

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: CUVA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Located between Cleveland and Akron Ohio, Cuyahoga Valley National Park is a treasured local destination. Surrounded by burgeoning development, it preserves and protects the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga Valley.

In 1996, the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area was created. This 110-mile district surrounds CVNP and 48 communities in 4 counties. Its physical linkages, the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR), and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Scenic Byway, allow people to experience Northeast Ohio's heritage. By 2016, new partnerships will help provide visitor services in Canalway Centers in Cleveland, Akron, and Zoar and our railroad will make the 8-mile link to downtown Cleveland, connecting the park to 3 major cities.

Our Get Up, Get Out & Go! Program, which actively engages underserved urban communities in the park, will be a priority. New programs and technology will be offered at our Environmental Education Center, continuing emphasis on urban youth scholarships so all Northeast Ohio kids can experience a national park. The Cuyahoga Valley Institute will be a reality. Partners will help us create a network of programs, focused on health, wellness, and sustainability, including overnight accommodations in historic structures, positioning CVNP as a regional and national destination. Farmland rehabilitation under the Countryside Initiative will be completed, making CVNP an exemplar in sustainable landscape management.

A new Volunteer Center, a centrally located historic structure, will give highly visible recognition to the contributions of our 2000+ volunteers and allow us to double their number.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association (CVNPA), our Friends Group and main stewardship partner, is reaching out to the community to empower Citizen Stewards who will work with their leaders to develop improved local storm water and development practices. CVNPA has 2,000 members/donors, has donated millions of dollars to CVNP, and is recognized locally as one of the top non-profits. By 2016, CVNPA will double its memberships and establish a park endowment that will help ensure the park's vitality for the next century.

Future physical and programmatic connections to the local community will enable the park to become a regional and national asset supported by a network of advocates with a deep sense of awareness and understanding and a commitment to protect the park in perpetuity.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

John P. Debo, Jr.

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STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Visitor and Resource Protection Division encourages active participation in stewardship by training specialized groups of volunteers who work closely with Protection Rangers to monitor resources; report and mitigate hazards; report violations; provide visitor education; render assistance in emergencies, and maintain equipment in a response ready state. The 120 member Trailblazer Hike, Bike, and Horse Patrol are the rangers' eyes and ears on park trails as they share information, model trail etiquette, and provide assistance such as first aid and bike repair. The 22 member TractTrekker group works off the beaten path to conduct resource inventories; survey and mark boundary; mark wetland buffers; and report damage. A third group, Operation's Volunteers, maintain EMS kits, AEDs, and fire extinguishers; monitor traffic counters; post and replace signs; support special use permits, and conduct inspections of historic structures. This partnership between Protection Rangers and citizens has proven to develop a solid sense of ownership in the park which is a springboard to involvement at all levels.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) will rehabilitate all historic structures associated with farmsteads identified for long-term leases through the Countryside Initiative, to preserve the agricultural heritage of the valley. CVNP will work with partners to rehabilitate historic structures for adaptive reuse in partnership activities. In addition, CVNP will engage the public to participate in preservation of historic structures through a revitalization of the historic preservation leasing program and through philanthropic support, such as for the planned rehabilitation in FY09 to create a volunteer center in the Boston Mills Historic District.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

CVNP will reduce infestations of high priority invasive plant species by at least 80% in areas of high visitor use and in areas of sensitive resources (e.g., rare plants). Reduction of invasive plant species will occur through engagement of the public with volunteer opportunities for individuals as long-term area stewards or for groups in targeted service work efforts. Student Conservation Association interns will be recruited through the Public Land Corps program to guide volunteer efforts. Restoration of areas through plantings of native species will be accomplished through partnerships with corporate and non-profit partners as well as through volunteer efforts and philanthropic support. Spread of invasive plants will be reduced through public education efforts in communities surrounding the park and with cooperating agencies. In addition, the park will seek to develop partnerships that both discourage the sale and use of exotic species and promote the use of native species in landscaping.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

