

CONSERVANCY



SPRING / SUMMER 2023, VOLUME 8: ISSUE 2

THE FUTURE ISSUE

WHAT'S INSIDE?
STRENGTHENING THE RIVER BY REINTRODUCING MUSSELS INTO OUR WATER



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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A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Hello Park Friends,

Have you noticed lately that our popularity is growing? More and more people are expressing their appreciation for Cuyahoga Valley National Park and all that we offer to Northeast Ohio and beyond. Our visitation grew to 2.9 million in 2022, making us the 9th most visited National Park in the country and 1st in the Midwest. In January of this year, the international travel website *Travel Lens* dubbed us the 2nd Best National Park in the nation based on how close and accessible we are to our communities, and the favorable reactions of the public to this beautiful place. With the Conservancy's help, your park has grown in size with the Brandywine Golf Course property purchase. Our community support has grown as well, with the Village of Peninsula, and cities of Cuyahoga Falls and Akron all passing resolutions declaring themselves gateways to the National Park. Over time, we hope that a higher national visitation to the Park will provide greater economic benefits for our communities.

We could not receive this kind of recognition and appreciation if it were not for the support and advocacy from all of you, our Conservancy members, donors, and friends! You help us keep our trails and resources in good condition for visitors, you help us reach and enrich the lives of more schoolkids in the region, you help us bring quality of life through the arts and storytelling and celebration of life events, and you help us connect the public to this place through your support of volunteer service. As we approach our 50th year in 2024, we are hitting our stride as we continue growing into the National Park we were meant to be; a National Park to and for the people.

Thank you for all you do in support of Cuyahoga Valley National Park!

LISA PETIT, SUPERINTENDENT
CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

“Our visitation grew to **2.9 million in 2022**, making us the **9th most visited National Park in the country** and **1st in the Midwest.**”

— LISA PETIT

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A MESSAGE TO OUR MEMBERS:

Thanks to you, the park is *growing* & the Conservancy's work is *growing*.

Support from many of you allowed us to purchase the former Brandywine Golf Course and add 198-acres to Cuyahoga Valley National Park. You also helped us purchase 15-acres to develop as Conservancy owned parkland, thereby assisting the park with visitor services more easily provided on privately-owned land. The Conservancy is now leading a planning process to determine potential uses of the property we own as we conduct environmental remediation on all of the property. You have also stood by us as we made our way through the pandemic. When our education, event and public programs were severely diminished, you supported us and allowed us to grow in new ways. I'm grateful to all of you for believing in our work and our programs and services have returned—and grown.

This October, several hundred leaders from National Park friends groups and the National Park Service will come to Cuyahoga Valley National Park for a 3-day meeting of the National Park Friends Alliance. We were selected to host this annual gathering because we are one of the largest, most innovative friends groups in the country. We will showcase our work alongside the wonderful staff and features of our beloved national park. We are humbled and privileged to be chosen to share our park with National Park leaders from around the country—and we can only do this because of your years of support.

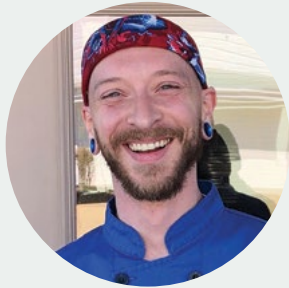


Thank you.

DEB YANDALA, PRESIDENT AND CEO

Meet the Staff

WESLEY PATTERSON
CULINARY PROGRAM MANAGER



Wesley’s career in food service began roughly twenty years ago at an East Coast Custard to pay for soccer cleats and he’s never looked back! He’s held many jobs in this industry, including ice cream scooper, dish washer, food runner, server, bartender, line cook, receiving clerk, purchasing manager, sous chef, food service director, and more. He prides himself in being someone who has worked through many positions and divisions within the food service industry, and he’s ecstatic to marry all of his passions together at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. He’s most looking forward to serving amazing food while incorporating the kitchen into programming and educating students on gastronomy and how it all works together!

KELLY MCGREAL
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR



Kelly McGreal joined the Conservancy in 2022 as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator. She values the Conservancy’s focus on community engagement and dedication to environmental education. Kelly’s background is in writing and communications. Prior to joining the Conservancy, she taught college-level writing at Cuyahoga Community College and Kent State University. Her 20-year teaching career allowed her to connect with students and the broader community. Kelly has been exploring CVNP since she was a teenager, and she is fond of photographing insects, plants, and landscapes.

KIMBERLY LOVANO
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR



Kimberly LoVano is excited to join the Conservancy team and combine her love of CVNP with community engagement and advocacy. Before joining the Conservancy, Kimberly spent a decade at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, working in a number of roles related to research, public education, and advocacy. Most recently, she served as the Food Bank’s Director of Advocacy and Public Education, where she led efforts to engage legislators and the community in the fight against hunger. Kimberly received her B.A. in international development and women’s studies from The Ohio State University. She was born and raised in Parma, Ohio and currently resides in the Akron area with her husband, their two children, and their dog, Lambeau.

