



# Valley Volunteer



NPS/TED TOTTH

NPS

## Volunteer Center Opens

On November 9, 2009, over 70 volunteers, donors, and partners joined staff from the National Park Service (NPS) and Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association (CVNPA) to dedicate the new Volunteer Center, a four-building complex. As we cut the ribbon encircling the Volunteer Management Office, we celebrated the hard work of the park's historic structure maintenance crew, CVNPA's fundraising success, and the center's future users—our amazing volunteers.

Speaking on behalf of volunteers, Adopt-a-Trail Chair Dave Burgan expressed his appreciation of NPS and CVNPA's high regard for the volunteer program and

our willingness to answer its need for designated office, storage, and meeting space.

Located opposite Boston Store Visitor Center, the new center gives Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) a central location for its growing community of volunteers. Volunteers have already begun holding meetings at Savacoal House, and many leaders have been assigned office and filing space there. Some volunteer groups are moving equipment and supplies into Savacoal Barn and Conger House this spring. The volunteer program staff moved into the Volunteer Management Office in January.

## Josh Bates Begins New Role

Starting in January, Park Ranger Josh Bates was promoted to Volunteer Liaison/Service Learning Coordinator after nearly a decade teaching students at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC). If you haven't met Josh yet, look for him at volunteer functions such as the Enrichment Series and Fundamentals Orientation.

One of Josh's new duties is developing programs for teens, an underserved audience at CVNP. Beginning this spring, he will involve urban youth from Akron and Cleveland in a variety of volunteer projects, from pulling invasive plants to trash cleanup along the trails. "I really see this new position as a way to ensure that today's youth can find meaning in this national park. I'm looking for ways to engage the next

generation of park stewards through service learning, scouting, and youth volunteer opportunities."

Since arriving in 1998 from his native Washington state, Josh has made Northeast Ohio his home. He met his wife Candace while they were both CVEEC interns. They are now raising two young sons in Akron.

You can reach Josh at (330) 657-2350 or [josh\\_bates@nps.gov](mailto:josh_bates@nps.gov).



NPS/TED TOTTH



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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 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, volunteers perform a wide variety of duties during every season of the year. Currently over 2,527 volunteers donate over 96,220 hours to the park. 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 (CVNP) 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.



Stacy Sadar of OHC (right) presents donation

## TRAILS FOREVER News

### Ribbon is Cut on New Bridge

Working alongside NPS staff in October 2009, over 50 volunteers from the Cuyahoga Valley Trails Council (CVTC) donated 780 hours to assemble and install the new Brandywine Gorge Trail Bridge. The fiberglass bridge spanning Brandywine Creek is 165 feet long and replaces hazardous stepping stones. Previously, the stones would move during high water events, requiring NPS staff and equipment to reset them. The new bridge improves both visitor safety and aquatic resource protection.

The November 1 ribbon cutting kicked off the TRAILS FOREVER program. The event celebrated the role of volunteers in ensuring that the national park's 104-mile trail system is maintained, enhanced, expanded, and preserved for all time and all people.

### Major Gift from

#### Ohio Horseman's Council

The Medina County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council (Medina OHC) donated \$17,500 in support of the TRAILS FOREVER program. This money will be used for future capital improvement projects on equestrian trails, made possible by the Medina OHC calendar fundraiser of 2004.

### Topography

*Saturday, June 19*

CVNPA hosts a rustic chic fundraiser to support the TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund. Enjoy a gourmet dinner featuring local chefs and seasonal foods, a hike to the sublime Ritchie Ledges, dancing, and a relaxing bonfire. Ledges Shelter, 7 p.m. For more information and to register, call (330) 657-2909 ext. 222.

## New Volunteer Training Manual Takes Shape

As the volunteer program grows, both volunteers and staff have expressed the need for an enhanced training program. In July 2009, the volunteer office hired intern Valerie Cosner to create a new *Volunteer Training Manual* with input from volunteers and volunteer supervisors. The manual outlines the training requirements of

each volunteer group and provides critical information about the park and our partners, including relevant policies and procedures. Copies will be available soon at [www.cvnnpa.org](http://www.cvnnpa.org) (click "volunteer"), or by contacting Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or [volunteer@cvnnpa.org](mailto:volunteer@cvnnpa.org).



