



Your Back Yard for 100 Years

NEWS RELEASE

December 6, 2022

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GORGE DAM REMOVAL PROJECT RECEIVES STATE FUNDING *Site preparation & public closures begin at Cascade Valley Metro Park*

Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Director Laurie Stevenson announced Friday that the state will contribute \$25 million to support the highly anticipated Cuyahoga River Gorge Dam Removal Project. The announcement comes as [work begins](#) to prepare a sediment disposal area associated with the project.

“Improving water quality across the state has been a key focus of my administration, and generations of Ohioans will benefit from the improvements that will be realized by removing the Gorge Dam,” said Governor DeWine. “This project will return the Cuyahoga River to a free-flowing river from Kent to the mouth of Lake Erie, will vastly improve water quality in the Cuyahoga River, and will pave the way for recreation, tourism, and economic development opportunities in this area.”

Before the dam can be deconstructed, more than 900,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment must be removed from behind it and safely placed within a 30-acre area of Cascade Valley Metro Park, on land that formerly served as an unregulated dump. The sediment remediation process will require a combination of federal (65%) and non-federal (35%) funds. Federal funds will be provided by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

“This contribution from the state of Ohio represents a significant portion of the non-federal funds required for this project, and we are very grateful for Governor DeWine and Director Stevenson’s support,” said Summit Metro Parks Executive

Director Lisa King. “This funding is critical to the project’s continued progress and builds on the incredible momentum and community support we’ve already achieved.”

Gorge Dam Removal Project stakeholders include City of Akron, City of Cuyahoga Falls, FirstEnergy, County of Summit, Summit County Council, Summit Metro Parks, Ohio EPA, Ohio Lake Erie Commission, The University of Akron and U.S. EPA. This group meets quarterly to provide technical assistance, build support and help raise funds. In addition, Summit Metro Parks has established the “Free the Falls” educational program to provide public education and support.

Beginning today, the Chuckery Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park is closed for tree removal in preparation for the future sediment disposal site. The City of Akron will then begin work on the [Northside Interceptor Tunnel](#) (NSIT) in the same area. The Chuckery Area will continue to be closed as necessary for public safety throughout the Gorge Dam and NSIT construction work.

To learn more about this funding announcement, visit [Governor DeWine’s website](#). To stay up-to-date on the removal project and associated park and trail closures, visit bit.ly/freethefalls.

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Established in 1921, Summit Metro Parks celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2021. The park district manages more than 15,000 acres throughout 16 parks, three nature centers and over 150 miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance is approximately 5.5 million visits. Find us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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