ALLISON SMITH
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT MANAGER



Allison’s career in parks has spanned over twenty years. She has worked in state and city parks in Massachusetts and her home state of Virginia. She’s also done every park-related task imaginable, from trail work to data analysis and everything in between. She most recently was the program coordinator for Greening the Gateway Cities, a state-sponsored urban tree planting program in Massachusetts. Allison has a bachelor’s degree in sociology and anthropology from Old Dominion University and a master’s degree in public administration from Strayer University. As the Administrative Support Manager for the Conservancy, Allison handles the day-to-day office operations and supports other departments. New to Ohio, she is excited to explore CVNP and her local Metroparks with her wife and daughter.

TWO TRUTHS & A LIE

...can you guess which statement is false?

- WESLEY PATTERSON**
- 1. He grew up on a farm with pigs, chickens, goats, and lots of corn!
 - 2. He LOVES all Cleveland sports!
 - 3. He’s been to all of the Great Lakes.

- KELLY MCGREAL**
- 1. She loves tofu and has mastered making it flavorful.
 - 2. She broke both arms at the same time.
 - 3. She once came face to face with a moose in Canada.

- KIMBERLY LOVANO**
- 1. She is a wedding officiant and has been honored to marry a handful of her friends and family over the years.
 - 2. She has traveled to London twice to visit Warner Bros. Studios where the *Harry Potter* movies were filmed.
 - 3. Her baking assistant is her four-year old daughter, Kaley. Their greatest baking feat was a six-layer buttercream cake.

- ALLISON SMITH**
- 1. She lived and worked on one of the Boston Harbor Islands for a summer by herself.
 - 2. She knows how to drive a snow plow.
 - 3. She has through-hiked the Appalachian Trail.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS HERE! →

ANSWERS: Number 3 is the lie. He still needs to see Lake Superior!

ANSWERS: Number 2 is the lie. She has broken both arms, but not at the same time!

ANSWERS: Number 2 is the lie. Kimmy and her husband are avid Harry Potter fans, but haven’t had the chance to visit the set—yet!

ANSWERS: Number 3 is the lie. This is a goal though! She has hiked sections in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

PHOTOS BY ZAINA SALEM

SEEDS OF HOPE: PLANTING THE NEXT GENERATION

BY HALEY BITTAKER AND ZAINA SALEM

ONE COULD SAY THAT PLANTING A GARDEN LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER TOMORROW.

This is a concept engrained in the workings of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC), co-managed by the Conservancy and the National Park Service (NPS). The CVEEC serves thousands of students every year via overnight, day, and summer programs, educating the next generation about the importance of the environment and what role they have in its future. A large part of the CVEEC's mission is teaching sustainable food practices. Thanks to the help of many trowels, the CVEEC is about to embark on a project designed to take this a step further by adding a new kind of classroom to its campus. With the collaboration of Spice Field Kitchen, the National Park Service (NPS), CVEEC's Culinary Team, volunteers, and the generous donation of April and Charlie Walton, plans have been set forth to breathe new life into the previously established Learning Garden & Hoop House.

The original Hoop House was built between 2012 and 2013 and sits adjacent to the Lipscomb Dining Hall on the CVEEC campus. The space was given its name from the structure of the greenhouse being shaped by half circles or hoops for its construction and shape. It includes a fenced area surrounding the greenhouse with indoor and outdoor soil beds. During the pandemic, this program had to be put on hold – but alas, growth in a garden stops for nothing.

Thanks to a generous contribution from Charlie and April Walton, the Conservancy is eager to rebuild the once popular Learning Garden & Hoop House for area students. The project at the CVEEC is designed to reboot the existing spaces while adding programmatic access points for thousands of students each year. Once completed, these spaces will allow students to engage in immersive learning experiences in food and farming, regenerative agriculture and climate change, culinary programs and careers, food justice, and nutrition and wellness.

Charlie and April Walton have been invested in the Conservancy since its inception. April, having a special interest in the CVEEC, said the key to environmental education is sparking curiosity.

“The most important thing is that you have to provide the space for children to be curious,” she said. “And that’s what the CVEEC does. It makes them curious and introduces them to the outdoor environment.”

The revitalized spaces will allow CVEEC to host more students daily thereby increasing the number served each year by thousands. This project will also further advance the CVEEC's reputation as an innovative and inclusive environmental education center.

CVEEC Director Amanda Schuster was part of the program prior to the pandemic and will be a pillar of its success to come.

“FOOD UNITES US ALL...”

—AMANDA SCHUSTER

“Something I am looking forward to is incorporating important historic education alongside sustainable practices, such as growing native plants in traditional ways.”

She hopes to incorporate the “three sisters” method of farming, an Indigenous agricultural practice where maize, beans, and squash are planted together in a shared space. The plants protect and nourish each other in different ways as they grow and provide a solid diet for their cultivators.

