks and bottomlands where the soil is constantly moist to wet.

WHEN: All year long. Red Maple is commonly thought of as having blazing red fall color, but trees found in the wild may display bright yellow, orange-red, or red fall color, or may even have poor green to chartreuse fall color.

FUN FACTS:

The sap from the Red Maple Tree can be used to create maple syrup.

Red Maple wood is more commonly used to produce smaller items, such as musical instruments, wooden boxes, clothespins and hangers.

4



□ TRILLIUM:

DESCRIPTION: The main distinguishing feature of this plant is its showy flowers and whorl of three leaves. It also has three sepals and three petals, hence why it is sometimes known as the "trinity flower," too. The flowers of this plant come in many colors like yellow, red, pink, purple, and white.

WHERE: As woodland wildflowers, Trilliums prefer high shade, though some species like a little sun. Look for these among leaf litter along the trails.

WHEN: April and early May

FUN FACTS:

Trilliums are a favorite food for deer.

In 1986, the Ohio General Assembly made the white trillium Ohio's official flower because it exists in all of Ohio's 88 counties.



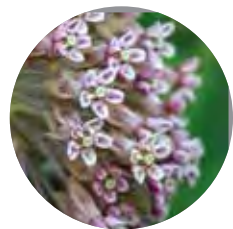
5 **SWAMP MILKWEED⁴:**

DESCRIPTION: Swamp Milkweed is one of our most common species and can be seen in any of Ohio's 88 counties come mid-late summer. The plants can vary greatly in size depending on the habitat conditions from 2 to over 5 feet in height. They are easily identified by the terminal flower umbels consisting of dozens of small, bright pink flowers, which resemble stars.

WHERE: This is our only wetland milkweed species and will flourish along pond margins or other damp sites. Floodplain forests, thickets, swamps, wet prairies/meadows/fields, roadside ditches, fens, marshes, and along just about any waterway are places you're likely to see Swamp Milkweed.

WHEN: It's typically a mid-late summer bloomer with flowers coming on in early July through August.

FUN FACTS:
The fibers of Swamp Milkweed stalks can be used to make rope/cordage and woven into cloth.
Swamp Milkweed is also frequently visited by hummingbirds!



8 **COMMON MILKWEED⁵:**

DESCRIPTION: The Common Milkweed is 'common' for a reason as it can be found with great frequency in every single Ohio county. It can grow upward of 4 to 5 feet in height and has large, pink/green/white umbels of flowers that are nearly spherical in shape and occur in the axils of the leaves.

WHERE: It occurs in just about any kind of disturbed, open habitat such as meadows, roadsides, railways, river and stream banks, and fallow fields.

WHEN: Begins to bloom in mid-June and will continue on through the summer up into August.

FUN FACTS:
This is the species that produces the majority of Monarchs in Ohio.
Large quantities of milkweed were used as stuffing in pillows and life jackets during WWII.



6 **JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT:**

DESCRIPTION: The plant grows to be about 8 inches to 2 feet in height. It is grown from a corm (a bulbous tuber) and produces calla lily-like flowers. There are male and female plants. Male plants will have one leaf divided into three leaflets, while females have two leaves of three leaflets. The flowers, which bloom in early spring, will grow to be about 3 inches long and are typically green-yellow or green with purple or brown stripes. Fruit becomes brilliant red.

WHERE: A variety of wooded environments, usually in rich soil.

WHEN: Late March through May

FUN FACTS:
It is toxic to dogs, cats and horses.
Jack-in-the-Pulpit can change sexes within its lifetime. All plants start off as male, pollen bearing flowers. Over time and with enough nutrients, the plant becomes female and produce berries! And if conditions change and nutrients are lacking, the plant can change back to male.



9 **VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS⁶:**

DESCRIPTION: The plants are 1 to 2 feet tall. The leaves are smooth and oval-shaped with a deep purple color before mellowing out into a blue-ish green color. The trumpet-shaped flowers bloom in clusters near the top of the stem. The buds change from pink to purple to blue as they bloom, although occasionally you might see a pink or white bloom.

WHERE: Low-lying damp woods, floodplains, stream terraces, etc. They can be most easily found along Furnace Run Trail.

WHEN: Early April through early May

FUN FACTS:
For a while, early Americans tried using bluebells to treat lung diseases.



7 **COMMON BLUE VIOLETS:**

DESCRIPTION: The purple flowers have white throats, and the three lower petals are somewhat hairy. The erect flower stem droops slightly and the flowers bend toward the ground. They have glossy green heart-shaped leaves.

WHERE: It appears in woods, thickets, and along streambeds, especially in shadier areas.