CVNP is taking legitimate steps to ensure that all Facility Management Software System (FMSS) capabilities are fully integrated into both our operational and planning maintenance programs. This database tool calculates the Facility Condition Index (FCI) and the Asset Priority Index (API), which CVNP has successfully used within project justifications to leverage \$400,000 to \$1,000,000 annually in cyclic and repair rehab monies for its highest priority assets. In 2008 the park will seek to fill a full time position dedicated to comprehensive management of the FMSS data entry process including, Asset Entry, Work Order Entry, Report Analysis, Inspection Documentation, and PMIS project connectivity with FMSS support data. This

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

will ensure that all CVNP assets are properly ranked by API, and that critical deferred maintenance, as indicated by the assets' FCI, is addressed in a cost effective and timely manner. CVNP will take the added step to develop a Park Asset Management Plan (PAMP), which will provide an executive summary of the best projects to fund based on API and FCI data. This will ensure scarce funds make it to the most important assets before their condition degrades.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

CVNP will improve the condition of park wetlands that are currently in poor condition as measured by wetland vital signs developed through the Heartland Inventory and Monitoring Network. Restoration efforts will target degraded wetlands and will be leveraged partially through wetland mitigation efforts associated with external development. Public involvement will include volunteer opportunities geared toward control of invasive plant management and in planting of native wetland species.

An aggressive program of public education and outreach in surrounding communities will serve to engage the public in better stormwater management and better stewardship of private lands to protect park wetlands and other resources. Park staff are actively engaging local community councils and planning commissions to encourage the passage or use of existing ordinances and zoning regulations that promote better watershed conservation. In partnership with Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association, a member-driven advocacy group will be developed to participate in public processes in their own communities to foster awareness of the need for stewardship of shared resources.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

CVNP will continue to conduct inventory and monitoring of museum collections, cultural landscapes and archaeological resources within the park. In addition, we will improve the public accessibility to information on the List of Classified Structures and the Cultural Landscape Inventory. Precise locations of resources are being mapped and linked to documentation and historical information for a web-based application that will provide park staff and the public ready access to non-sensitive cultural resource information. By providing the information in a more user-friendly, searchable interface, inventory and monitoring efforts will be improved and public understanding of park resources will be enhanced. Sensitive information such

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STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

as for archaeological resources will be made available to appropriate park staff for purposes of improved monitoring of those resources.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Sustained funding over the park history has allowed the NPS to be able to protect a significant percentage of those lands required for resource protection and to create a critical mass of ownership needed to fulfill the park's mission. Yet, there are over a dozen large tracts of undeveloped land which don't currently have any federal protection. These properties, many of which are in prominent locations in the park, are held by myriad of governmental institutions, non-profit organizations and private/recreational businesses. Comprising over 2,200 acres, these tracts have traditionally been considered compatible with the national park. However, as the park has seen with similar properties, we expect that many of these properties will, in time, be at risk as financial pressures mount on public institutions and private recreational facilities. By 2016, CVNP intends to protect all large tracts within the national park through the donation or purchase of protective easements or, as necessary, federal land acquisition. Failure to protect these highly-visible properties will result in negative impacts on natural and cultural resources and the scenic values of CVNP.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

CVNP will broaden and enhance the partnership between the park and regional research institutions currently embodied in the park's Woodlake Environmental Field Station to include a wider array of universities, agencies, and other institutions across a broad geographic area, and expanded to a greater variety of disciplines. Multi-disciplinary approaches to park resource issues will be encouraged and promoted through active development of research partnerships across disciplines in natural sciences as well as in engineering, geography, history, social sciences, and anthropology. One aim is to increase the number and diversity of research projects focused on the park, and to attract researchers from greater distances. Public engagement in this endeavor will be achieved through opportunities to volunteer on research projects and public education through workshops and seminars. Funding for support of student research would be leveraged through foundations and corporate or individual philanthropic support.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Many Centennial Challenge performance actions involve improving and expanding existing interpretive and educational programs. A common thread is the goal to engage children in a national park and lay groundwork for their life-long interest in related values such as conservation. We believe that our experience with youth and ability to provide in-depth programs positions us to contribute to this objective. We already have a track-record of success: In 2003 a longitudinal evaluation of the resident school program quantitatively showed that the program has significant impact on young people's long-term understanding of national parks and commitment to the environment.