## Invasive Plant Battle Heats Up

CVNP's invasive plant control program is receiving a big boost in 2010. The national park is partnering with the NPS Heartland Inventory and Monitoring Network, Akron Garden Club, and Student Conservation Association to host a four-person exotic-plant crew, a biological technician, and a conservation intern dedicated to combating the most harmful invasive plants.

The park's highest priorities are to eradicate kudzu and tree-of-heaven, and to comprehensively treat non-native vegetation at 30 additional sites. Work areas include sensitive wetlands, habitat restoration sites, and areas supporting rare plants. Although project sites are distributed throughout the park, most are within one mile of the Cuyahoga River.

Control methods vary by species according to standard protocols and the experience of staff and volunteers. Crews will continue to pull some plants, such as garlic mustard, by hand, but battle others with herbicides. Following treatment, Plant Ecologist Chris Davis hopes to begin re-vegetating disturbed sites using native plants propagated at the park.

Last year, approximately 200 volunteers contributed nearly 900 hours removing invasive plants. Chris expects those numbers to grow in 2010, commenting that "Cuyahoga Valley National Park has an incredible crew of dedicated volunteers committed to fighting bad plants. This year, we're fortunate to have additional funding and staff to help those efforts."

## VIP Advisory Committee

The volunteer program now has a Volunteer Advisory Committee to give input on policy decisions and to help drive our growth and direction. The committee consists of a representative from each park division and partner, plus one volunteer. The committee's first task was to help develop and edit the new *Volunteer Training Manual*. The next challenge will be to review and edit a *Volunteer Supervisor Manual*, and to work with the volunteer office on the use and growth of the new Volunteer Center.

## Corporate VIP Program Growing

Area corporate groups are literally "lending a hand" to CVNP. In fiscal year 2009, their one-day projects included working on trails, landscaping, painting, and more. This added up to 674 hours of service. We thank Key Bank, Lilly Pharmaceutical, Leadership Akron, Charles Schwab, Findley Davies, Human Arc, and Sherwin-Williams for their help.

As the 2010 schedule shapes up, we anticipate even more growth in this program. AkzoNobel, Summa Health System, and Leadership Akron/Torchbearers/Junior Leadership Akron are scheduled to date. Our biggest group ever will be 350 volunteers from Sherwin-Williams, coming in May. Does your corporate group want to get involved? Contact Bridget Ambrisco at (330) 657-2364 or [bambrisco@cvnnpa.org](mailto:bambrisco@cvnnpa.org).

*AkzoNobel employees paint a park dormitory.*



# In the Spotlight



COURTESY/STEVEN GLAZER

Children questing in New England.

## Questing Workshops for Volunteers and Teachers

CVNP is partnering with Cleveland Metroparks, Cascade Locks Park Association, and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County to introduce a new recreational activity to Ohio—questing.

Quests are treasure hunts that celebrate community, history, stories, nature, and special places. A type of letterboxing, questing involves following a rhyming trail of clues and a curious map to find a hidden box. Questers log their finds and collect unique stamps. In early March, national questing expert Steve Glazer leads a series of two-day workshops to train volunteers, park staff, and teachers in developing the first 20 quests for the Ohio & Erie Canalway. Couldn't make a workshop? Volunteer to pilot the new quests in May and June. Enjoy researching and exploring local parks? Creative writing? We'll be recruiting more volunteers to develop quests in the future.

For more information, contact Arrye Rosser at (440) 546-5992 or [arrye\\_rosser@nps.gov](mailto:arrye_rosser@nps.gov).

## ED-Venture, Educating for Adventure

ED-Venture, an activity group of CVNPA in partnership with NPS, provides opportunities to develop outdoor skills in backpacking, camping, and hiking. Founded by four volunteers in 2009, ED-Venture presents regular outdoor skills workshops, including overnight trips in CVNP. A recent highlight was the Lightweight Backpacking Clinic in January led by professional long-distance backpacker Andrew Skurka. For details on upcoming programs, check CVNP's quarterly *Schedule of Events*, available at visitor centers and [www.nps.gov/cuva](http://www.nps.gov/cuva).

## Exploritas Comes in July

From Sunday through Friday, July 18 - 23, CVNP hosts a group from Exploritas who are coming to volunteer and enjoy everything the national park has to offer. Formerly known as Elderhostel, Exploritas is a nonprofit organization that has been coordinating educational tours throughout the world since 1975. Volunteer Denny Reiser will be working with the volunteer office to coordinate programs and activities for the group. To register call (800) 454-5768 or visit [www.exploritas.org](http://www.exploritas.org).