Schuster and her education staff will be pairing up with Stephen Baker, Spice Field Kitchen's chief operating officer, to create a curriculum for this project. Spice Field Kitchen is the 501c3 arm of the CVNP farm, Spice Acres, which conducts sustainable farming and culinary programming and installs learning gardens.

Baker, an educator himself of the last 21 years, began his work at the Spice Field Kitchen in 2018 and has never looked back.

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU HAVE TO PROVIDE THE SPACE FOR CHILDREN TO BE CURIOUS AND THAT’S WHAT THE CVEEC DOES.” —APRIL WALTON

“With this level of intentionality, youth are set up to have positive relationships with food and make informed decisions regarding their food choices,” said Baker.

Inclusivity is a shared goal between Spice Field Kitchen and the Conservancy. The partnership will allow the Conservancy to design ADA-accessible spaces that offer young people from all backgrounds the opportunity to connect with nature through food.

Schuster says the current space will be altered to be more accessible to people of all abilities, including raised beds, wheelchair accessible pathways, and sensory experiences. The new learning garden will include a variety of annual and perennial plants that will allow all program participants to see, touch, smell, and taste nature’s bounty throughout the entire growing season.

Baker said the skills of gardening and cooking lead to the development of youth and young families, including the freedom to not be confined by the health ill-effects of high fat and sugar diets; more economic control through cost-effective, nutritionally dense meal-planning; and community bonding by quality time spent cooking and eating a meal together.

“We believe anybody, at any age, can learn something about food and cooking, and that exposure at a young age leads to foundational change in a person’s relationship with food,” Baker said.

Baker will be working closely with CVEEC Culinary Program Manager Wesley Patterson to decide which plants would be best to grow at the CVEEC according to growing seasons, climate, harvest times, and what would be easiest for the kids.

“We are so lucky to have a great area for this project and an amazing partner in Spice Field Kitchen,” Patterson said.

“We both understand the importance of educating our youth and creating a passion for knowledge of our earth and the role we play.”



THANKS TO A GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION FROM CHARLIE AND APRIL WALTON, THE CONSERVANCY IS EAGER TO REBUILD THE LEARNING GARDEN & HOOP HOUSE FOR AREA STUDENTS.

Patterson said he’s most looking forward to seeing the immense change that will happen in the space. “I hope this garden will inspire children to take what they learn here at the CVEEC back home to their everyday lives,” he said.

IF YOU’RE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR THE LEARNING GARDEN REVITALIZATION PROJECT, PLEASE REACH OUT TO VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER ANDREW O’LEARY AT AOLEARY@FORCVNP.ORG.

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT SPICE FIELD KITCHEN’S FIELD-BASED EDUCATION PROGRAMS THROUGH VOLUNTEERING, EMAIL HELLO@SPICEFIELDKITCHEN.ORG.



STUDENTS EXPLORE THE ORIGINAL HOOP HOUSE



WHAT’S GROWING?

The new learning garden will provide a beautiful educational space that allows students to engage in seasonal agriculture from May through October.

“PARTICIPANTS CAN HAVE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES WITH NUTRIENT-DENSE, DELICIOUS FOOD FROM THE SOIL TO THE TABLE AND MAKE THE CONNECTION THAT HEALTHY SOIL LEADS TO HEALTHY PLANTS, HEALTHY PLANTS LEAD TO A HEALTHY BODY, AND A HEALTHY BODY IS THE FOUNDATION OF A VIBRANT COMMUNITY...” —STEPHEN BAKER

SOME OF THE PRODUCE THAT WILL BE GROWN INCLUDE:

- Vegetables:

BABY GREENS, GARLIC, GINGER, TURMERIC, LOOFAH GOURDS, GROUND NUTS, INDETERMINATE TOMATOES (VINING), CHERRY TOMATOES, PEPPERS, CUCUMBER, PEAS, GROUND CHERRIES, ARUGULA, CHARD, KALE, POLE BEANS, CARROTS, JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE, & SPINACH
- Herbs:

BASIL, OREGANO, THYME, DILL, SAGE, CHAMOMILE, CILANTRO, PARSLEY, CHIVES, & BORAGE
- Flowers:

BACHELORS BUTTONS, CALENDULA, MONARDA, NASTURTIUMS, LAVENDER, DIANTHUS, MARIGOLD, ANISE HYSSOP, ZINNIA, SUNFLOWER, COSMOS, COVER CROPS (SPRING), & BENEFICIAL BEE MIX