Additional actions respond to Richard Louv's book, "Last Child in the Woods." Louv discusses the need to reconnect children to outdoors through unstructured, playful experiences. He sees this as essential to a healthy childhood and a trigger for adult involvement in conservation. At CVNP, we will integrate his ideas into current programs and publications. We also plan to design a self-guided nature experience that will let parents implement his ideas with their children while visiting the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Operational issues like Fleet Management and the disposal of wastewater will be modified to reduce the potential negative impact that these activities might have on air and water quality. Working directly and through partners the park will attempt to influence through education and example the land use practices in and around the park in a way that improves the control of runoff, reduces soil erosion and increases the protection of wetlands. One of our main operating partners, the Countryside Conservancy, continues to expand its programming and outreach in order to demonstrate sustainable agricultural practices. We will strive to continually reduce our 'carbon footprint' with efforts to improve overall energy efficiency by reducing the amount of electricity and fuels utilized to support the operation.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Through a campaign of education and heightened awareness all park employees, managers, and partners, we will be more effective at identifying how operational activities influence and impact the environment. Armed with this increased knowledge and awareness, opportunities to improve can be identified and decisions can be made at all levels of the operation that respect the natural systems and which reflect the stewardship and environmental leadership role of the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

CVNP plans to pursue actions to inspire an environmental conscience in Americans that will reach school children and the general public. We strive to model environmental practices at Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center where we currently have a constructed wetland for waste water treatment, a fuel cell to provide electricity, and green design of the multi-purpose building. Through revisions to the curricula for school programs presented through the center, we will use these features to promote making decisions based on the principles of sustainability.

We will also pursue opportunities to create and/or interpret projects that demonstrate sustainability to the general public. Part of this involves focusing greater attention on environmentally conscious projects already pursued by the park, especially related to restoration. Others will involve working with partners and other park divisions to create new projects in publicly visible areas that can provide new opportunities to interpret sustainability.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

CVNP demonstrates its commitment to environmental stewardship through a variety of sustainable practices which often incorporate alternative energies or fuels. A premier example is the November Lodge at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC). This multi-use building incorporates geothermal heating, solar light tubes, and cutting edge fuel cell technology.

The 10-kW Solid Oxide Fuel Cell system is being tested as a demonstration project to provide emission-free electricity. As CVNP looks to the future, these types of demonstration projects will ultimately help reduce the carbon footprint at CVEED and eventually allow facilities to operate "off the grid".

As these Park projects succeed, it will encourage others in the industries of Solar Power and Wind Power to collaborate on demonstration projects. Because of CVEEC's established role in educating the next generation, it is possible to incorporate these types of alternative fuel technologies into touch and see curriculum. This means the benefits of these types of alternatives will extend far beyond the boundaries of the Park- out into the communities and workplaces of these future environmental stewards.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

Utilizing a study conducted by the Center for Park Management, the park's fleet management practices will be modified to increase efficiencies from both an environmental and fiscal standpoint. The issue of sustainability will have an ever increasing influence on all operational activities including procurement, facility preservation and maintenance, transportation, and utilities. Increased efforts will be placed on utilizing park efforts to better inform the public concerning the issue of sustainability. All facility construction and rehabilitation efforts will place a high priority on achieving the highest LEED certification practical.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In rehabilitation of existing structures (both historic and non-historic) CVNP will increase the use of sustainable practices, including reuse of materials recycled from demolitions and other rehabilitation efforts in the park, selecting renewable and recycled materials from certified "green" sources, utilizing energy efficient utilities and appliances, and incorporating sustainable methods into site work around structures, including stormwater management techniques and use of recycled materials. Within 10 years, CVNP seeks to have 100% of all structure rehabilitations to include at least 75% sustainable materials and practices.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

CVNP owns and maintains 125 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails, including 20 miles of the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail, used by more than 1.5 million visitors annually. An important goal is to develop or facilitate external connections to the Towpath Trail to connect adjacent communities with the park and along 110 miles of the Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area. A 2002 survey of potential linkages to the Towpath and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway (CVSR) identified 11 potential links, of which only 3 have been undertaken. CVNP will implement all feasible linkages to the Towpath and CVSR.