WHEN: Early April through late May

FUN FACTS:
Blue Violet flowers symbolize love and faithfulness. The Ancient Greeks considered the violet a symbol of fertility and love; they used it in love potions.



1 **AMERICAN SYCAMORE TREE:**

DESCRIPTION: The American Sycamore is a massive tree easily identified by its height, spreading canopy, and unique bark. Leaves are simple, three to five lobed with varying number and size of incisions, 5 to 8 inches across. Leaf shape is variable but generally wider than long; leaves are medium green above with light pale or woolly undersides. Leaf petioles swollen at base. The bark is smooth, whitish bark peels off in irregular patches from upper branches to reveal darker bark underneath, creating a characteristic gray, green, and brown mosaic resembling camouflage.

WHERE: This native tree prefers deep, moist, well- or moderately-drained soils of variable pH and full to partial sun; it is often found naturally along rivers and streams.

WHEN: All year but look for their leaves to turn yellow in early fall.

FUN FACTS:
The American Sycamore has the largest leaf of any tree in North America.
The largest deciduous tree in eastern U.S., sycamore trees can grow 75 to 100 feet.
Seeds of sycamore are known as "helicopters" because of their wings that rotate similar to helicopter's propellers in the wind.

GLOSSARY

NATIVE SPECIES: A species that normally lives and thrives in a particular ecosystem. This can include any species that developed with the surrounding habitat and can be assisted by or affected by a new species.

PERENNIAL: Unlike annuals or biennials, perennials are plants that live year after year.

SEPALS: Part of the flower of flowering plants. Usually green, sepals typically function as protection for the flower in bud, and often as support for the petals when in bloom.

DECIDUOUS: Deciduous is the term that describes trees, bushes, vines and other plants that shed their leaves annually. It comes from the Latin term deciduous, meaning "tending to fall or falling."

PETIOLES: The stalk by which a leaf is attached to a stem giving the ability to twist the leaf to face the sun. Also called leafstalk.



SUPERINTENDENT, CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK
BY: ZAINA SALEM

Working in the National Park Service (NPS) has taken Lisa Petit through a 21-year journey in a variety of leadership positions for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). She started as a Wildlife Biologist and later became Chief of Resource Management for the park. She also served as Deputy Superintendent before becoming Acting Superintendent. During her time in CVNP, Lisa oversaw all science, engineering, design, planning, environmental compliance, and resource stewardship activities.

A trailblazer, Lisa recently made history by becoming the first woman superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Park since its establishment in 1974. Lisa has worked alongside the Conservancy and supported our value to the park and to Northeast Ohio. We welcome her move to this important leadership role and look forward to continuing to work in partnership with her for the benefit of CVNP, its visitors, and those we serve.

Lisa spoke with the **CONSERVANCY** to talk about making history in CVNP, her goals as superintendent, and her most memorable moments in the park.

NOW THAT YOU'RE SUPERINTENDENT, WHAT'S ON YOUR TO-DO LIST?

LISA PETIT: First, I am still very focused on continuing our part in restoring the Cuyahoga River to a healthier condition and providing a truly special recreational experience for visitors.

Next, we are coming up on our 50th birthday in 2024, and we are setting our sights on the kind of National Park we want to be for the next 50 years as we contribute to the quality of life for residents of Northeast Ohio and become more of a national destination. We want to welcome and be accessible to all people, and we want all to enjoy an authentic and unique "National Park experience" once they're here.

Thirdly, we are very fortunate that Congress provided funding to National Park units to erase the backlog of maintenance on our infrastructure and facilities. Over the next 4 years we have the potential to restore our most popular visitor amenities – the Ohio and Erie Canal and Towpath Trail, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and many of our most significant historic buildings to bring our resources back to excellent condition for use and enjoyment by the public.

And last, but not least, I am focused on strengthening relationships between the park and our community leaders and stakeholders throughout the valley, with an eye toward increasing the economic benefits that CVNP visitors can bring to the region while they enjoy the many services offered by our Gateway Communities.

YOU ARE THE FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE AS SUPERINTENDENT OF CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1974. HOW DOES THAT FEEL?

LISA PETIT: I feel very honored! I am excited to take the baton and build on successes of the past five superintendents, each of whom have moved the park forward to get us to where we are now. In my 20+ years with this park, I have learned a great deal from superintendents John Debo, Stan Austin, and Craig Kenkel. I am thrilled to join other women environmental leaders in the National Park Service and in Northeast Ohio. I have had the great fortune to work with and learn from many of these women over the years. Most notably, Conservancy President and CEO, Deb Yandala and I have collaborated in one way or another throughout my time here and one of the best things about becoming superintendent is that I will be able to work even more closely with Deb.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD?

