



Valley Volunteer



NPS COLLECTION

Volunteers Raise Funds and New Bridge

Cuyahoga Valley Trails Council (CVTC) is a non-profit volunteer group that represents four trail user groups in Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP)—hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, and cross-country skiers. On October 18, 2008, a work group of 25 volunteers carried, assembled, and installed a new bridge on the Stanford Trail in Boston Township. CVTC donated over \$15,000 to purchase the 35-by-4-foot fiberglass pedestrian bridge, the first one using this material in the national park. Prior to this volunteer workday, Stanford Trail had been closed for six months because flooding washed out the old bridge.

“Our thanks and gratitude go out to this outstanding group for their donation of the bridge and their hard work,

enthusiasm, and dedication to Cuyahoga Valley National Park,” said John P. Debo, Jr., the park’s superintendent.

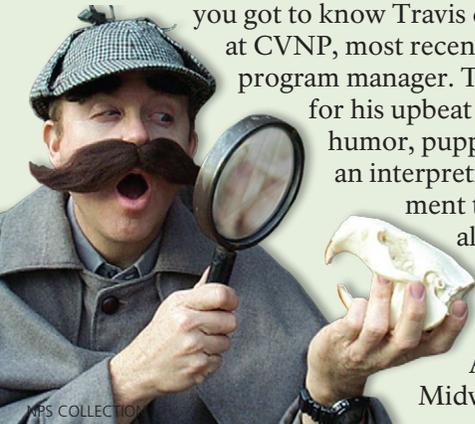
Since its founding in 1985, CVTC has assisted the national park in carrying out the development of a planned network of over 95 miles of trails. The group holds monthly volunteer trail work sessions, helps coordinate the Adopt-a-Trail program, works on special events, trains new volunteers, and encourages stewardship of the trail system. CVTC recently published the third edition of *Trail Guide to Cuyahoga Valley National Park*. For more information on volunteering with CVTC, visit www.cvtrailsCouncil.org.



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Travis White Hangs Up Stetson

After 32 years with the National Park Service (NPS), Park Ranger Travis White hung up his hat in December 2008 and headed down the happy trail of retirement. Many of you got to know Travis during his nearly 17 years at CVNP, most recently as the volunteer program manager. Travis will be remembered for his upbeat personality, sense of humor, puppeteering skills, work as an interpretive trainer, and commitment to volunteerism. He was also unforgettable as Sherlock Bones—a recurring role that won him the Freeman Tilden Award for the NPS’s Midwest Region in 1998.



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Travis had a diverse NPS career, serving in seven parks as different as Saguaro National Park, Mammoth Cave National Park, and Lincoln Home National Historic Site. Although mostly a park ranger in interpretation, he also worked in maintenance, resource management, and law enforcement. Travis certainly understands what the word “service” means in National Park Service and demonstrated this in both his personal and professional life.

Travis recently stopped by the office and had these words to share. “Retirement is definitely a lot of fun. What I miss the most is all of the wonderful people who I got to interact with regularly. As the weather warms, expect to see me volunteering in the park—teaching CPR/First Aid classes and doing some acting. Again, God bless you all for giving me such a marvelous send off.”



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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 2,328 volunteers donate over 81,970 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.



Message From Bridget Garvin

Still new to my work as the director of volunteer programs, I am both thrilled about the program growth opportunities ahead and awed by the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers. I appreciate the conversations I have had with many of you and the feedback you have given. With your input and input from the National Park Service and Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association (CVNPA), we have begun to set priorities and chart the course for the coming year. Communication, organization, and training are all recurring themes arising from these conversations, so expect improvements in these areas. We can all also look forward to the opening of the Volunteer Center later this year (see below).



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For those of you unfamiliar with my background, I am returning to the Cuyahoga Valley after seven years as the executive director of Cascade Locks Park Association in Akron. I say "returning" because I was a management assistant intern for CVNP while working toward my master's degree in environmental studies. During this time, I fell in love with the national park and got involved in the Ohio & Erie Canalway. I have spent most of my career working with volunteers including two years directing a youth volunteer program for the March of Dimes and one year as a full-time volunteer for the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in southern Oregon. On a personal note, I grew up in Toledo, now consider myself a full-fledged Northeast Ohioan, and am getting married this summer in the Cuyahoga Valley.

