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SUMMIT METRO PARKS TO CONVERT SUMMIT LAKE PUMP HOUSE TO COMMUNITY-BASED NATURE CENTER

Summit Metro Parks will begin renovations for a new nature center in the historic Summit Lake Pump House following action last night by Akron City Council to formally transfer the facility from the City of Akron to the park district. In a plan first announced earlier this year, the transfer will enable Summit Metro Parks to expand its outreach activities and establish a more permanent presence in the neighborhood.

“We are ready to get to work creating a world-class nature center at Summit Lake, and we thank the city for making this possible,” said Executive Director Lisa King. “Acquiring the Summit Lake Pump House allows us to offer additional programming to community residents and visitors while continuing to build on the strong partnerships we’ve formed here over the last two years.”

“This has been a wonderful partnership with Summit Metro Parks and I can only imagine it growing exponentially in the years to come,” said At-Large Councilwoman Veronica Sims.

Situated alongside the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail, the Pump House offers a prime location for educational and recreational outreach. After operating an award-winning “pop up” nature center out of the Reach Opportunity Center at Summit Lake since early 2017, the park district now has a dedicated space for its nature-based

and cultural programming. Following positive water quality test results, Summit Metro Parks also began offering kayaking, fishing and other water-based programs earlier this year.

Pump house renovations are made possible through a \$600,000 John S. and James L. Knight Foundation grant intended to better connect Akronites to their neighborhoods, nature and each other. The initial phase of the work began earlier this year when Great Lakes Construction removed the unused pumps and associated equipment. The new nature center could include a community meeting and program space, history and nature-themed exhibits, office space for on-site staff, parking and outdoor gathering areas with beautiful lakefront views. Gardens managed by Let's Grow Akron will remain on the property in partnership with Summit Metro Parks. The park district anticipates opening the nature center to the public by spring 2020.

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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.



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