LISA PETIT: Fortunately, women are more represented in STEM fields now than ever before. We have some amazing women who work in all fields of the National Park Service and at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Biologists, engineers, law enforcement rangers, communications dispatchers, interpretation and education rangers, cultural resource specialists, facility managers, environmental protection specialists, to name a few.

My advice to girls and young women (or anyone) interested in the environmental field is to follow your heart, do what makes you happy and what stimulates your mind! Do not be deterred by people who think you cannot make it because of who you are. I was lucky to have many male supporters and mentors, but I had a few loud naysayers (both male and female) in life too. I always knew what I wanted to do, and so I worked harder to get past those obstacles. Also, I would say take every opportunity to gain experience and learn from others in your chosen field. Sometimes, the unpaid internships or volunteer experiences are the most beneficial in your career development.

YOU HAVE SPENT 21 YEARS IN CVNP WORKING IN A VARIETY OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS). HOW HAS THE PARK CHANGED SINCE THEN?

LISA PETIT: Over the past two decades, CVNP has changed dramatically! The most impressive changes have been in the comeback of the Cuyahoga River, the improved condition of the forests, meadows and wetlands, the revitalization and popularity of the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and the Countryside Initiative farms, our beautiful new Boston Mill Visitor Center, and the change in the attitude of staff toward a greater sense of pride about what this park has become and what more we can be.

WHY IS THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NPS AND THE CONSERVANCY IMPORTANT?

LISA PETIT: Our partnership with the Conservancy, the official friend group of CVNP, is critical to the evolution and ultimate success of the park. The Conservancy helps us build public awareness and support as well as making us more relevant to our local communities whether through the arts, environmental education, or providing a memorable way for people to celebrate their significant life events.

HOW DOES THAT RELATIONSHIP UNLOCK THE FULL POTENTIAL OF CVNP?

LISA PETIT: We simply could not be as successful as we are in providing so many benefits and services to the public. Especially during the COVID pandemic, our park was still able to remain open and serve people while many parks had to close. The Conservancy played a huge part in our ability to continue serving the record numbers of people coming to the park. We also would not have such an expanded public reach and impact without the Conservancy. We have a creative NPS staff, but as a large federal agency we often cannot be as nimble or innovative as the Conservancy can be on our behalf. The Conservancy directly expands the capacity of our workforce, especially through a huge cadre of passionate volunteers, and helps us push boundaries to reach new levels of service to the public.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF MANAGING A NATIONAL PARK, AND WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE THAT'S SPECIFIC TO CVNP?

LISA PETIT: I believe the biggest challenge of managing a national park is in balancing the long-term protection of our resources for future generations with serving the rapidly evolving and expanding recreational needs of the current generation of visitors. There is always much more to do than there is funding to do it, and that is why parks fall behind in the ability to keep up with their dual mission. This challenge is as true for Cuyahoga Valley as it is for Yellowstone.

For CVNP, we have a relatively large amount of built infrastructure that is historic and expensive to maintain, and we have a lot of environmental threats to our natural resources. A huge challenge! That is why the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative have been such a great help in assisting national parks with this balancing act. It is also why the assistance from Conservancy members and donors is so essential for our future. For CVNP, the challenge of being a national park within a highly populated area is also our strength and brings so many more opportunities because of the support of our communities and the people of northeast Ohio.

YOU SHARE THE CONSERVANCY'S COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION AND WELCOMING NEW PEOPLE TO OUR PARK. WHY IS THAT SO IMPORTANT?

LISA PETIT: CVNP was first established under the NPS "Parks to the People" initiative, to bring the National Park experience to urban population centers and allow more of the American public to enjoy their national parks closer to home. Over the 47 years of our existence, we have made tremendous strides in fulfilling that purpose. However, we have much more to do to make the benefits of this national park fully available to people of all races, ethnic backgrounds, and abilities. We need to build awareness and extend our reach to more of our local communities especially in Cleveland, Akron, and Canton, and as we become more of a national destination, our visitors should reflect the diversity of the rest of America.

YOU'VE BEEN WITH CVNP FOR MANY YEARS - WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PARK MEMORY?