CVNP's trail plan was completed in 1985, and many recommendations were implemented. The park seeks to revise this outdated trail plan to better serve the needs of trail users. Another goal is to connect the two primary recreational uses, the Towpath Trail and CVSR, with a pedestrian bridge at Rockside Road Boarding Area and Lock 39 Trailhead. The project would increase visitor use and address safety concerns at this popular site while enhancing this alternative transportation system by linking rail passengers with the primary Class I trail in the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

CVNP protects 22 miles of the Cuyahoga River, which is listed as an impaired waterway, though water quality has improved since the park was established. Water quality in the park is affected by combined sewer overflow discharges from the City of Akron. A rapid method for determining bacteria levels in the river provides the public with real time information on conditions for recreational use of the river. The park will implement a public notification system and will develop a river use management plan to encourage and manage public recreation on the river.

The park's Alternative Transportation System lies along the historic Valley Railway, operated now by park partner, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR). CVSR operates along 51 miles of this historic route, connecting the national park with two major cities, Akron and Canton, and providing ways for visitors to travel to and within the national park. The goal is to extend train service an additional 8 miles into downtown Cleveland, thereby providing a one-of-a-kind regional transportation asset that links 3 major cities and a national park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

In 2006, over 2,000 individuals provided over 70,000 hours of volunteer service to Cuyahoga Valley National Park, making the park's volunteer (VIP) program one of the most active in the National Park System. By 2016, we hope to see these numbers grow significantly, to at least 100,000 hours of volunteer service.

To energize the park's volunteer program to meet this goal, we plan to develop a Volunteer Center to create a physical place and higher profile for the VIP program; increase staffing capacity to manage the VIP program in collaboration with the park friends group; and develop meaningful new activities to engage volunteers in the park.

One of the biggest growth areas for new volunteer activities will be those in support of natural and cultural resource protection. As some examples, we will expand our recently launched Citizen Scientists and Invasives Volunteer programs; involve volunteers in natural resource restoration activities; engage students of all ages in service learning projects; and create volun-tourism activities as part of the Cuyahoga Valley Institute, another initiative designed to promote life-long learning and tourism in the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Over the next ten years, CVNP will expand programs that engage youth and urban audiences. We will use a program model established in 2006 as the park's pilot program for the NPS Health and Recreation Initiative. It involves recreation programs and park promotion activities that highlight the physical connections to the park accomplished through the extension of the Towpath Trail and creation of neighborhood connector trails. Civic engagement is a key to the program model because community partners and school children helped design and implement the programs. In its pilot community (Akron, Ohio), school children named the program Get Up, Get Out & Go! (GGG). Through the Centennial Challenge, we will solidify the program in Akron and expand to new communities, including Cleveland.

These programs will focus on improving the lives of children. GGG connects health and outdoor recreation, intentionally responding to childhood obesity and associated chronic diseases. Our programs will also be influenced by the ideas Richard Louv articulates in his book "Last Child in the Woods". He calls for playful, less structured experiences in nature as an essential part of a healthy childhood.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Over the next ten years, we will improve our capacity and sophistication in using ranger-facilitated programs and special events to attract new and diverse audiences to the park. We believe that we need to be willing to try new kinds of programs and engage creatively with community partners to design and present programs that will serve as audience draws. One approach will be to expand programming around content that draws diverse audiences, as has been our experience with Underground Railroad programs. Another approach will be to diversify our cultural arts programming, especially by adding events that will have a greater appeal to young audiences. An outcome of meeting this goal will be increased numbers of visitors to ranger-facilitated programs.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Over the next ten years, Cuyahoga Valley National Park will work to fulfill its potential as a destination for heritage tourism by continuing to plan and implement its vision for a Cuyahoga Valley Institute (CVI). As currently conceived, the CVI will weave together programs, recreation, and overnight accommodations to create a dynamic experience that encourages multi-day visits to the park. The CVI is a multi-partner initiative in-part motivated by the desire to promote regional economic development through tourism.

