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NEWS RELEASE

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CUYAHOGA RIVER WATER TRAIL TO RECEIVE STATE DESIGNATION OCTOBER 4

Cuyahoga Falls, OH – Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Director Mary Mertz will designate the Cuyahoga River Water Trail as Ohio's 13th state water trail in a ceremony at Water Works Park (Peninsula Shelter) in Cuyahoga Falls on October 4 at 10 a.m. The event celebrates years of work by the Cuyahoga River Water Trail Partners – a grassroots collaboration of more than 25 organizations, agencies, and communities – to develop the trail, which spans the entire length of the river. Managing and stakeholder partners will gather along with the public to celebrate the official designation of the water trail.

The ceremony will feature remarks by Director Mertz as well as the Cuyahoga River Water Trail Partners, including Andrea Irland, National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, Mayor Don Walters, City of Cuyahoga Falls, Christine Craycroft, Portage Park District Executive Director and Peter Bode, representing Torchfest. The group plans to unveil public access points, a signage plan, a paddling brochure and more.

The river that burned is now sparking excitement. The Cuyahoga River Water

Trail is a lasting legacy project of the rejuvenation of the Cuyahoga River which in June celebrated 50 years since the final river fire. The water trail features 24 designated access points on nearly 90 miles of river. A hallmark of the Cuyahoga River is the variety of paddling experiences – calm and scenic in the upper river near Hiram, diverse through Kent, challenging white water in the gorge of Cuyahoga Falls, naturally remote through Summit Metro Parks and Cuyahoga Valley National Park and industrial in the shipping channel in Cleveland.

The Cuyahoga River Water Trail is managed by: City of Akron, City of Cuyahoga Falls, City of Kent, Cleveland Metroparks, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Geauga Park District, Mantua Village, Portage Park District, Summit Metro Parks and Village of Silver Lake.

A water trail is a stretch of waterway that has been identified as a recreational resource with maps, signage and informational resources that show official access points, amenities and safety information. Water trails promote public use of waterways and create educational, recreational and environmentally rewarding opportunities for paddlers and others. These trails support tourism and encourage conservation and stewardship.

Ohio's diverse system of water trails is statewide and includes the Great Miami, Kokosing, Mahoning, Maumee, Muskingum and Olentangy rivers. Some of the rivers are wild and natural, while others, like the Olentangy, travel through urban areas. Information about state water trails can be found at watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/watertrails.

Additional information about the Cuyahoga River Water Trail is available through the Cuyahoga River Water Trail partners at www.cuyahogariverwatertrail.org.

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Summit Metro Parks manages more than 14,000 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, with 22.4 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.