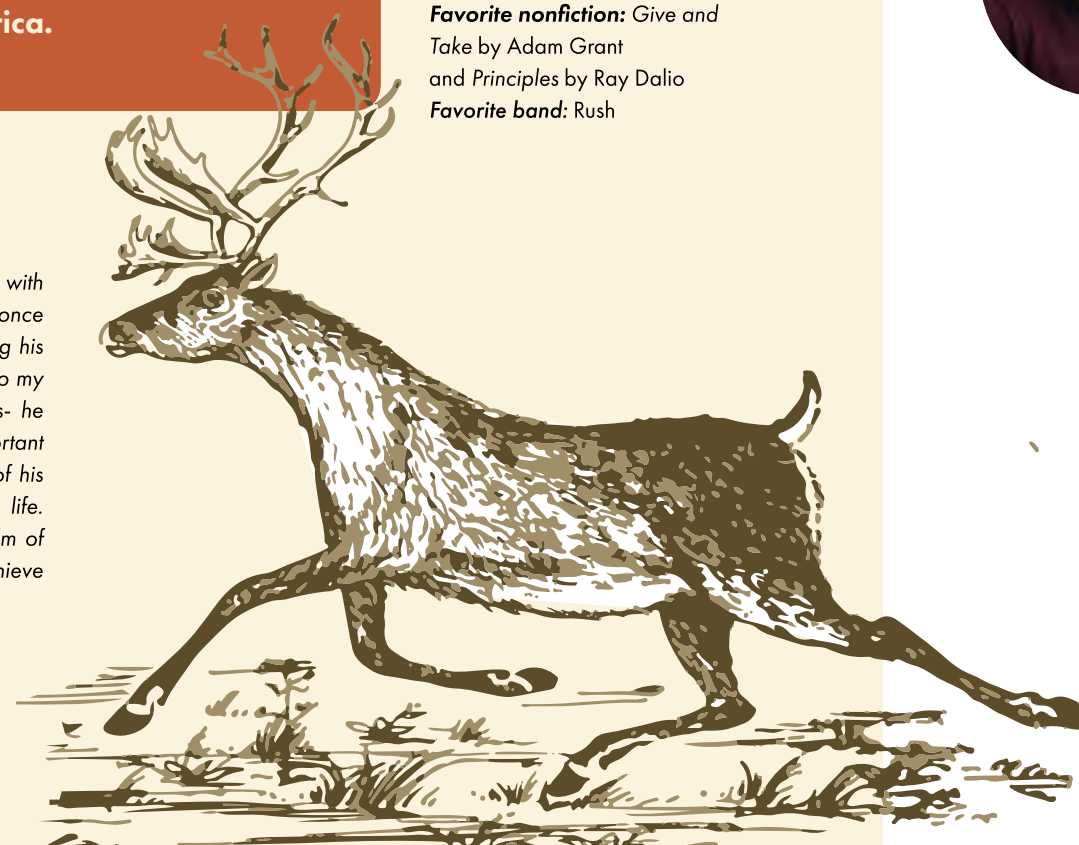
LISA PETIT: It is too hard to come up with just one! So, I'll list a few. **My favorite nature memories were unusual encounters with wildlife in my early years with the park:**

A coyote came running full clip past me in the forest, because it was being chased and dive-bombed by an angry pileated woodpecker! Reminded me of the old Roadrunner cartoons!

As I was standing in a small ravine, I heard a loud crashing coming toward me through the forest. I looked up to see a huge, 10-point buck hurtling toward me and he jumped straight over my head and continued running through the forest. Awesome!

My favorite memory of a person was: Meeting and speaking with former Congressman John Seiberling, once at a park function and once with my family in the checkout line at Acme where he was bagging his own groceries. He was such a lovely person, and when he spoke to my young daughters that afternoon- though he really didn't know us- he treated them as if they were his own grandchildren and the most important people in the world. To me, that small act was the true measure of his character and the humble way he served people throughout his life. I carry that memory with me, and I feel privileged to take the helm of Cuyahoga Valley National Park to honor his legacy and try to achieve his vision for this place.

We need to build awareness and extend our reach to more of our local communities especially in Cleveland, Akron, and Canton, and as we become more of a national destination, our visitors should reflect the diversity of the rest of America.



WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE NEXT CHAPTER OF CVNP?

LISA PETIT: I view the next chapter as one of maturing as a National Park. We are relative youngsters in NPS and compared to the 100-year-old Cleveland and Summit Metro Parks and Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Our "birth" in the 1970s was painful for the people who lived in the valley and much of that pain remains for their families who still live here. We had an awkward youth as we grew and developed, learned from our mistakes, and grappled with self-doubt and a battered self-esteem. Over the past 20 years we have developed more confidence, collaborated better with our partners, gained more public support, and blossomed in our ability to serve the public and protect the resources. So, now it is time to reach toward our true potential to provide the National Park experience and benefits to everyone in a way that sustains us into the next 50 years and beyond. To do that, we must remember and acknowledge our history and continue learning from our mistakes so that we can get better at being Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE PARKGOERS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

LISA PETIT: My idea of relaxation is being far off the beaten path with my family fishing for walleye or pike on a remote lake in Canada, having the whole beach to ourselves at Assateague National Seashore, or just sitting by a campfire studying the night sky.

