



Valley Volunteer



NPS/JERRY JELINEK

Volunteers Restore Habitat

Volunteers of all ages assisted resource management staff with habitat restoration projects in 2011.

On August 30, over 400 employees from Fairmont Minerals, a global company headquartered in Northeast Ohio, donated funds and over 2,900 volunteer hours to complete 11 projects in Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). One of their main projects was working with park staff and other volunteers to convert 14 grassy acres near Red Lock Trailhead to a young forest with over 1,500 native hardwood trees. They also assisted CVNP Civil Engineer Janet Popielski by collecting 1,000 cuttings from sandbar willow trees in preparation for a riverbank stabilization project that was completed during the fall.

In October, over 120 fifth graders and staff from the National Inventors Hall of Fame® School in Akron did a problem-based learning unit called “What Do Deer Eat?” The fifth graders planted additional trees at the 14-acre site and studied the short-term effects of deer browsing to help determine whether particular tree species and/or heights are more susceptible to hungry deer. Plant Biologist Chris Davis will use the data to help plan future projects.

Opportunities to participate in habitat restoration projects are available biweekly on the second Thursdays and fourth Saturdays from May through November. More information and the schedule—including additional dates throughout the year—are at www.nps.gov/cuva under Support Your Park.

What’s in Our Hoop Houses?

CVNP is now home to two hoop houses! Each hoop house provides a growing environment for plants that is sheltered from inclement weather, insulated from temperature extremes, and protected from browsing deer.

Resource management staff constructed the first hoop house in 2010 to grow native plants from local seeds collected by staff and volunteers. These plants will be used to transform sites that were once infested with invasive plants.

The second “high” hoop house, constructed by Fairmont Minerals volunteers in 2011, will produce local foods and create hands-on experiences for youth at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC). Plans for 2012 include building raised beds, a trellis system, and other infrastructure for growing to begin.

Volunteers are needed for all stages of these two hoop-house projects. To get involved, call 330-657-2299 or visit Support Your Park at www.nps.gov/cuva.



NPS/CATHERINE WIDEMIRE



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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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National Park Service (NPS) volunteers come from all over to help preserve and protect our natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment of this and future generations. At Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), volunteers perform a wide variety of duties during every season of the year. Currently more than 5,700 Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) donate over 154,800 hours. We rely on these dedicated people to provide the highest level of quality services to our visitors and to help us protect America's heritage.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park encompasses 33,000 acres along the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. Managed by the National Park Service, CVNP combines cultural, historical, recreational, and natural activities in one setting.



NPS/JOSH BATES

Cooperative Weed Management

Threats to national parks increasingly come from outside park boundaries. In 2012, CVNP is kicking-off a partnership with the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park; Cleveland Metroparks; and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County to address one such problem.

The new Crooked River Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)—which encompasses the entire Cuyahoga River watershed—will manage invasive plants at a regional scale. The Crooked River CWMA will set priorities and allow partners to work

outside of jurisdictional boundaries, assisting each other and private land owners by pooling resources and creating new volunteer opportunities.

Support for the program comes from two grants through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) totaling more than \$400,000. The funds will stock an equipment cache and create a youth job corps with the help of Summit County's Youth Employment for Success program.

For more information on how to get involved, see the front cover articles.

Better Communications

The Volunteer Office continues to find ways to better communicate with you. Visit the Conservancy's new website www.conservancyforcvnp.org to see our improved Volunteers-in-Parks section. There you can sign-up for our Volunteer Opportunities e-newsletter under Training & Resources. To receive our monthly Volunteer E-News, an exclusive e-newsletter for CVNP volunteers,

send your e-mail address and full name to volunteer@forcvnp.org. Call our Volunteer Info Line at 330-657-2299 to sign-up for training sessions and ask about volunteer opportunities.

Want to promote volunteerism? Stop by a visitor center to pick up our new CVNP volunteer business cards and hand these out to your network of friends and family.

Cleveland Indians Volunteer Challenge

Volunteer at least four hours between April and August and receive a free pair of Cleveland Indians tickets, courtesy of Business Volunteers Unlimited (BVU) and the Cleveland Indians. First, register with BVU at www.bvuvolunteers.org and log your

volunteer hours for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Their website lists exact dates for the eligibility period as well as the entry deadline. Next, redeem your tickets at www.indians.com and enjoy the game!

Building Knowledge and Camaraderie

What do trains, farms, land acquisition, and bats have in common? These are a few of the **Enrichment Series** topics being offered this spring and summer. For the past four years, on the **second Tuesday of the month**, CVNP volunteers have enjoyed these informative talks by a variety of speakers.