## Fast Facts

From October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009, there were

- 2,527 active park volunteers (8.5% growth over the previous year) who donated 96,220 hours (22% growth)
- 9,130 Trailblazer hours (109% growth)
- 3,125 Rail Rovers hours (21% growth)
- 1,211 Lock Demonstration hours (program returned after a hiatus)
- 996 Wildlife Watcher hours (7% growth)
- 896 invasive plant management hours (60% growth)
- 649 Farmers' Market volunteer hours (164% growth)
- 487 hours donated in one day for a stream-bank restoration project

In fiscal year 2009, total volunteer service hours were equivalent to 46 full-time staff members or almost \$2 million. Wow!

## New Scout Patches Available

NPS now offers a Resource Stewardship patch for Boy and Girl Scouts. Scouts need to participate for a minimum of 10 hours in an organized education program and/or volunteer service project at a national park unit. For more information or to receive your patch, contact Josh Bates at (330) 657-2350 or [josh\\_bates@nps.gov](mailto:josh_bates@nps.gov).





## Cuyahoga River “Nowcast” Available Online

Same-day predictions of Cuyahoga River water quality are now available from May through August at [www.OhioNowcast.info](http://www.OhioNowcast.info). A new computer model, which takes into account current weather and environmental conditions, is being tested to estimate *E. coli* bacteria levels, an indication of sewage contamination. Low levels are considered “good.” When levels are “poor” (high), a water quality advisory will be issued.

The new model is being pioneered in the Cuyahoga Valley by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists, working in cooperation with the NPS. Traditionally, water quality advisories are issued based on bacteria samples collected the previous day and grown 18-24 hours in a laboratory, a relatively slow and expensive process that yields unreliable results because water quality can vary daily. The new method uses turbidity, a measure of water cloudiness, to quickly predict bacteria levels. Field testing will continue through the summer. Researchers will continue to refine the model as more data is collected.

Nowcasts are also available for two Lake Erie swimming beaches.

## New Messages at Trailhead Bulletin Boards

During the spring, the park is phasing in a new graphic design approach to its bulletin board messages. In addition to a new welcome and orientation panel and other standard information, we will post changeable safety alerts and resource protection hot topics that are relevant to that particular location. We are also making park and trail maps available at all trailheads. When you are out in the park, be sure to stop and see our new look.

## Towpath Trail Safety Campaign

This summer CVNP is launching a Towpath Trail safety campaign in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks, Stark Parks, and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County. The four agencies are working together to reduce visitor accidents by spreading a consistent message of trail etiquette. The project will be modeled after a successful campaign developed by George Washington Memorial Parkway, an NPS site in the Washington, D.C. area that manages a bike/hike trail with similar challenges.

The Towpath Trail is the most visited recreational amenity in CVNP, with an estimated 1.5 million visits to its 20 miles of trail each year. The section with the highest accident rate is Peninsula to Boston. The entire Towpath Trail when fully built will stretch from Cleveland to Dover/New Philadelphia as part of a national heritage area, the Ohio & Erie Canalway.

## Did You Know?

If you encounter anything that might be a dumped or abandoned container of hazardous waste, immediately contact the park’s Communication Center by calling (800) 433-1986 or radioing 731. Do not kick, move, open, touch, or remove the container. The contents might be dangerous to you and the environment, and this could be a crime scene. In October 2009, 48 gallons of old paint and other containers were illegally dumped at Little Meadow parking area. Fortunately, an alert employee knew what to do and saved the park thousands of dollars in clean-up costs.





## Meet Ivan Kassovic

CVNP welcomes Ivan Kassovic as the new field operations supervisor overseeing all field law enforcement and emergency services operations. Ivan works directly with Trailblazers, Tract Trekkers, and other visitor and resource protection volunteers. He commented, "I am overwhelmed by both the quantity and quality of the work volunteers are doing here at Cuyahoga Valley and I am really excited to be a part of this team."

Ivan transferred from Rocky Mountain NP where he was a sub-district ranger. He has also worked in law enforcement, aviation, search and rescue, resource management, interpretation, and maintenance at five other national parks.