- Favorite film:** *It's a Wonderful Life*
- Favorite novel:** *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Favorite nonfiction:** *Give and Take* by Adam Grant and *Principles* by Ray Dalio
- Favorite band:** Rush

WELCOME TO THE CONSERVANCY TEAM!



GREG MORTON
Vice President of Administration

Greg has more than 20 years of employment in the non-profit sector. Most recently he served as the Vice President of Mission Services and Public Relations for Goodwill. He has experience in human resources, various workforce development programs, IT, marketing and fund development. "I'm very excited about the opportunity to be a part of the Conservancy team as well as working with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park partners. I realized over the last two years with all that was happening in the world there were few places that you could count on for relief and Cuyahoga Valley National Park was one of them."



DOMINIC MOORE-DUNSON
Program and Arts Manager

Dominic hails from Akron, OH, and is a graduate of National Arts Strategies' Executive Program for Arts & Culture Strategies at the University of Pennsylvania, which is a program designed to enhance all capacities to lead a thriving arts & culture non-profit organization. Amongst his many roles as an emerging arts leader in Akron, Dominic serves as a co-founder of the Akron Black Artist Guild, board secretary of ArtsNow, and served on the inaugural board member of The Devil Strip Magazine. In 2016, Dominic established a large-scale community-based dance theatre project called Artie & The Black Card which premiered in September 2018. By partnering with arts, education, and business institutions/corporations, the project inspires conversation around Black identity, how it relates to economic development in the Black community, and the solutions we can create to cultivate a more diverse pool of Black professionals and other marginalized people groups.

TWO TRUTHS & A LIE

...can you guess which statement is a lie?

GREG

Greg enjoys riding his motorcycle including through all parts of CVNP.

Greg once played the drums for the group Earth Wind and Fire.

He has made over a dozen solo skydiving jumps.

DOMINIC

Dominic was mentored by Garth Fagan, the original choreographer of The Lion King Broadway.

As a choreographer, Dominic has had an ice cream flavor created in response to one of his shows.

Dominic was on the National Championship University of Akron Men's Soccer Team in 2010.

CHECK BELOW TO SEE IF YOU GUESSED RIGHT!

ANSWERS:
Greg once played the drums for the group Earth Wind and Fire. (LIE, but one of his favorite groups of all time.)
Dominic was on the National Championship University of Akron Men's Soccer team in 2010. (LIE, he left the team in 2009.)



IMPROVING TRAILS BIT BY BIT

RESTORING CVNP BRIDLE TRAILS

BY: ZAINA SALEM

NESTLED BETWEEN WETMORE AND QUICK ROADS LIES FOUR MILES OF CLEAR-RUNNING CREEKS, DEEP WOODS, WILDFLOWERS, AND ACRES OF SOLITUDE THAT MAKE UP THE WETMORE TRAIL.

It is not uncommon to hear horses trotting along Wetmore Trail as it is the starting point for seven interconnected bridle trails in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Although these trails were designed for horseback riding, its versatility allows hikers and snowshoe enthusiasts to enjoy them as well.

Old barns, shelters, and horse pastures are scattered throughout the area, a reminder of earlier farming days. The name Wetmore derives from the land's first owners, Frederick and Emilia Wetmore, who lived in the late 1800s. Several owners have succeeded them since then, and some of the land was acquired by Summit Metro Parks. In 1984, the National Park Service (NPS) purchased the remainder of the farms.

Earlier in 2021, the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park announced the creation of a new trails restoration fund: The Cuyahoga Valley Bridle Trail Fund. A generous donation by Ray and Jan Dalton launched the establishment of this much-needed fund which will work to assist the NPS with making improvements to bridle trails over a three-year period.

Ray and Jan got their first horses 4 years ago as a “bucket list” item. They have always enjoyed watching them and rode rental horses on many of their vacations.

“We own a horse-prepared property on Hines Hill Road and decided to go for it in 2017 based on the fact that we were 3 miles from CVNP and their great trail system,” Ray said. “Once we began to ride the trails at CVNP and the Metroparks, we quickly realized that this great asset at CVNP was in need of repairs and renovations.”

The Daltons began conversations with the Conservancy, NPS, and members of the Summit and Medina counties of the Ohio Horseman’s Council, and it was clear that they all wanted the same outcome: returning the trails to their former glory. As a result, Ray and Jan decided to create and provide the initial multi-year funding of the Cuyahoga Valley Bridle Trail Fund.

“The Fund is less than one year in existence and the CVNP team is doing a fantastic job of utilizing the Fund to accelerate repairs and improvements,” Ray said. “We are pleased with the energy, effort, and performance of CVNP and the Committee and are hopeful that many others will contribute to this valuable Fund.”