BUTTERFLIES

SOCIAL



PHOTO BY DANIELLE AINGER



PHOTO BY DANIELLE AINGER



PHOTO BY DANIELLE AINGER

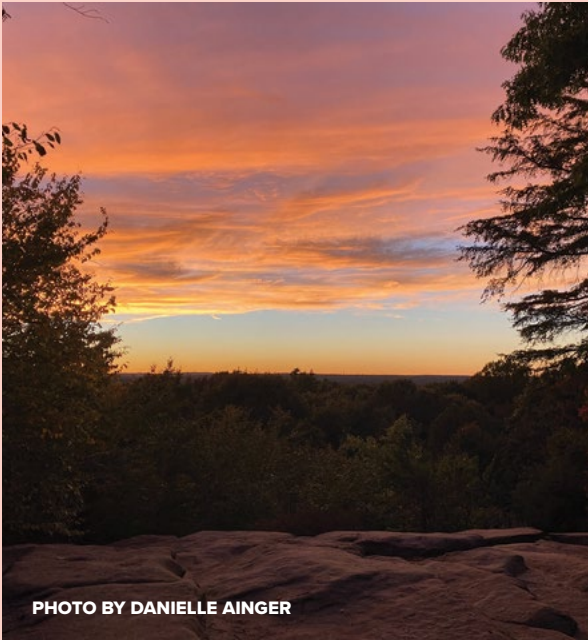
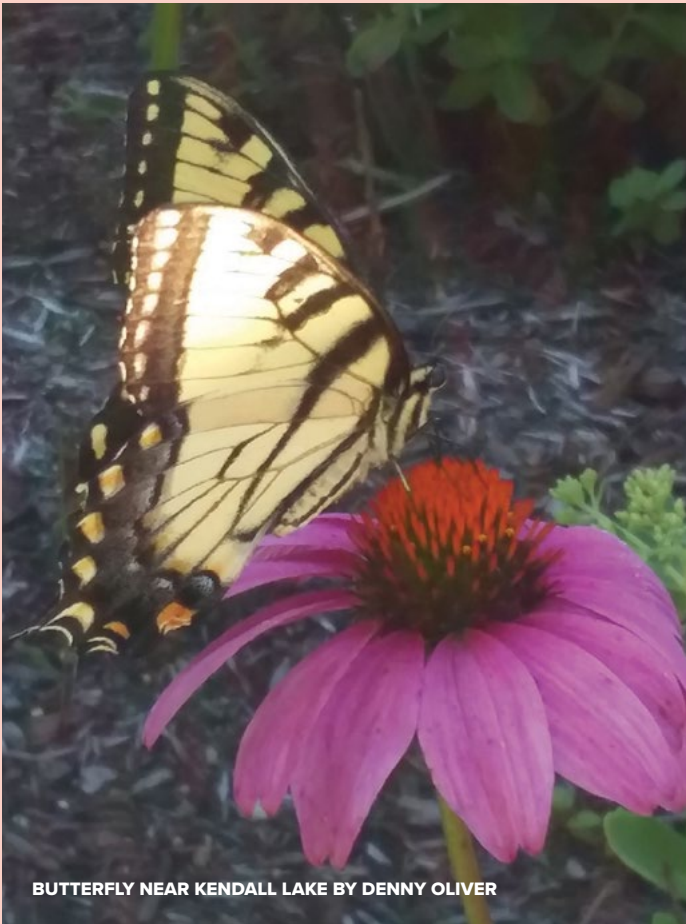


PHOTO BY DANIELLE AINGER



BUTTERFLY NEAR KENDALL LAKE BY DENNY OLIVER



PHOTO BY DANIELLE AINGER

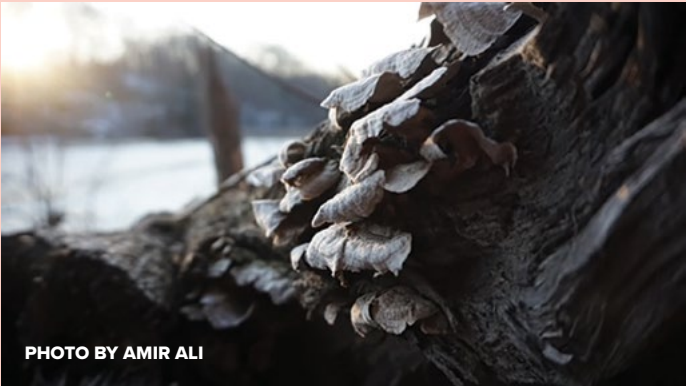


PHOTO BY AMIR ALI

“When your grandkids grow up exploring the park (and grow almost as fast as the wildflowers—with shirts to match the colors.) On a questing trip in August 2022 with Grandma and Grandpa.”

—BARBARA OSYK

REDISCOVERING NORTHEAST OHIO & THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY'S BLACK HISTORY

BY ERICH SCHNACK




BRANDYWINE FALLS, LEDGES, THE OHIO & ERIE CANAL . . . IF YOU ARE A FAN OF CUYAHOGA VALLEY, YOU ARE PROBABLY FAMILIAR WITH THESE ICONIC SITES. BUT WHAT ABOUT LAKE GLENN, THE CABIN CLUB, AND STONIBROOK?

