



We're Your Back Yard

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NEWS RELEASE

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SUMMIT METRO PARKS RECEIVES FEDERAL AWARD TO FUND CUYAHOGA RIVER RESTORATION AT VALLEY VIEW *Progress also continues on renovation of the former clubhouse*

River restoration work at the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park in Akron is underway thanks to a \$2.5 million award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Regional Partnership. Made possible through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, this funding is in addition to a previously granted \$500,000 award for design and engineering. Restoring nearly a mile of the Cuyahoga River, the project includes floodplain excavation and instream habitat improvements for fish and aquatic wildlife, as well as making the river more accessible for water-based recreation such as canoeing, kayaking and shore fishing.

“These improvements are not only critical to the Cuyahoga River itself, but they ultimately help protect water quality all the way to Lake Erie,” said Executive Director Lisa King. “This work also sets the stage for an incredible new park area that will welcome over two million visits a year and result in an estimated \$2.8 million in annual tourism spending for our local economy.”

The park district also recently awarded Cavanaugh Building Corporation a contract to renovate the former Valley View Golf Course clubhouse into a rentable public events facility. Originally a dairy barn built in the mid-1800s, renovations will highlight the building’s soaring ceilings, historic barn stone foundation and scenic position on the property.

"NOAA is committed to supporting habitat restoration efforts that benefit the fish, wildlife, and people that call the Great Lakes region home," said Carrie Selberg Robinson, director of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation. "Projects like Summit Metro Parks' work along the Cuyahoga River provide much-needed habitat for fish and wildlife, as well as valuable recreation and tourism opportunities for local communities."

While this new award is dedicated to natural resource restoration, it will ultimately help launch public access to the property. Visitors will be encouraged to embrace the Cuyahoga River via the new four-county, 88-mile Cuyahoga River Water Trail, bike on trails including the nearly 100-mile Ohio & Erie Canalway Towpath Trail, connect to a 125-mile network of foot trails suitable for beginner or expert hikers, ride the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway, enjoy scenic beauty and wildlife viewing, and use one of the all-season park facilities for a group or family event.

Acquired by the park district in 2016, the Valley View Area has already undergone a significant transformation. Phase I of the project was implemented with over \$1 million in external funding from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund to remove non-native vegetation and restore streams and wetlands covered to create the golf course.

The ecological restoration and development of the Valley View Area has been made possible by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Great Lakes Commission Regional Partnership, as well as the Ohio Public Works Clean Ohio Conservation Fund. Local foundation support has been vital to the project and has come from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Akron Community Foundation – (Capital Fund, McAlonan Fund, and William C. and Betty J. Zekan Fund), Burton D. Morgan Foundation and the Summit Metro Parks Foundation, as well as generous financial contributions to the project by other foundations and individual donors. Important in-kind support has been provided by volunteers and Friends of Metro Parks. Project partners include the Ohio EPA, Cuyahoga River Area of Concern and the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. Additional information is available at <https://www.glc.org/work/aocs/cuyahoga>.

Please note: Architectural renderings and site tours are available upon request.

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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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