I look forward to meeting many of you during this busy and exciting year.

Volunteer Center Update



Savacoal House, March 2009.

The new Volunteer Center is quickly becoming a reality. In record time, CVNPA successfully raised over 2/3 of the \$855,000 project from generous donors. Contributors include the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, the Lehner Family Foundation, the Jean Thomas Lambert Foundation, the Chilcote Family Foundation, the Bokom Foundation, several park volunteers, and the descendants of the Savacoal family. CVNP will provide the rest of the funding.

NPS staff is making great strides in rehabilitating the four historic buildings in the village of Boston that will become the Volunteer Center. Located at the corner of Boston Mills and Stanford roads, the Savacoal House (built in 1920) will offer office and meeting space for our volunteer groups and will be used as a recruitment area for new volunteers. The Savacoal Barn, behind the house, will provide cold storage. The Conger House (1910), next door to Savacoal House, will also serve as a storage facility. The volunteer program staff offices will be in the Boodey House (1893), located next to Trail Mix.

Through this project, we are both preserving historic structures within the national park and building a volunteer center in a vibrant, well visited, and centrally located destination along the Towpath Trail.



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Become a Watershed Steward

Forty years ago a fire on the Cuyahoga River burned into the national consciousness, helping spark the modern environmental movement. In celebrating 2009 as the Year of the River, the National Park Service and other partners recognize local citizens' success in healing our crooked river as well as the work that lies ahead.

To protect a river, you must also protect the land that drains into it—the entire “watershed.” Did you know that 46 communities impact streams flowing into CVNP and even more impact the Cuyahoga River? Ecologist Kevin Skerl has been studying the downstream effects of development in surrounding communities on the national park's waterways and has begun presenting his findings to community planners. But more voices are needed. Do you live upstream from CVNP? If so, consider regularly attending your community's monthly public decision-making meetings as a Watershed Steward volunteer. See page 7 for details.

Homeowners can help too. Think about ways to slow down the water running off your property into ditches and streams, protecting waterways from damage and reducing flooding. A simple strategy is to plant more and mow less. Taller vegetation naturally slows and filters stormwater. Other

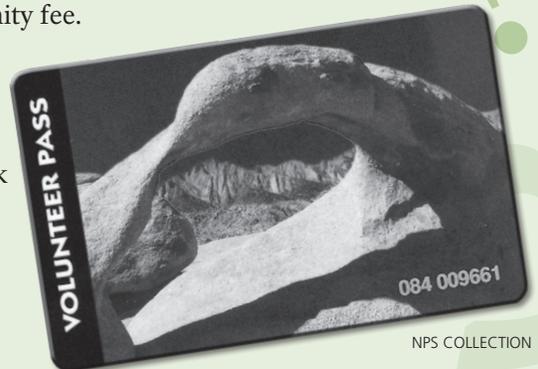
ideas are to install rain barrels on your downspouts or rain gardens in low areas. You can also improve the quality of the water flowing off your yard by using less fertilizer and fewer pesticides, and properly disposing of household hazardous waste such as old motor oil and paint.

To learn more, read *Cuyahoga River Recovers* and *Watershed Stewardship*, two new bulletins available at visitor centers or online at www.nps.gov/cuva. Click on Nature and Science for more watershed protection resources. Our actions can truly make a difference today and over the next forty years.

Did You Know?

All volunteers who have given 500 service hours since January 1, 2007 are eligible to receive an America the Beautiful Volunteer Pass. This pass provides free entry to federal recreation sites, including national parks, that charge an entrance or standard amenity fee.

The pass is good for one year. The Volunteer Office will contact qualifying volunteers by the end of May to award the America the Beautiful Volunteer Pass. If you think you qualify and do not hear from us by June or need the pass earlier, contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2909 ext. 109 or slewis@cvnpa.org.



