FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park Launches All-Terrain Wheelchair Access Program

PENINSULA, Ohio – April 27, 2026 – Thanks to the generous support of Open Trail Collective, the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) is proud to announce the launch of a new all-terrain wheelchair lending program designed to expand trail access for visitors with disabilities, injuries, or mobility challenges.

Through a successful community fundraising campaign, Open Trail Collective raised funds to purchase a GRIT Freedom Chair (Spartan model) and then donated it to the national park. With additional support from dedicated volunteers, the chair will now be available for individuals to borrow for personal use—free of charge—making it easier for more visitors to experience the park.

“This new program opens the door for more people to enjoy Cuyahoga Valley National Park,” said Kimberly LoVano, Director of Programs and Engagement at the Conservancy for CVNP. “We are excited to partner with Open Trail Collective to make outdoor access more welcoming and possible for our community.”

The GRIT Freedom Chair is an all-terrain wheelchair designed for exploring trails, parks, and the outdoors independently. It is a self-propelled chair that uses a lever-powered system and mountain bike components to roll over roots, rocks, gravel, mud, and most natural surfaces.

“We’ve seen the GRIT Freedom Chair completely transform people’s relationship with nature,” said Kara Lapso, founder and Executive Director of Open Trail Collective. "We’re so excited to gift this chair to the Conservancy for the CVNP and know this is an important step forward for accessibility within CVNP.”

Visitors interested in renting the GRIT Freedom Chair can submit a request by emailing wheelchair@forcvnp.org. Trained Conservancy staff and/or volunteers will be available onsite to assist with check-in, set-up, and orientation prior to use. For safety, users are strongly encouraged to bring a companion during their visit.

This program reflects the Conservancy for CVNP’s commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and ensuring everyone has the chance to connect with the outdoors at Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

ABOUT CONSERVANCY FOR CVNP

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The Conservancy is the official nonprofit partner and friends group of Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). As one of the largest and most effective national park partners in the country, the Conservancy is a recognized leader in advancing the mission of CVNP through innovation, collaboration, and community engagement.

With a mission to enrich people's lives and enhance our region by inspiring use, preservation, and support of CVNP, the Conservancy offers a wide range of cultural and educational programs. It co-manages the park's volunteer program, operates retail spaces, and provides distinctive venues for weddings, meetings, and special events—all in service of connecting people to nature and Ohio's national park. Learn more at www.forcvnp.org.

MEDIA CONTACT

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