Since the creation of the Bridle Trail Fund, several improvements have been made including repairing bridle trail surfaces, installing armored crossings, repairing and cleaning trail bridges, cleaning and installing trail drainage features, trimming of trail corridors, removing trees, and improving trail signs.

Generous donors like you are why our community is able to enjoy the beautiful trails in CVNP.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAY AND JAN DALTON

“We own a horse-prepared property on Hines Hill Road and decided to go for it in 2017 based on the fact that we were 3 miles from CVNP and their great trail system,” Ray said. “Once we began to ride the trails at CVNP and the Metroparks, we quickly realized that this great asset at CVNP was in need of repairs and renovations.”

— Ray & Jan Dalton

TO MAKE A GIFT TO THE BRIDLE TRAIL FUND, PLEASE VISIT [FORCVNP.ORG/BRIDLE-TRAIL-FUND](https://forcvnp.org/bridle-trail-fund)



PHOTO BY ZAINA SALEM

TREE PLANTINGS ALLOW STUDENTS TO HAVE A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN RESTORING THE HABITATS IN CVNP.

learning through service

THE SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES IN HABITAT RESTORATION AND PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK.

STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO TAKE A HANDS-ON ROLE IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF THEIR NATIONAL PARK AS WELL AS LEARN HOW SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM ENHANCES THEIR OWN COMMUNITY, AND IN TURN, THEIR OWN LIVES.



STUDENT CONDUCTS WATER QUALITY TEST OF THE CUYAHOGA RIVER.



STUDENTS SEARCHING FOR MACRO INVERTIBRATES, SUCH AS CRAYFISH, IN A STREAM IN CVNP.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WICK POETRY CENTER

hands-on service!

Cuyahoga Valley National Park represents a montage of some of our region's most cherished lands and precious natural and historic resources. From the majestic heights of Brandywine Falls to the rocky sandstone cliffs of the Ledges, the Conservancy supports the park in preserving these magnificent and meaningful places for all to enjoy.

Now, a new plot of land will be added to our national park. On September 27, 2021, the Conservancy announced that it had purchased the 207 acres of the former Brandywine Golf Course.

Sitting on both sides of Akron-Peninsula Road south of the Village of Peninsula, Brandywine Golf Course opened in the 1960s and operated as a public course until 2018. It is adjacent to the Virginia Kendall area of the park to the south, Camp Manatoc and Camp Butler to the east, and the Cuyahoga River to the west. As well as the riverfront, the property has two significant streambeds and is home to rare species.

The National Park Service will purchase 192 acres from the Conservancy once environmental restoration is complete. The remaining 15 acres will be retained by the Conservancy, which has begun a master planning process that will help inform the funds needed to be raised for activation and programming. At this time, the property is not open to the public.

This land purchase is a first of its kind for the Conservancy and made possible through the generosity of individual donors and recoverable grants from the Northeast Ohio community and national foundations. This includes Akron Community Foundation, Connor Foundation, GAR Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, and National Park Foundation.

"The amount of dedication from the community to the park and to our work is truly phenomenal," said Deb Yandala, President and CEO of the Conservancy. "The importance of conservation and preservation of CVNP is underscored by the community stepping up to help us raise and secure the funds needed to purchase this property and ultimately increase access to the park and the Cuyahoga River."

Yandala said as the Conservancy looks ahead with this project, there are more successes to come with it. One will be the planning and design of parkland with a special focus on community access and engagement of people who historically haven't had the opportunity to be part of park design. Another will be an opportunity for community engagement and listening to the public on what they want from their national park, looking closely at river access.

Newland Park Land

BY: ZAINA SALEM
PHOTO BY JACK MCCORMICK

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Thank you to over 40 additional donors who contributed to this important campaign. Please see page 23 for the complete list.

To Our Donors,

YOU
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THIS
POSSIBLE

*Thank you for
your support during
these new and
challenging times!*

THE CONSERVANCY GRATEFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES THE GENEROUS
INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS,
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A Biden wildflower
 shows off its bright,
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Tall Ironweed blooms from July to September and can be found growing in meadows and open woodlands in CVNP.

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While space limits our ability to list all donor names, we are grateful for the support that each of you provides, no matter the size of your gift.

If you would like to change the way your name is listed in future publications or have other corrections, please contact us at 330-657-2909 x139.

**deceased*

CASCADE SUBARU IS IMPROVING EDUCATION ONE CLASSROOM AT A TIME

Cascade Subaru, part of Cascade Auto Group, is committed to providing students and schools with the resources necessary to learn and grow in the classroom.