New Trailblazers Recruited

Trailblazers are a volunteer hiking, cycling, and horseback patrol group which provides information, first aid, and bike maintenance to visitors on over 100 miles of CVNP trails. Because they can encounter many different situations, Trailblazers need excellent judgment and extensive training. Every two to three years, another “class” of recruits is selected through a competitive process.

Following a January open house, a team of park rangers and seasoned Trailblazers interviewed 120 prospective volunteers over two days and ultimately selected 54 new recruits, bringing the group's total to 130. Park Ranger Jared Brewer, the program coordinator, said, “I feel this process went very well. We had excellent candidates and are excited about the program's growth.”

In the Spotlight

Share Your Memories

This fall, PBS stations around the country will air a new six-part documentary, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, by renowned filmmaker Ken Burns. Here in Ohio, Western Reserve Public Media is producing a documentary specifically on Cuyahoga Valley National Park to air in conjunction with the Burns' film. Untold stories of local people will be central in this film.

This spring, Western Reserve Public Media will hold public collection events to gather memorabilia, photographs, and footage of the special place that has become Cuyahoga Valley National Park. We invite you to join us at Happy Days Lodge from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Sundays, April 26 and May 17. You do not need an appointment to share photos or memorabilia. Items will be scanned or photographed on site. For home movies, Western Reserve Public Media will borrow them and convert them to DVD, returning the movie and a



Boy fishing at Kendall Lake circa 1951.

complimentary DVD copy. Oral history appointments are already fully booked.

As volunteers you have a special perspective. Come be part of this

unique opportunity to enrich our collective understanding of this national park by telling us how you fit into the picture.



Fast Facts

From October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008, there were:

- 2,328 active park volunteers who donated 81,972 hours, a 10% increase in hours over the previous year
- 1,144 Polar Express Volunteers who donated 13,456 hours (we undercounted in previous years so we cannot compare figures)
- 233 Adopt-a-Trail volunteers who donated 4,055 hours, a 58% increase
- 65 Rail Rovers who donated 2,524 hours, a 67% increase
- 67 Visitor Center Assistants who donated 3,533 hours, a 19% increase
- 26 Wildlife Watchers who donated 925 hours, a 48% increase
- 12 Cuyahoga Valley Photographic Society volunteers who donated 1,823 hours, a 35% increase
- 6 Digital Photo Volunteers who donated 430 hours, a 143% increase

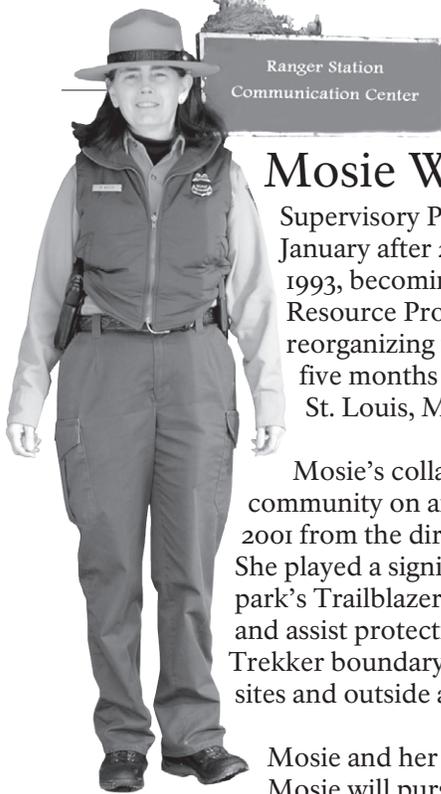
Bravo to BraVo!

Extraordinary people performing ordinary tasks is how one local organization describes United Disability Services' new BraVo! program. BraVo!, which stands for Building Relationships and Volunteer Opportunities, consists of a group of enthusiastic individuals with disabilities who form a very unique volunteer corps.