Regular attendee Walt Strotz explains, "I gain knowledge that pertains to not only Cuyahoga Valley National Park, but also our partners such as Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad or the Countryside Conservancy."

Volunteer Fred Glock adds, "I love the chance to see friends among the volunteers and staff, as well as meet new people." Socializing over coffee and cookies, volunteers have a chance to share and celebrate their love of this park and the volunteer work they accomplish. This series is another way that our volunteer program helps to build a community of park stewards.

Upcoming highlights include two exciting field trips.

In June, we gather at the Basket of Life Farm for a tour and discussion with Countryside Initiative farmers Eric and Heather Walters, Countryside

Conservancy Executive Director Darwin Kelsey, and the park's Landscape

Architect Darlene Kelbach. The Basket of Life Farm is located at 4965 Quick Road in Peninsula. Additional parking is available next door at Armington Pond.

In September, be ready for a late evening at the Ledges. Cleveland Metroparks Naturalist Tim Krynak and Park Ranger Paul Motts share bat facts and demonstrate acoustic monitors that help locate and identify these amazing nocturnal creatures.

For more information, see the Enrichment Series listing on page 8.

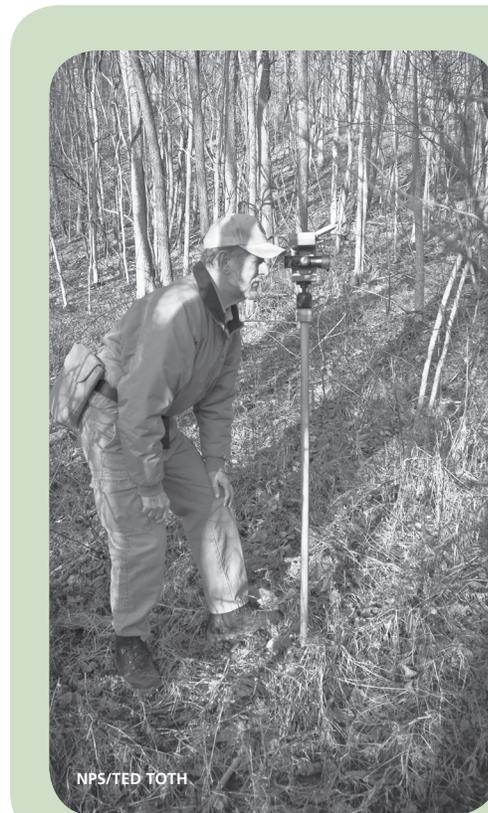
Introducing Wetland Monitors and Invasive Persuaders

Hiking off the beaten path, contributing to local scientific research, and being able to volunteer with one's spouse are a few reasons why **Wetland Monitors** are enjoying this new volunteer position. Wetland Monitors help resource management staff by collecting field data at important wetland sites. Under the direction of Wetland Biologist Sonia Bingham, Wetland Monitors "adopt" one or more groundwater wells, obtain water level measurements weekly, and report their findings to the park. Sonia's goals this year are to increase volunteer satisfaction and to help them experience new connections with each adopted wetland by providing more information about its natural history. This year, volunteers are also invited to survey their wetlands for the rare spotted turtle.

Have you noticed garlic mustard (an invasive plant) on the Towpath Trail? So have our **Invasive Persuaders**, a new Park Ambassador group. These volunteers chat with park visitors about the spread and scope of invasive plants and what people can do about the problem. Program goals for 2012 are to add more roving stops, integrate Invasive Persuaders into habitat restoration sessions, and distribute a "take action" card.



NPS/JERRY JELINEK



NPS/TED TOTH

Did You Know?

Since the 1970s, **Tract Trekkers** have inventoried land tracts in CVNP using maps, compasses, GPS units, and cameras. Their job is to list and map both natural and built features as well as record any hazards or concerns related to park resources. Tract Trekkers have marked 85% of the park's legislative boundary lines to denote jurisdictions, important information for park law enforcement. Through the Adopt-a-Trail program, this volunteer group also leads monthly trail sweeps of the Salt Run Trail.

Recently John McDowell and Dick Whitehead retired from Tract Trekking after 14 and 12 years as a VIP, respectively. Over the years, they have hiked 1,900 miles marking the boundaries of the park. Kudos for all your hard work!

In the Spotlight



Major Improvements at Two Sites

Two recent construction projects improve visitor services and showcase “green” practices.

