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SUMMIT LAKE NATURE CENTER TAKES SHAPE WITH CONSTRUCTION, INDOOR EXHIBIT WORK UNDERWAY

The future Summit Lake Nature Center is beginning to bloom at the former pump house building along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Akron. Construction and interior design as well as interpretive exhibit planning is underway this summer, with an anticipated grand opening in early 2021.

“After the successful pilot of a nature center with educational programming developed based on feedback we received from the community, we are thrilled to expand our presence in the Summit Lake neighborhood and to connect people with nature in new ways in Summit County,” said Executive Director Lisa King.

Building construction began early this year. Work is expected to be complete in August and includes updates to the building’s windows, door(s) and roof as well as the installation of an elevator to provide accessibility. Plans for the first floor include a large gathering space with 14-foot high ceilings and restrooms. The second floor will include a kitchenette and a large area for interpretive programs with expansive views of Summit Lake. Akron-based designer Hazel Tree Interiors will implement interior design for the space.

Additionally, planning is underway for interpretive exhibits. Summit Metro Parks is working with Tessellate/EXPLUS to bring to the community educational and engaging exhibits that

tell the story of the site's cultural past and highlight its natural history. Initial concepts include a welcome desk, ample seating and gallery-style displays, as well as live educational animals.

The pump house building was donated to the park district by the City of Akron, and its development has been made possible thanks to generous in-kind services and grant funding. Funders include the Akron Community Foundation, DuPont Clear into the Future Grant Program, Great Lakes Construction, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Sisler McFawn Foundation, Summit County Land Bank Community Development Matching Fund Grant Program and an anonymous private donor. The park district will continue to compete for additional grant funding to offset project costs. For more information, call 330-867-5511.

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Summit Metro Parks manages 14,000 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, with 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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