Ivan can be reached at Coonrad Ranger Station at (440) 546-5952 or [ivan\\_kassovic@nps.gov](mailto:ivan_kassovic@nps.gov).

## Remembering Mary Kay Newton

Mary Kay Newton passed away November 5, 2009. She was part of the original volunteer organization that promoted the Cuyahoga Valley as a potential National Park Service site. She worked for the YMCA in Tallmadge and later as one of the first four rangers in CVNP. After retiring in 1985, Mary Kay supported the park through diverse volunteer service, often accompanied by Guy, her husband of 63 years. Mary Kay was involved in weekly bird censuses, visitor centers, M.D. Garage art exhibits, folk festivals, and CVTC trail maintenance. She cherished the wildlife and natural areas in the park, and enjoyed engaging visitors.

## Saying Goodbye to Two Train VIPs

Harlan (Hal) Johnson passed away on October 10, 2009. A train enthusiast, Hal volunteered as a Rail Rover and with Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR)'s summer youth programs. He especially loved leading the old-fashioned sack races outside of Canal Visitor Center and meeting new people. His widow Beverly remembers, "He talked so much that I was afraid the train would leave him!"

Mark Rubin passed away on December 28, 2009. Mark was an outstanding volunteer conductor, winning the 2008 CVSR Volunteer of the Year Award. Mark set the bar high and will be greatly missed.

## Welcome

**Lynn Garrity**, a landscape architect, was hired as an outdoor recreation planner to coordinate CVNP's Comprehensive Trail Management Plan. Lynn has prior experience with numerous trail, greenway, and watershed plans.

**Fred Garrett** was hired as a carpenter for the Special Projects Crew.

**Dave Mekker** became the new electrician after serving on a temporary appointment.

**Mike Hodgkinson** was promoted to maintenance worker supervisor, Special Projects Crew.

**Scott Schreiber** joins CVNP as the new information technology (IT) specialist. Scott is a Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator who has worked with computers for 19 years.

## Happy Trails

**Ken Pipes**, maintenance worker supervisor (special projects), retired October 2009. Ken started work at CVNP in 1992 as a seasonal carpenter. Considered a master carpenter by his peers, his retirement plans include woodworking, woodcarving, fishing, and spending time with grandchildren.

**Ron Spain**, materials handler (Central Maintenance Area), retired in January. Ron began working at CVNP in 1982 as a seasonal painter on the Historic Preservation Crew, and later served as a motor vehicle operator and a dispatcher. Ron plans to visit his grandchildren and fish with his son.

**Gerry Wuchter**, visitor use assistant (Interpretation, Education and Visitor Services), retired December 2009. A retired science teacher, Gerry started his NPS career in 1976 at Cape Cod NS and joined the CVNP staff in 1985 as a seasonal park ranger (protection). Gerry and his wife enjoy "snowbirding" in Florida.

# Volunteer Opportunities



## Make a Difference!

Volunteer opportunities at CVNP are diverse, with something for all interests. Apply for these and other opportunities online at [www.volunteer.gov/gov](http://www.volunteer.gov/gov) (keyword “Cuyahoga”). For more information, contact the names listed below or the volunteer office at (330) 657-2296.

### Adopt-a-Trail Workshop on National Trails Day

*Saturday, June 5*

Attend the annual Adopt-a-Trail workshop, followed by a trail sweep. Meet the crew leaders and learn how to keep CVNP’s trails safe and enjoyable. Children must be at least 6 years old. Octagon Shelter, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. For more information, contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or [volunteer@cvnnpa.org](mailto:volunteer@cvnnpa.org).

### Canal Camp Volunteers

Teachers and others who love working with children are needed to educate students about CVNP. Assist in the operation of a canal lock, participate in historic games, and enjoy a train ride. Weekday mornings in summer. Contact Pamela Machuga at (330) 657-1914 or [pam\\_machuga@nps.gov](mailto:pam_machuga@nps.gov).

### 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, photographing market

activities, assisting chefs with cooking demonstrations, and providing office support. Contact Natalie Wardega at (330) 657-2178 or [marketassistant@cvcountryside.org](mailto:marketassistant@cvcountryside.org).

### Craft Crew Volunteers

Engage kids of all ages in craft activities at Park Place in Peninsula. Schedule varies; programs are 2 - 3 hours. Contact Pamela Good at (330) 657-2909 ext. 120 or [pgood@cvnnpa.org](mailto:pgood@cvnnpa.org).