These three locations are historic African American recreational spots recently rediscovered as part of *The Green Book* Cleveland Project. Lake Glenn was a country club with jazz and blues music. The Cabin Club was a venue that offered sports, entertainment, and overnight lodging. The Stonibrook was a large outdoor estate owned by Bill Johnson, a Black World War II veteran. Although the physical locations no longer exist, *The Green Book* Cleveland project aims to keep the memory of these spaces alive.

Green Book Cleveland is a project of the Center for Public History + Digital Humanities at Cleveland State University and the National Park Service in collaboration with ThirdSpace Action Lab, Cleveland Metroparks, Summit Metro Parks, Ohio & Erie Canalway, Trust for Public Land, and Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The name is derived from the historic Black travel guide, *The Green Book*, published annually from 1936 to 1966. The book was designed to direct African Americans to hotels, parks, restaurants, and spaces where they would be welcomed. This information was critical for Black travelers' safety prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The guide was also a form of self-determination by African Americans. The book enriched Black entrepreneurship because *The Green Book* sites were often owned and operated by African Americans.

The Green Book website documents Black heritage sites across Northeast Ohio in a place-based website, greenbookcleveland.placinghistory.org. Visitors to the website can browse Green Book articles by map or location category.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is helping to gather underrepresented stories in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the park in 2024-25 and the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026. Would you like to share your story? Rangers are recording oral histories on a variety of topics in 2023. 

EMAIL CUVA_STORIES@NPS.GOV FOR MORE INFORMATION.



PHOTOS COURTESY
THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRENGTHENING THE RIVER:

REINTRODUCING MUSSELS TO THE LOWER CUYAHOGA RIVER

BY KELLY McGREAL
PHOTOS BY RYAN GRZYBOWSKI

DEPENDING ON SIZE AND SPECIES, A FRESHWATER MUSSEL CAN FILTER OVER EIGHT GALLONS OF WATER A DAY, PULLING IT THROUGH SPECIALIZED GILLS. PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, RIGHT? NOW IMAGINE AN ENTIRE BED OF MUSSELS—HUNDREDS OF THEM—EACH ONE FILTERING THE WATER LIKE A LIVING WATER PUMP. IF IT'S HARD TO VISUALIZE, IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE MOST OF US HAVE NEVER SEEN ROBUST MUSSEL BEDS. EMBEDDED ON THE BOTTOMS OF PONDS, LAKES, AND RIVERS, IT'S EASY TO MISTAKE THEM FOR A PILE OF ROCKS. BUT THERE'S ANOTHER REASON WHY MANY OF US HAVEN'T SEEN FRESHWATER MUSSELS: THEY'RE JUST NOT AS COMMON AS THEY USED TO BE. IN FACT, MOST SPECIES ARE AT-RISK OR ENDANGERED, AND SOME ARE ALREADY EXTINCT.

While it's true freshwater mussels still thrive in some places, native mussel populations are absent or declining in many areas. Here in Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), native mussel populations are missing from the Lower Cuyahoga River, but biologists think it's time for reintroduction!

LOW MUSSEL MASS: WHERE HAVE ALL THE MUSSELS GONE?

Mussels exist throughout the world, and North America has the highest diversity of mussels with over 300 species. While this number is remarkable, reports estimate that 70% of them are at risk of extinction. Habitat loss and pollution, which affect mussels' ability to reproduce and survive, are major factors in why we're seeing declining populations.

To understand why mussels are so vulnerable to environmental changes, it's important to learn a bit about their life cycle. Did you know that fish help mussels reproduce? After mussel eggs are fertilized, they develop into larvae called glochidia and are released like tiny confetti. If it sounds like a party is about to get started, you're right. Glochidia attach to the gills of a fish who unwittingly becomes the host with the most, providing a life-changing ride through the water. During this time, glochidia grow into juvenile mussels, but every get-together must come to an end. Young mussels eventually drop off the host fish. If conditions are right, they burrow into the substrate and head to bed—a mussel bed they form at the bottom of the river.

Mussel reproduction is pretty unusual, and some mussels require a specific kind of fish host for glochidia. Other mussel species are considered “generalists.” They aren't so picky—a number of fish can serve as hosts. In either case, mussels need fish. Without them, their life cycle grinds to a halt. Unfortunately, the host fish necessary for reproduction aren't available to many freshwater mussel species due to pollution and habitat loss.

By now, most of us know about the Cuyahoga River's infamously polluted past. In the late 1960s, the heavily contaminated water barely sustained aquatic life, including host fish vital to the reproductive cycle of mussels. Even if fish somehow survived severe water pollution, mussels could not. As filter feeders, they are sensitive to contaminants since bacteria, chemicals, and other non-organic particles are drawn through their gills as they eat.