Specifics of the vision include: 1. Day and multi-day, immersive, educational experiences tied to arts, culture, heritage, environment, recreation, and sustainable agriculture; 2. a network of overnight accommodations and conferencing facilities in rehabilitated park historic buildings that are leased to a private operator; 3. capital investments at partner sites to support CVI; 4. integration of existing recreational and cultural amenities; and 5. promotion targeted to multi-day audiences.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

CVNP proposes two-tier performance actions towards this objective. First, we will build on existing strengths in education programs to keep them innovative into the future. CVNP is an excellent location to invest in education programs. Our location in a metropolitan area lets us reach large numbers of students through programs. We already have an extensive program infrastructure. This includes Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, a 128-bed residential center operated by Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association in cooperation with the NPS. It also includes Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, the excursion railroad with existing connections to Akron and Canton and a future connection to Cleveland. Through the Centennial Challenge, we will enhance our curricula, add services for urban youth, incorporate field-based and learning technology, and improve our capacity to provide scholarships to allow low-income students to participate in programs.

The second action is to improve online learning about the park for students around the country. Using curriculum standards as our guidelines, we will develop a website with age-appropriate content about the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUVA

EDUCATION

- Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.**
- Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.**

The Centennial Challenge gives CVNP the opportunity to bring interpretive media up to 21st-century standards, with emphasis on better engaging children, representing multiple points of view, benefiting from the advantages of technology, and ensuring accessibility.

At CVNP, we recognize that the internet is frequently the public's first introduction to the park. This is especially true for young, technology savvy audiences. It is essential that the park's internet presence appeal to young audiences, especially to help them view the park as a good place to visit.

We propose to pursue two types of performance actions to engage youth in the park through the internet. First, we propose designing information and orientation web pages specifically to appeal to young audiences. Graphic design, word choice, and types of featured park activities would be selected based on what would appeal to youth. Second, we would incorporate web features designed to engage younger audiences. We particularly recognize that youth seek the opportunity to create web content. We will explore options that will let them do so, such as blogs, web forums, and contests to develop podcasts.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

- Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

One focus for Centennial Challenge interpretive media improvements at CVNP will be innovative methods to engage recreational audiences in the interpretive stories of the park. Many recreational visitors never enter a CVNP visitor center. Our challenge is to create compelling interpretive products that can be accessed directly during a recreational visit. We believe that new technologies can support this goal, especially because they are more dynamic and offer greater potential to represent multiple voices than static interpretive media traditionally used in outdoor settings.

Thus on trails, especially the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, we will explore options such as multimedia wayside exhibits, cell phone tours, and audio and video podcasts. On Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad we will pursue an audio tour as the mechanism for passengers to have an interpretive experience.

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Site: CUVA

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

CVNP plans dual performance actions to promote increased involvement in the Junior Ranger program. First, we will expand ranger-led programs and conducted activities that we present under the Junior Ranger label. We believe that the name "Junior Ranger" should be treated as an NPS brand associated with excellent interpretive programs. At CVNP, we see adding new program series under this brand, potentially including service-learning opportunities for children.

The second performance action involves dramatically increasing the profile and use of existing and potentially new Junior Ranger self-guided materials. Currently, the park has a Junior Ranger Booklet that is a cooperating association sales item with limited distribution. Making it a free publication and seeking mechanisms to distribute it in large quantities can make this publication shift from an under-the-radar-screen activity to a routine park experience for children with their families.

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Site: CUVA

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Through the Centennial Challenge, CVNP will seek to improve the contribution of visitor centers and exhibit facilities to visitor satisfaction, understanding and appreciation of the park. Currently, CVNP operates six visitor centers/exhibit facilities. Two facilities, Happy Days Visitor Center and Canal Visitor Center, offer a full range of services throughout the year. Four facilities--Boston Store, Peninsula Depot, Frazee House, and Hunt Farm--offer more limited services and operate seasonally. As currently configured, these facilities are underperforming. Attendance compared to overall park visitation is low and drops each year.

Performance actions for the Centennial Challenge are to define and implement a new vision for these facilities. While specifics are to be determined, we believe they will combine improving the visitor center and exhibit functions at some buildings while finding new ways to provide excellent visitor experiences at others. The latter will require us to think creatively and search beyond traditional models used for visitor facilities in the NPS.