At Rockside Station, passengers benefit from an expanded platform that allows for quicker boarding and has a permanent restroom. With safety in mind, CVNP installed an emergency exit lane across the west side of the tracks.

Metro Parks, Serving Summit County, in cooperation with CVNP, relocated the Bike & Hike Trail near Brandywine Falls. The main goal was to improve safety by moving the trail off the roadway, but the trailhead upgrade benefits all visitors to CVNP’s top attraction.

These sites now feature sustainable design elements. Look for porous pavement, stabilized turf in the parking lots and emergency access areas, bioswales or rain gardens to catch storm water, energy-efficient LED lights, and low-mow grass.



Fast Facts

From October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011:

- 5,717 volunteers donated 154,844 hours (among the top 5 in NPS)
- 5 new volunteer positions were created: Invasive Persuaders, Paw Patrol, Quest Crew, Music by Nature Assistants, and Wetland Monitors
- 4,896 hours were contributed by Visitor Center Assistants (37% growth)
- 744 hours were contributed by Hike Assistants (573% growth)
- 28 acres of invasive plants were cleared by youth and corporate groups, helping to restore natural habitats at several sites throughout the park
- 42 schools and youth organizations contributed 9,600 hours
- 20 companies and adult organizations contributed 5,461 hours
- 2 new bird species, the golden eagle and blue grosbeak, were added to the CVNP bird checklist by a Citizen Scientist

In fiscal year 2011, total volunteer service hours were equivalent to over \$3.3 million. Thank you for donating your time and talent to CVNP!

Volunteer Celebrations 2012

We are proud of and honored by our volunteers’ many contributions and look forward to celebrating these throughout the year. After receiving valuable feedback about the 2011 events, we made some changes for 2012. We are planning a picnic dinner on Saturday, August 11 for volunteers who contribute 40 or more hours from June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012. Information will be sent to qualifying volunteers in early July. In addition, we will be honoring those achieving major milestones prior to the Enrichment Series lectures (see page 8) on May 8, August 14, and November 13.

Outstanding VIPs Win Regional Awards

Three park volunteers were selected for George B. Hartzog, Jr. Regional Awards for their dedication and exceptional performance. The competition was among 57 parks in the National Park Service’s Midwest Region.

The Hartzog Volunteer Group Award was given to Joe and Lisa Cellura for volunteering in a number of positions including Wildlife Watchers, CVSR programs, and bird monitoring. Most notably, they developed a roving kit about bats that included tactile elements to engage people with visual impairments.

The Hartzog Youth Volunteer Award was given to Christine Sisler. She began as an elf aboard Polar Express™ three years ago as high school student and soon after joined the GO Crew! Christine acts as a leader and role model for children and peers alike.

Contact the volunteer office by June at volunteer@forcvnp.org to nominate an outstanding volunteer or group for this year’s awards.



Meet Jared Brewer

Jared Brewer is the park ranger (law enforcement) who supervises the Trailblazers, the park's volunteer patrol group. Jared explains that **Trailblazers** follow the principles of law enforcement. They always notify the Communications Center where they are heading, work with a partner, and carry the proper safety equipment for their job. Sound interesting? Recruitment for a new class of Trailblazers starts this fall. Information will be in our next issue of the *Valley Volunteer* and available at www.conservancyforcvnp.org.

Jared has had lots of experience protecting people and park resources. In addition to his routine duties, Jared is an emergency medical technician, a firefighter, trained in technical rescue, and the park's Emergency Medical Systems Coordinator. Over the past decade, Jared has worked at Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Devils Tower National Monument, and Independence National Historical Park as well as CVNP.

Jared's Safety Tips

- Be aware of your surroundings. If you notice anything that seems out of place, including natural hazards and people acting suspiciously, tell the Communications Center (440-546-5945 or radio 731) what you see and your exact location.
- Use the buddy system by volunteering with a partner.
- Have the proper clothing and equipment for your task.
- In stressful situations, stay calm with your voice, demeanor, and posture. Take a moment to step back and consider your options.

When it comes to safety, a little extra time and attention can make all the difference.



Safe is Sound Update

The second successful summer of the Towpath Trail safety awareness campaign, Safe is Sound, ended in early fall. Thousands of cyclists, runners, and walkers stopped by the Safe is Sound tents to receive safety-themed stickers, cards, bike bells, and whistles. Staff and volunteers gave runners and walkers safety whistles as a way to signal for assistance in emergency situations and cyclists bike bells as a reminder to give an audible signal when passing.