To make matters worse, mussels and the fish that help them have also been impacted by habitat loss. Dams, first used for agriculture and later for industry, have been part of the Cuyahoga River since the 1820s. Though technologically innovative, dams dramatically affect ecosystems. They impact water and sediment quality, alter habitat, and block some fish (including host fish) from migrating. This has been true for the Lower Cuyahoga River. If the picture seems bleak, read on, because this is a story of restoration and hope.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

We know from archeological records that freshwater mussels are native to the Cuyahoga Valley, and there is evidence that prehistoric peoples living here had a variety of uses for mussels and their shells. As it turns out, some mussels can still be found in the Upper Cuyahoga River, but the same cannot be said for the Lower Cuyahoga, which includes over 25 miles of river running through CVNP. If mussels were once part of the park’s ecosystem, could they thrive here again? Scientists think so.

The health of the river steadily improved after the passage of the Clean Water Act of 1972, and its ecological comeback is impressive. CVNP Biologist Ryan Trimbath explains:

“WE’VE IMPROVED WATER QUALITY, RIVERINE HABITAT, AND RIPARIAN AREAS, AND WE’VE SEEN THE RETURN OF WILDLIFE—RIVER OTTERS ARE BACK, BALD EAGLES ARE NESTING, AND THERE ARE LOTS OF FISH.”

Now over fifty fish species can be found in the river. This includes stonecat madtom catfish, river chub, and northern pike, which are sensitive and require high water quality. The fact that they’re here is a good sign.

Along with improvements in water quality, Trimbath says the removal of the Canal Diversion Dam from the river in 2020 was a “game changer” for CVNP. Demolishing the dam connected over 20 miles of the Lower Cuyahoga River to Lake Erie once again. Fish are now able to move freely upstream as far as the Gorge Dam in Cuyahoga Falls. Healthier water and the ability for fish to migrate bodes well for freshwater mussel reintroduction. But to see whether the Lower Cuyahoga River can support and grow mussel beds, scientists needed to put it to the test—a fitness test.

PASSING THE FITNESS TEST

Mussels need a relatively clean aquatic environment to survive. In 2021, scientists in CVNP placed 70 adult Mucket mussels in the Lower Cuyahoga River. For 70 days, the mussels stayed in mesh cages, pulling the river water through their sensitive gills—90% lived! The results were encouraging, but scientists wondered if younger, more vulnerable mussels could also make it. To find out, they’d need juvenile mussels. Enter the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (GNFH), located in Wisconsin.

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the hatchery focuses on recovering at-risk aquatic animals such as freshwater mussels. GNFH donated 300 young Fatmucket mussels, a generalist species native to the Midwest, for the park’s study. Once here, scientists put the mussels in specially designed silos and placed them at six separate sites, five in the Lower Cuyahoga River and one in the Grand River in Painesville, Ohio.



THE
SIZE OF
MUSSELS
IN THE
LOWER
CUYAHOGA
RIVER ARE
ABOUT THE
SIZE OF A
DIME!

WITH A
DIAMETER
OF ABOUT
0.705 IN. OR
17.91 MM



From June to September 2022, researchers studied water conditions, sediment buildup in silos, and mussel growth. Though some mussels died, Fatmuckets at the Cuyahoga and Grand River sites had similar survival rates, hovering around 50%. While that number may seem low to some, scientists were pleased. They suspect most mussel deaths resulted from sediment clogging the silos, which wouldn’t be an issue if mussels were freely reintroduced to the river. Overall, the study was a success. Young mussels survived and grew. The river passed the fitness test.

GROWING MUSSELS, GROWING KNOWLEDGE

For scientists monitoring the river’s health, the results of the 2021 and 2022 studies inspired hope. That mussels in the Lower Cuyahoga did nearly as well as those in the Grand River is promising. The two rivers have similar conditions, yet the Grand River already has diverse, robust freshwater mussel beds. This leads scientists to believe the Lower Cuyahoga can grow and support mussels, too. The river seems ready for a reintroduction. As Trimbath puts it, “We’re not seeing a stop sign. We’re seeing a proceed with caution sign. We’ve built a research component into our reintroduction effort to guide an adaptive process for restoration.” Funded by the National Park Foundation, mussel reintroduction to the

“WE’RE NOT SEEING A STOP SIGN. WE’RE SEEING A PROCEED WITH CAUTION SIGN.”

—CVNP BIOLOGIST RYAN TRIMBATH

Lower Cuyahoga is set to begin this fall. Fatmucket mussels collected upstream near Kent are being propagated by GNFH. Once ready, hundreds of one-year-old mussels will be introduced to river sites researchers select this summer. Some of the mussels will be held back until they are two years old and released the following year. Trimbath explains, “This is phase one—just the beginning of a larger effort to rebuild diverse and robust mussel beds in the Cuyahoga River.”

If reintroduction is successful, the presence of freshwater mussel beds will be a bio-indicator of a healthy river with good water quality. Not only do mussel beds signal water health, but their presence further improves aquatic environments. Trimbath notes, “Mussels are tricky. They require clean water, but they also clean the water.” Along with filtering water, they stabilize the river bottom, provide habitat for fish or other small aquatic animals, and serve as a food source for wildlife.