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Site: CUVA

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

One of the areas of focus for interpretive and educational programs at Cuyahoga Valley National Park is to reach out to diverse audiences, especially in urban communities. Through these programs, the park creates partnership networks that we will leverage for recruitment for employment. We will also build youth leadership and mentoring opportunities into interpretive and educational programs to create interest in NPS careers.

A second set of performance actions will be to expand relationships with local colleges that will enable the park to recruit and develop a diverse workforce that reflects the demographics of Northeast Ohio.

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Site: CUVA

PROFESSIONALISM

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Leading up to, and extending beyond the Centennial, we will continue to refine annual planning cycles to develop and monitor progress toward short, mid and long range goals. In an effort to ensure that resources are focused on the highest park priorities and that the best business practices are in use, we will adjust programs and systems accordingly.

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Site: CUVA

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Managing for safety excellence can enhance employee productivity, visitor experience, and improve overall management effectiveness. Healthy, productive employees are our most important resource, and a safe visitor experience enhances park stewardship.

CVNP is interested in the well-being of its employees and places great emphasis on maintaining a safe and efficient work environment. All employees must be properly trained do their jobs safely and effectively. Visitors should better understand the less obvious risks in the park to avoid unnecessary injury and property damage.

Developing and implementing risk management intervention strategies will eliminate or mitigate risks in the park. Unnecessary risky behaviors must be eliminated and operating hazards and risks must be controlled. The goal is to reduce the number employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent. The park will work to achieve this goal through the training, awareness, and cooperation of all employees. Employees are expected to have the same concern for personal safety and the safety of their fellow employees and visitors as they have for the performance of their work.

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Site: CUVA

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Located between Cleveland and Akron Ohio and lying within or adjacent to 15 communities, means Cuyahoga Valley National Park is truly a partnership park. We maintain over 30 different agreements with a variety of organizations in order to meet our mission objectives. Our three main operating partners allow us to provide services and opportunities to residents and visitors in Northeast Ohio that we would otherwise be unable to provide. Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association works with the NPS to operate our Environmental Education Center. Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad allows us to provide a unique form of alternative transportation to, through and within CVNP - particularly through our Bike Aboard! program. The Countryside Conservancy works with the NPS and private farmers to establish a lived-in, rural landscape in the park, as well as provide opportunities to eat sustainably produced, locally grown products. Our demonstrated partnership successes of the past will allow us to engage citizens, volunteers and other partners in ways that will not only help the park, but also develop in people a deeper sense of commitment to the park and the community at large.

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Site: CUVA

PROFESSIONALISM

- Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.**
- Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.**

CVNP is treasured by local residents as place to go to improve their health and wellness, as well as their understanding of the myriad natural and cultural resources that are protected in the Cuyahoga Valley. We have learned that working in partnership allows us to do a better job of accomplishing our mission and meeting the needs of the public. We are constantly working on improving our communications strategies to help the public understand the value of the park and our partners' existence, our missions and goals, and the role the public can play in the park and with our partners. Over the next several years, in conjunction with our partners, mainly Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and the Countryside Conservancy, we will be developing new and different messages that will help increase the public's understanding of how they can become involved and play a role in assisting the national park and its partners preserve this national treasure.

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- Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

National efforts to raise awareness about the role of philanthropy in the history of the National Park System through the Centennial Initiative and the efforts of the National Park Foundation will be enhanced on the local level by Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association. As the park's Friends Group, CVNPA has been and will continue to be a strong voice for community support of the park. In its 30+ years of park philanthropy, CVNPA has supported many park projects and activities. CVNPA's dedicated Board of Directors, and staff of over 40 permanent and seasonal employees, has allowed CVNPA to raise millions of dollars in support of CVNP. Facilities have been built, trails have been maintained, interpretive programs and special events have been hosted, and urban youth scholarships have been provided allowing kids to attend programs at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center.

To ensure the vitality of Cuyahoga Valley National Park for future generations, CVNPA's goal is to establish a park endowment. CVNPA is poised to position the park endowment as a valuable opportunity for philanthropic giving associated with environmental, cultural and recreational values.

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