In August 2008, the national park honored BraVo! with a special awards ceremony recognizing their one-year anniversary of working with the Adopt-a-Trail maintenance program. Each of the 17 participants received a certificate, a volunteer mug, and a volunteer pin for their contribution. BraVo! has adopted the Haskell Run Trail near Happy Days Lodge. On the third Tuesday of every month, the group performs their "trail sweep" which lasts about 2 hours. This past winter BraVo! also began supporting The Polar Express™ train program. This industrious group helped to string over 31,000 bells for Santa to give to each child. We could not have done it without you!

To learn more about BraVo!, visit www.udsakron.org (see adult services) or call (330) 762-6348.





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Mosie Welch Retires

Supervisory Park Ranger Maureen “Mosie” Welch retired in January after 23 years of NPS service. She came to CVNP in 1993, becoming the operations supervisor for Visitor and Resource Protection in 2003. Mosie was a key person in reorganizing the division into one district. In 2008, she spent five months at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, Missouri, as acting chief ranger.

Mosie’s collaboration with other agencies and the local community on an interagency investigation led to an award in 2001 from the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. She played a significant role in establishing and developing the park’s Trailblazer program, in which volunteers patrol park trails and assist protection rangers. She also worked with the Tract Trekker boundary and resource inventory volunteers. Other NPS sites and outside agencies have emulated these programs.

Mosie and her husband, Denis, will remain in Ohio where Mosie will pursue all things equestrian, spend more time with her daughter, Corey, and volunteer in the park and community.

dispatcher, and law enforcement officer and served as an Incident Command System and Weapons of Mass Destruction instructor. Richard participated in numerous Homeland Security details, including a 30-day assignment in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. He currently works for the U.S. Army Staff College as an instructor and evaluator.

Doug Verner, CVSR dispatcher, retired in October after over 10 years with the scenic railroad.

Travis White, park ranger (interpretation), retired in December after 32 years of NPS service. See cover story for details.

Welcome

Jocelyn Buckey is the new community relations manager for CVNPA events. She is a recent marketing management graduate of the University of Akron where she also worked as an assistant for three years in the Department of Development.

Stacy Heffernan was hired by CVNPA as the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center director. Stacy has a master’s degree in biology from Case Western Reserve University, is completing a second in education from Cleveland State University, and has an Ohio teaching license in 7-12th grade life sciences. Most recently, Stacey worked at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History developing and administering programs for students and adults.

Tim Kerr was hired into a permanent position as plumber after serving for three years as a term employee. Tim is also the president of IAM/NFFE, Local 2062 at CVNP.

Aaron Sherrod became the new maintenance worker at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center in August after serving in seasonal maintenance positions at CVNP since 2006.



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Volunteer Program Assistant Hired

A familiar face returns to the Cuyahoga Valley. CVNPA hired Shelby Lewis as the volunteer program assistant, a new permanent position created as part of the volunteer program restructuring. As in past seasonal positions here, Shelby will coordinate administrative tasks performed by the volunteer office. These include helping to recruit, place, and train new volunteers; tracking agreements and hours; communicating with volunteer supervisors; managing uniforms; and supporting new projects. Shelby will also be out in the park working with specific volunteer groups and at volunteer events.

“Shelby’s past success, combined with her enthusiasm and understanding of the work needed to move us forward, are why we selected her. She will be a great asset,” remarked Bridget Garvin, director of volunteer programs.

Happy Trails

Elwood “Woody” Howitt, maintenance mechanic supervisor, retired in January after 28 years at CVNP. Woody was involved in the rehabilitation of many historic buildings, spearheaded the push to get Akron water to Everett, kept the mechanicals working during our festivals, and attended to many utilities crises throughout his tenure. Woody is civically engaged in the Portage County Fair and Streetsboro City

Schools. He is also a clock builder and repairer “extraordinaire.”

Laurie Principe, CVNPA chief development officer, left in February to pursue professional opportunities in Lake County and greater Cleveland. Laurie had been with CVNPA since November 2007.

Richard Vasquez, park ranger (protection), retired in January after 30 years of federal service. He worked as a firefighter, interpreter,

Staying Safe



Slow Down and Be Courteous

Given that there are over 2.5 million visits to CVNP each year, it is not surprising that injuries and sudden illnesses sometimes occur. No doubt, some people limp home on their own without calling for a park ranger or an ambulance. For those who do seek assistance and go on to receive medical care, their “reportable” cases get reviewed by the Safety Advisory Council (SAC) to see if there are ways the park can improve safety.