The new message for 2012 is to stay aware of your surroundings while playing music by wearing just one ear bud. This summer, look for safety stops along the Towpath Trail from Cuyahoga to Tuscarawas counties.



First Aid and CPR Training

Over the past winter, the volunteer office and park management reevaluated First Aid and CPR requirements, establishing two levels of training. First Responder Training combines First Aid, Compression-Only CPR, and Bloodborne Pathogens into a six-hour class. CPR/AED/First Aid is an eight-hour class that also includes Bloodborne Pathogens. Both certifications are valid for two years.

The new safety training requirements for volunteer positions can be found in the updated appendix of the volunteer handbook at www.conservancyforcvnp.org.

First Responder Training

Saturday, March 31 or Sunday, June 3
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

CPR/AED/First Aid

Sunday, April 22 or Saturday, June 2,
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

To register, contact the volunteer office at 330-657-2299 or volunteer@forcvnp.org.

Transitions & Milestones

Steve Wait Leaves a Legacy

In April, Steve Wait retires as President and CEO of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR). He came onboard in November 2006 after working 32 years in the freight railroading business. Earlier in his career, Steve was the President and COO of the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway.



His vast business experience was an ideal match for CVSR and his creative leadership has grown the not-for-profit organization from a “hobby” railroad to a full-fledged park partner. Steve describes CVSR’s role as “following the park’s lead on solving big problems, such as growth and redesign.” In the past five years, CVSR has improved its operating parameters. It is financially secure, ridership is up over 70%, and the organization’s visibility has expanded. According to CVSR Board of Trustees Chairman George Snider, CVSR is now considered one of America’s largest and most respected excursion railroads.

Steve said that it was always his personal goal to stay for this length of time as a way to give back to the community. Now that CVSR is on

solid financial footing and has a strong business plan, it’s a good time to leave. The next President and CEO, arriving in late April, will forge ahead with more fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and efforts to engage the Akron/Cleveland markets. CVSR also plans to contribute to the National Park Service’s goal of engaging underserved communities, part of the agency’s A Call to Action centennial initiative. CVNP was recently awarded a \$3.2 million federal Transit in Parks Program grant and Steve’s successor will see to fruition four projects to rehabilitate, rebuild, or replace part of CVSR’s aging fleet.

Remembering Three VIPs

We are saddened by the loss of three dedicated park volunteers.

Russ Johnson, 67, passed away on August 7. In 2001, Russ joined the Buckeye Trail Association and began maintaining portions of the Buckeye Trail. Russ’ focus was the CVNP section between Snowville and Boston Mills roads. He supervised many volunteer work sessions and several Boy Scout projects, working closely with CVNP Landscape Architect Kim Norley.

Lynn Schreiber, 73, passed away on May 19. Through Adopt-a-Trail, Lynn helped maintain the Brandywine Gorge and Stanford trails for many years, retiring in 2002. She was also an active Cleveland Hiking Club member.

Jack Shallcross, 65, a Lock 38 Operator since April 2011, passed away on December 9. Jack assisted with demonstrations at Canal Visitor Center.

Milestone Awards

Congratulations to the following volunteers for achieving these milestones in their cumulative hours of service as of October 2011:

- **2,000 hours:** Mike Brittain, Joe Cellura, Lisa Cellura, David Kopkas, Mark Kroczyński, and Ed Toerek
- **3,000 hours:** Henry Hegrat
- **4,000 hours:** David Herbster
- **6,000 hours:** Winnetta Kennedy
- **10,000 hours:** Birdie Smith



Happy Trails

Jack McMahon retired after 20 years as a VIP. He was involved with Polar Express™, visitor centers, Art @ M.D. Garage, Day Out with Thomas™, SET Team, Underground Railroad, and the Countryside Farmers’ Markets as a Parking Assistant.

Welcome

Katrina Haas is the new associate development director for the Conservancy. She previously worked for the Geauga Humane Society, where she served for four years as the development director.

Rich Miller is the Conservancy’s new Kitchen Manager and will manage day-to-day operations.

Lori R. Smith is the Conservancy’s education coordinator for the CVEEC. She is managing the farm education program and developing curriculum for replacement exhibits at Canal Visitor Center.

Volunteer Opportunities

Make a Difference!

Learn about CVNP's diverse volunteer opportunities by visiting www.conservancyforcvnp.org and apply online. New opportunities are posted year-round. For more information or to request a mailed copy of the volunteer application, call 330-657-2299.