### 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. Contact Brady Bourquin at (330) 657-2752 or [brady\\_bourquin@nps.gov](mailto:brady_bourquin@nps.gov).

### Environmental Education Center Assistants

Assist staff at the CVEEC with various duties in support of our resident school program and summer camps. Lead games, update bulletin boards, maintain program supplies, clean pond nets, and help with office support.

Contact Connie Dages at (330) 657-2796 ext. 100 or [cdages@cvnnpa.org](mailto:cdages@cvnnpa.org).

### Kitchen Assistants

Help kitchen staff at CVEEC assemble, package, and deliver food to Trail Mix. Multiple shifts per week needed. Contact Larkin Rogers at (330) 657-2796 ext. 121 or [lrogers@cvnnpa.org](mailto:lrogers@cvnnpa.org).

### Mowing Volunteers

Volunteers needed to mow the lawn at the Volunteer Center. Contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or [volunteer@cvnnpa.org](mailto:volunteer@cvnnpa.org).

### Questing Volunteers

See the questing article on page 4 for details.

### RiverDay Volunteers

*Saturday, May 15*

Remove trash and invasive plants within the Cuyahoga River watershed. Children must be at least 10 years old, accompanied by an adult, and have a signed parental permission form. Breakfast snacks provided. Meet at the Boston Mills Ski Resort parking lot, 7100 Riverview Road in Peninsula, at 8:30 a.m. Some projects may last until 1 p.m. Advance registration is required. Contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or [volunteer@cvnnpa.org](mailto:volunteer@cvnnpa.org).

### Drop-in Volunteer Opportunities

Help with trail maintenance and exotic plant management projects. No long-term commitment needed. Schedules and additional information are at [www.nps.gov/cuva](http://www.nps.gov/cuva) under Support Your Park, or contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or [volunteer@cvnnpa.org](mailto:volunteer@cvnnpa.org).





National Park Service  
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15610 Vaughn Road  
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## Fundamentals Orientation

Join us for Fundamentals: Becoming Stewards, an Introduction to National Park Service Volunteerism. This two-hour training session provides an orientation to the NPS, CVNP, and CVNPA. All volunteers are required to take this course within six months of joining the volunteer program. Experienced volunteers looking to refresh their knowledge and become reinvigorated are also welcome.

Classes are Wednesday, March 24 from 7 - 9 p.m.; Saturday, May 8 from 10 a.m. - noon; Thursday, July 8 from 7 - 9 p.m.; and Saturday, September 11 from 10 a.m. - noon. To register contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or volunteer@cvnpa.org.

## E-News

To receive the monthly volunteer e-newsletter via e-mail, contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or volunteer@cvnpa.org.

## Comments

We are interested in your thoughts and suggestions regarding our volunteer program. Contact Bridget Ambrisco at (330) 657-2364 or bambrisco@cvnpa.org.

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



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## Training in Interpretation

Do you regularly interact with the public or work in a visitor services position? Park Ranger Rebecca Jones is leading an informal interpretation class on Thursday, March 18 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. To register contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2296 or volunteer@cvnpa.org.

## Enrichment Series Continues

The Volunteer Enrichment Series is excellent training for all volunteers, providing up-to-date information so that you can excel as park stewards. All are invited on the second Tuesday of every month at Happy Days Lodge. Refreshments begin at 6:30 p.m. Lectures are from 7 - 8 p.m. Upcoming topics and speakers are:

- **April 13**, Native Woodland Wildflowers of CVNP, Park Ranger Paul Motts
- **May 11**, History of Jaite, Park Ranger Rebecca Jones
- **June 8**, Tracks to the Future: CVSR Planning Beyond 2012, President and Chief Executive Officer Steve Wait, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad
- **July 13**, Managing All Park Resources—the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly—to Maintain a Natural Balance, Chief of Resource Management Lisa Petit
- **August 10**, State of the Volunteer Program, Director of Volunteer Programs Bridget Ambrisco, Park Ranger Josh Bates, and Volunteer Program Assistant Shelby Lewis
- **September 14**, History of the Park: Revisiting *The Green Shrouded Miracle*, Park Ranger Scott Van Houten