Reintroducing mussels to the Lower Cuyahoga River will benefit CVNP’s entire ecosystem, and it looks like the river is ready. Trimbath is hopeful that the work done in CVNP will have impacts that extend beyond the park, saying, “Freshwater mussel restoration science is relatively new. Most efforts have focused on conservation of threatened and endangered species. The science being done here will help inform future efforts to restore relatively common species into rivers with a long history of human impacts where mussels may be completely absent today.”

THE EFFORT TO REINTRODUCE MUSSELS TO THE CUYAHOGA RIVER HAS BEEN COLLABORATIVE.

MANY THANKS TO:
THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS—BUFFALO DISTRICT, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT, GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ADAM BENSHOFF FROM EDGE ENGINEERING, AND SCIENCE.

THANKS ALSO TO:
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AND COLUMBUS ZOO AND AQUARIUM FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT.



UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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OCTOBER						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

1

LOW POWER HAPPY HOUR

An eco-friendly event featuring local professionals who work in and around the topic of sustainability combined with acoustic music.

TUESDAY, JUNE 20; WEDNESDAY, JULY 12; WEDNESDAY, AUG. 9; & WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6

2

FAMILY FUN DAYS

Join Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Conservancy for a free family event featuring a DJ, art activities, fishing, hiking, and field games!

SATURDAYS: JUNE 24, JULY 22, AUG. 26, & SEPT. 16

3

YOGA HIKES

Power-down and connect with nature while stopping to practice yoga postures and learning breath practices during a moderately paced hike.

SUNDAYS: JUNE 4, JULY 30, AUG. 20, & SEPT. 17

4

RHYTHM ON THE RIVER

A free, family-friendly summer concert series held at Howe Meadow. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy food trucks, yard games for kids, great live music, and dancing!

SUNDAYS: JUNE 11, JULY 9, AUG. 13, & SEPT. 10

5

CAMPFIRE EVENTS

Cuyahoga Valley National Park & the Conservancy invite you to spend an evening at Ledges Shelter for a National Park Service tradition—campfires. Bring a picnic to this free event and enjoy field games, a hike around the ledges, music, and s’mores. The evening ends with a puppet show that explores the amazing animals, and history of the park.

EVERY WEDNESDAY: JUNE 28, JULY 5, JULY 12, JULY 19, JULY 26, AND AUG. 2.

6

FUNDRAISERS

ELEVATION: JUNE 16, TOPOGRAPHY: JUNE 17, AND EXPLORATION: OCTOBER 1



DONOR HIGHLIGHT

Debbie Dey



DONOR HIGHLIGHT

THE CONSERVANCY’S DONOR HISTORY BEGINS IN 1996, AND DEBBIE DEY IS ONE OF APPROXIMATELY THIRTY INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE A GIFT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THAT YEAR, LAUNCHING THE CONSERVANCY’S FUNDRAISING PROGRAM.

TODAY, THE CONSERVANCY HAS OVER 37,000 DONOR RECORDS! WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO DEBBIE AS WELL AS EVERY SINGLE CONSERVANCY DONOR FOR THEIR STEADFAST SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS.

WE CHATTED WITH DEBBIE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CONSERVANCY AND HER FAMILY’S HISTORY WITH THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CUYAHOGA VALLEY?
My family relationship with the Cuyahoga Valley began before Cleveland was founded, and my personal relationship before Cuyahoga Valley National Park existed. My family worked with Moses Cleaveland beginning in 1796 and helped survey what would become Greater Cleveland. They were given land to farm as payment for their service. I was born on that same farm off Schaaf Road in Brooklyn Heights, just north of today’s Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

TELL US ABOUT WHEN YOU FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THE CONSERVANCY AND HOW YOU BECAME INVOLVED.
In college, I enjoyed working on an archaeology dig in Independence, just above the Cuyahoga River Valley. In graduate school, I learned at a student job fair that the Conservancy’s predecessor, Cuyahoga Valley Association, had just helped the park open Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. I had to be involved! I began as a student intern and then worked for the organization for several years to help increase philanthropic opportunities for people to help support the Conservancy’s education work.

WHY ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT SUPPORTING THE CONSERVANCY AND WHAT MAKES YOU CONTINUE SUPPORTING YEAR AFTER YEAR?

I continue to be astounded that we have the privilege of enjoying this beautiful National Park right here in our own urban area! We don’t have to get on an airplane to see and enjoy historical, scenic and environmental wonders—we have them **RIGHT HERE!** I am grateful for everyone who helps preserve this area and continues to make it better and easier to access year after year.


I am grateful for everyone who helps preserve this area and continue to make it better and easier to access year after year.

—DEBBIE DEY

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE WHO’S CONSIDERING DONATING OR BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CONSERVANCY?