We're doing it by partnering with the **Subaru Loves Learning** national initiative and **AdoptAClassroom.org** to provide a \$3,000 credit to Woodridge Primary School in Peninsula. The school is just minutes from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) which offers a multitude of programs for children. The Conservancy has consistently partnered with Woodridge Schools to offer hands-on educational programs in CVNP. Cascade Subaru's donation will provide \$500 of supplies to each of six classrooms.

This year alone, Subaru will benefit more than 114,000 students nationwide—and we're proud to step in and help a school in our area.

Research shows that students in many schools across the country lack the supplies and resources needed to succeed in the classroom.

"The average teacher spends hundreds of dollars a year out of pocket to help fill the shortfall in classroom school supplies," said Michelle Primm, managing partner of Cascade Auto Group. "We're hoping this donation will relieve the burden on teachers and give students at Woodridge Primary School a better chance to do well in the classroom while also exploring the wonders of the national park."

Subaru Brand Manager David Hurte echoed Michelle's sentiment. "We believe in making learning accessible to as many students as possible," he said. "Adopting classrooms through Subaru Loves Learning is just one of the many ways we're doing more to make a difference in our community."



Cascade Subaru, located in the middle of the 20-acre campus at 4149 State Road in Cuyahoga Falls, has been serving the community for more than 50 years. Learn more at CascadeAutoGroup.com.



The J.M Smucker Co. o SUPPORTING STEWARDS OF THE LAND



At The J.M. Smucker Co., we support organizations that help create a healthier planet for current and future generations.

Environmental stewardship has always been a part of our heritage and today is a key consideration in virtually every aspect of our operations. In addition to our own work, our partnerships with groups that help promote sustainable land practices and volunteer activities like the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park help to extend the meaningful impact we can make in support of environmental responsibility.

By showing our appreciation for the land around us, we can help preserve our park system and make sure it continues to be enjoyed by future generations.



PARK IMPACT PROJECTS

...and how you can help!

The Conservancy is raising money to help CVNP replace five pedestrian bridges within the park. The existing trail bridges are currently failing due to erosion and damaged structural integrity. Existing wooden bridges will be replaced with fiberglass truss bridges with wood decking.

We are grateful to TRAILS FOREVER donors for helping support the replacement of these bridges. Special thank you to Monica & Keith Owen for their generous gift towards the Plateau Trail bridge. Check out the progress so far and find out how you can help!



Old Carriage Trail Bridge



Plateau Trail Bridge



Stanford Trail Bridge

funds needed!



Salt Run Trail Bridge



The bridge being replaced on Salt Run Trail is currently in decline and past its life cycle. Temporary repairs have already been conducted to this bridge for stabilization, but a permanent replacement is needed for a total cost of \$30,500.

Join us in investing in this next trail improvement by visiting www.forcvnp.org/footbridgeproject. You may also use the donation slip in this magazine and designate your gift to "Salt Run Trail Bridge." We appreciate your help in advance!

social creatures*



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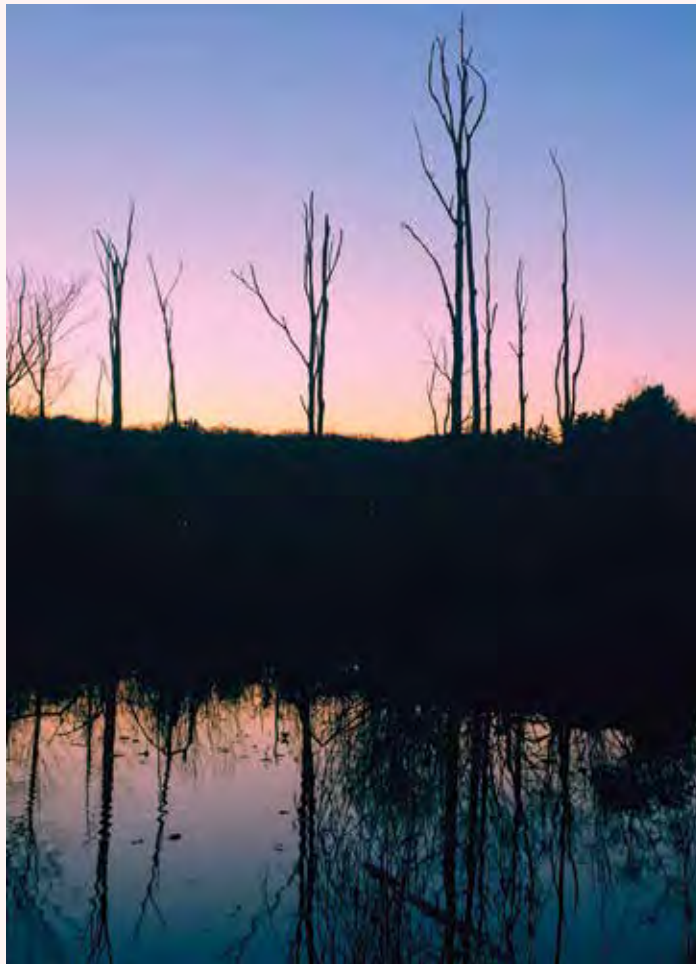