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Countryside Farmers' Market Volunteers

Join the excitement surrounding fresh and local foods. Opportunities include parking assistance, staffing the information table, setting up and tearing down, taking photographs, assisting chefs with cooking demonstrations, and providing office support.

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad Volunteers

Ever wanted to be behind the scenes of a real working railroad? Opportunities include special events assistant, conductor, mechanic, brakeman, trainman, concessionaire, and office assistant.

Cycling Schools Volunteers

Assistants needed to bike with inner-city school groups on the Towpath Trail. Bring your own bike, helmet, and sack lunch. Weekdays in late May and early June.

GO Crew!

Do you enjoy working outdoors with

youth? Help with the Get Up, Get Out & Go! Program, activities at Music in the Meadow concerts, and service-learning projects.

Habitat Restoration Volunteers

Help with planting, seed collection, and exotic plant management. See page 1 for more information.

Parade Walkers

Want to represent Cuyahoga Valley National Park and our Volunteer



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Days of Service

Here are four great opportunities to pitch in without a long-term commitment. Advance registration of at least three business days is required. Most events are family-friendly. For more information and to register, call 330-657-2299 or visit www.conservancyforcvnp.org.

Sunday, April 22

Earth Day

1 - 4 p.m.

Saturday, June 2

National Trails Day: Adopt-a-Trail Workshop and Trail Sweep

8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Saturday, May 19

RiverDay

9 a.m. - noon.

Saturday, September 29

National Public Lands Day

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Program in a parade? Current volunteers are invited to join us in July and November.

Quest Crew

Volunteers of all ages are needed to pilot test new quests, maintain hidden boxes, draw maps, and support the program in other ways. This is a family-friendly opportunity.

Tract Trekkers

Assist law enforcement by marking park boundaries, documenting landscape features, and reporting hazards. See page 3 for details.

Trail Workers

Join Adopt-a-Trail on monthly sweeps or Cuyahoga Valley Trails Council on monthly trail maintenance projects. No long-term commitment needed. Schedules and additional information are at www.nps.gov/cuva under Support Your Park, or contact the volunteer office.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cuyahoga Valley National Park
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VIP Orientation

Fundamentals: Becoming Stewards, an Introduction to National Park Service Volunteerism provides an orientation to the NPS, CVNP, and the Conservancy. New volunteers are required to take this within six months. Experienced volunteers are also welcome. Thursdays, March 22 or July 19 from 7 - 9 p.m., or Saturdays, May 5 or September 8 from 10 a.m. - noon. To register contact the volunteer office at 330-657-2299 or volunteer@forcvnp.org.

Training in Interpretation

Foundations of Interpretation introduces the theory and practice of interpretation. This is a prerequisite for other series classes. Tuesday, March 27 from 10 a.m. - noon.

Informal Interpretation trains you in one-on-one contacts with visitors. Wednesday, April 4 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. or Sunday, April 22 from 1 - 3 p.m.

To register contact the volunteer office at 330-657-2299 or volunteer@forcvnp.org. To take these classes online, contact Park Ranger Josh Bates at 330-657-2350 or josh_bates@nps.gov for details.

For a large-type version of this newsletter, call 440-546-5991 or 800-433-1986.



NPS/TED TOTH

Enrichment Series

The Volunteer Enrichment Series provides up-to-date information so you can excel as a park steward. All are invited on the second Tuesday of every month. Meet at Happy Days Lodge, except for the two field trips. Refreshments begin at 6:30 p.m. and lectures are from 7 - 8 p.m., unless otherwise noted. For more about the series, see the article on page 3.

On May 8 and August 14, refreshments begin at 6 p.m. and are followed by a volunteer awards presentation. On June 12, we meet at Basket of Life Farm. On September 11, the program is at Ledges Shelter and lasts until 9 p.m.

Upcoming topics and speakers are:

April 10, Land Acquisition at CVNP, Management Assistant Dennis Hamm

May 8, Questing Through the Canalway, Interpretive & Education Specialist Arrye Rosser and Katie Montgomery, director of marketing and public relations, Ohio & Erie Canalway

June 12, Farm Field Trip, Countryside Conservancy Executive Director Darwin Kelsey, Landscape Architect Darlene Kelbach, and Countryside Conservancy Farmers Eric and Heather Walters (see above)

July 10, For All People: Creating Access to Our National Parks, Park Ranger Margaret Adams

August 14, The Future of Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, CVSR President and Chief Executive Officer (to be named)

September 11, Bat Facts, Naturalist Tim Krynak of Cleveland Metroparks and Park Ranger Paul Motts (see above)