For fiscal year 2008 (October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008), the SAC noticed a 175% increase in reportable accidents and sudden illnesses along the Towpath Trail, mostly in the Lock 29 to Boston section where 12 of the 22 incidents occurred. For comparison, there were only 8 reportable accidents/illnesses in fiscal year 2007 and 12 in 2006. Increased visitation and congestion here are likely factors.

On the Towpath Trail, there are two broad types of situations happening. The first is that a visitor who is out exercising becomes ill due to an underlying medical condition, dehydration, or heat. The second happens when a cyclist (or occasionally a runner) loses control

and falls, sometimes causing a chain reaction. The results of the latter can be serious: head and spinal injuries, unconsciousness, broken bones, and nasty wounds.

Experienced Trailblazer Walt Strotz has the following advice for safely sharing the trail. “Faster traffic is responsible for yielding to slower and oncoming traffic. Everyone yields to horses. Cyclists should ride at a safe speed consistent with the physical conditions of the trail and the amount of users. Slow down in areas of heavy usage or limited visibility. Pass on the left and always give an audible signal beforehand. All trail users need to be respectful of other users, regardless of their mode, speed, or level of skill.”

In addition, Park Ranger Lois Neff recommends that all cyclists wear a helmet and all trail users be aware of their surroundings. When stopping, step off the trail onto the berm to avoid blocking traffic. Dogs must be on a six-foot leash and stay to the right with their owner.

Whether you travel the Towpath Trail as a visitor or a volunteer, consider how you can help ensure that everyone goes home safely.

Spring CPR/First Aid Training

Volunteers who are expected to provide first aid as part of their duties must be certified in American Red Cross CPR and First Aid. This includes visitor center volunteers, program leaders, and work crew leaders. If you are unsure, check your position description and with your supervisor.

This spring there is a two-day course in CPR/AED/First Aid especially for volunteers. It will be on Saturday and Sunday, April 4 - 5 at November Lodge. For more information and to register, contact Safety Officer Linda Smith at (440) 546-5941 or linda_l_smith@nps.gov. Space is limited.



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 (enter zip code 44141). For more information, contact the names listed below or the volunteer office at (330) 657-2909 ext. 109.

Adopt-a-Trail Workshop on National Trails Day

Saturday, June 6

Mark your calendar for the 8th annual Adopt-a-Trail training. Meet the program leaders and learn how to help keep CVNP's trails safe and enjoyable. Octagon Shelter, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. For details, contact Bridget Garvin at (330) 657-2909 ext 103 or bgarvin@cvnnpa.org.

Bike Excursion Volunteers

Volunteers needed to assist during camp bike excursions on the Towpath Trail. Must work well with children, be able to ride and supply your own bicycle, and be knowledgeable (or willing to be trained) in bike safety. Weekdays in summer. Contact Jennifer Bucheit at (330) 657-2796 ext. 117 or jbucheit@cvnnpa.org.

Canal Camp Volunteers

Teachers and others who love working with children 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.

Craft Crew

Volunteers needed to lead craft activities during programs at Park Place in Peninsula. Bring your creative touch and help kids of all ages make something special. Schedule varies. Contact Pamela Good at (330) 657-2909 ext. 120 or 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 Arrye Rosser at (440) 546-5992 or arrye_rosser@nps.gov.

Day Camp Assistants

Help with before/after care at the Junior Ranger Day Camp at Happy Days Lodge. Must enjoy working with children and be ready to play, lead informal activities, read aloud,

and supervise campers. Two hour sessions on weekday mornings and/or afternoons in July. Background check required. Contact Jennifer Bucheit at (330) 657-2796 ext. 117 or jbucheit@cvnnpa.org.

Environmental Education Center Program Aids

Assist staff at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center with various duties in support of our resident school program and summer camps. Lead games, create 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.