PHOTO BY BRETT DODRIDGE



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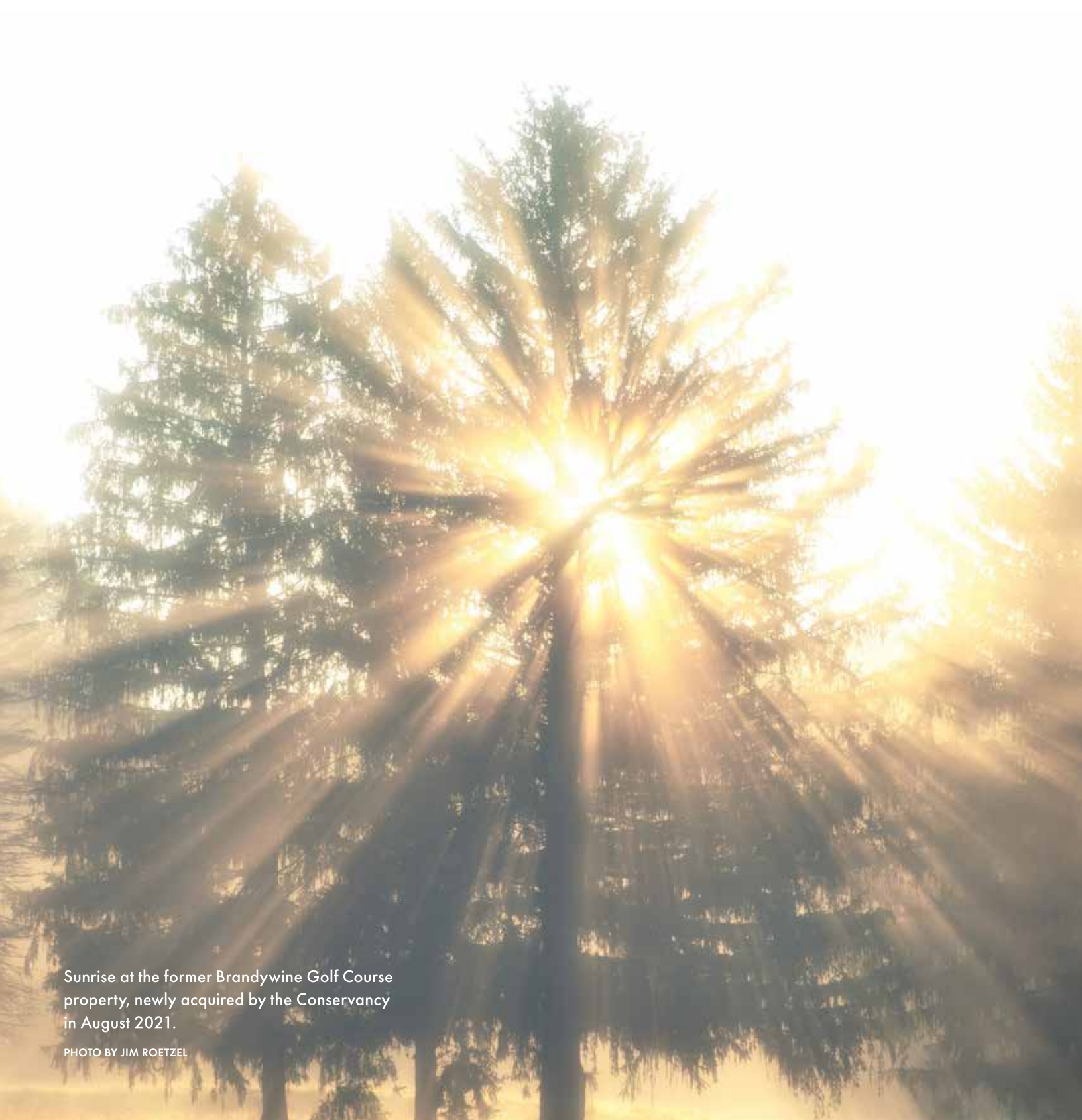
PHOTOS BY TOM MENYES



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Sunrise at the former Brandywine Golf Course property, newly acquired by the Conservancy in August 2021.

PHOTO BY JIM ROETZEL