DO IT! And then come enjoy the park time and time again. Bring people you know, including those who have not been here before. There is so much to do, outdoors and indoors. Go on a guided hike or explore on your own. Visit the historical sites, attend a concert, go skiing, ride the train, attend an event—there is no end to what you can do in Cuyahoga Valley. And more activities get added all the time. Today, we can canoe and kayak the Cuyahoga River—this seemed impossible just a few years ago.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TRAIL OR SPOT IN CVNP?

My own backyard! I have lived in Cuyahoga Valley in Brecksville for seven years. Each time I look out my window all throughout the year, I still cannot believe my children and I live in this beautiful place. 



PHILANTHROPY OPERATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP MANAGER

Jessica Livers joined the Conservancy in 2021 as the Philanthropy Operations Coordinator and we are happy to welcome her to a new role as Philanthropy Operations and Membership Manager. She has over 10 years experience in data management, sales, marketing, and member services. Before joining the Conservancy, Jessica was the Member Services Supervisor at LifeWorks of Southwest General, a medically integrated fitness center.

Jessica is excited to step into her new role and continue to support meaningful work that enriches and enhances our communities.

TWO TRUTHS & A LIE ...can you guess which statement is false?

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS BELOW

- 1. Jessica is a Cleveland area native and is an alum of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center.
- 2. Jessica and her fiancé, Mike, love to travel around the country with their travel trailer and have visited all but two National Parks.
- 3. She loves plants and has over 100 houseplants.

ANSWERS: Number 2 is the lie. Jessica has visited 23 National Parks and hopes to visit them all!

DONOR HIGHLIGHT

TO OUR DONORS,

YOU
MAKE
THIS
POSSIBLE

Thank you for your
support during
this exciting time
of growth!



THE CONSERVANCY GRATEFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES THE GENEROUS
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CORPORATIONS, & FOUNDATIONS
WHO MADE GIFTS DURING OUR
FISCAL YEAR 2022 AND ALL
OF CALENDAR YEAR 2022.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 - DECEMBER 31, 2022

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PHOTO BY DANIELLE AINGER

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

To see a full list of donors, please visit our website. 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.

DONORS

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CASCADE SUBARU

Supports Walsh Jesuit Labre Ministry with Donation of Socks for the Homeless

IMAGINE HAVING TO GO WITHOUT SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS A PAIR OF SOCKS. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS, INCLUDING CHILDREN, HAVE TO DEAL WITH SUCH A REALITY.

On Tuesday, February 21, Cascade Subaru helped support those in need by providing 1,000 pairs of socks to the Labre Ministry at Walsh Jesuit High School. This small item that most of us take for granted provides comfort and helps maintain the health of homeless people.

Each Monday for 853 consecutive weeks, two adults and six students in The Labre Ministry travel into Akron to share prayer, food and friendship with the homeless and others who are struggling. The students are following the call and example of St. Benedict Labre, an 18th century French Franciscan who devoted his life to helping the homeless.

April Katona is the Campus Ministry Assistant at Walsh Jesuit. She told us how important the ministry is to the homeless throughout Akron.

“We have developed relationships with many homeless people, including some who have actually gotten inside. We’ll stop at apartment buildings and they’ll come out to see us,” she said. While the food is important, it’s the relationship that the homeless relish the most.

“We are blessed to have an entire community of parents, staff and students committed to helping the homeless,” she said. “It makes them all feel that they are part of the ministry.”

“As graduates of Walsh Jesuit, we are excited to join the students who are part of this important community program,” said Pat Primm, Cascade Subaru owner and Internet marketing manager. “Bringing the Subaru Loves to Help Program into contact with such a charitable ministry just makes sense to us. The socks we donated today will be distributed throughout the year.”

Cascade Auto Group, consisting of Cascade Subaru, Cascade Mazda and Audi Cuyahoga Falls, values its relationships with the Conservancy for CVNP, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, the Ohio & Erie Canalway, the Summit County Humane Society and many more.



THRIVING TOGETHER

AT THE J.M. SMUCKER CO., WE ARE INSPIRED BY OUR PURPOSE, “FEEDING CONNECTIONS THAT HELP US THRIVE – LIFE TASTES BETTER TOGETHER.”

We deliver on our Purpose through the guidance of our Thriving Together agenda, which is focused on five key target areas:

- **ACCESS TO QUALITY FOOD**
- **ACCESS TO EDUCATION**
- **MAKING CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES**
- **ENSURING EQUITABLE AND ETHICAL TREATMENT FOR ALL**
- **SUPPORTING A HEALTHIER PLANET**

Through this focused approach and the help of our important partners, we maximize our resources to make the most meaningful impact in the areas we are best equipped to assist.

We are proud to partner with organizations like the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park who share our passion for making a difference in our community and our world.





1403 West Hines Hill Road
Peninsula, Ohio 44264
forCVNP.org

PHOTO BY ZAINA SALEM