Lock 38 Demonstration Volunteers

Volunteers dress in 19th-century-style clothing and demonstrate lock operations at Canal Visitor Center. Wednesdays through Sundays in the summer and weekends in the fall. Contact Scott Van Houten at (330) 657-2752 ext. 227 or scott_van_houten@nps.gov.

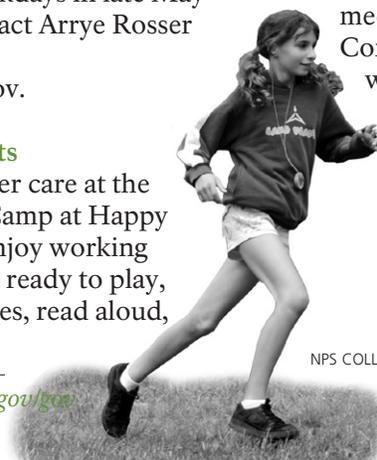
RiverDay Volunteers

Saturday May 16

Come be part of a regional celebration of how far we have come in the recovery of the Cuyahoga River. Clean up trash, remove invasive plants, and be part of other projects to protect the river. Ages 10 and older. Howe Meadow, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Contact the volunteer office at (330) 657-2909 ext. 109 or check www.cvnnpa.org.

Watershed Stewards

Residents of CVNP's watershed communities needed to attend monthly public decision-making meetings (Council/Planning Commission) to promote watershed stewardship. Contact Kevin Skerl at (330) 650-4415 ext. 4 or kevin_skerl@nps.gov.





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U.S. Department of the Interior

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Deer crossing Towpath Trail.

Enrichment Series Continues

If you haven't attended the new Volunteer Enrichment Series, you are missing out. All are invited on the second Tuesday of every month at Happy Days Lodge. The purpose is to provide up-to-date information so volunteers can excel as park stewards. Refreshments begin at 6:30 p.m. Lectures are from 7 - 8 p.m. Upcoming topics and speakers are:

- **April 14**, Canalway South, Dan Rice, president and chief executive officer, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition
- **May 12**, Why a Crooked River Has a Steel Spine?, Steve Wait, president and chief executive officer, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad
- **June 9**, Canalway North, Tim Donovan, director, Ohio Canalway Corridor, and Jim Kastelic, senior park planner, Cleveland Metroparks
- **July 14**, Cuyahoga River Recovery, Biologist Meg Plona and Civil Engineer Janet Popielski
- **August 11**, Civilian Conservation Corps, Park Ranger Scott Van Houten
- **September 8**, Find Out About Our National Historic Sites, Park Ranger Allison Powell, James A. Garfield NHS, and Pat Krider, executive director, First Ladies NHS

Canalway Field Trips

Volunteers are invited to further explore the Ohio & Erie Canalway through two field trips. The Canalway South trip is on Tuesday, April 21 at 4:30 p.m. Meet at the Mustill Store for a hike through the Cascade Locks Park and downtown Akron. The Canalway North trip is on Saturday, June 13 at 10 a.m. Meet at Canal Basin in Cleveland for a tour of the Flats. For details visit www.nps.gov/cuva/supportyourpark/volunteer. To register contact Bridget Garvin at (330) 657-2909 ext. 103 or bgarvin@cvnpa.org.

Fundamentals Training

Join us for Fundamentals: Becoming Stewards, an Introduction to National Park Service Volunteerism. This 2-hour training provides an orientation to the NPS, this park, and CVNPA. Designed to help you understand and carry out the NPS mission, the class is strongly encouraged for new volunteers and recommended for experienced volunteers looking to refresh their knowledge and become reinvigorated in supporting our beloved national park.

Classes are Saturdays, May 2 and September 12 from 10 a.m. – noon and Wednesday, July 8 from 7 - 9 p.m. To register, contact Shelby Lewis at (330) 657-2909 ext. 109 or slewis@cvnpa.org.

Comments

We are interested in your thoughts and suggestions concerning our volunteer program. Please contact Bridget Garvin at (330) 657-2909 ext. 103 or bgarvin@cvnpa.org with ideas on how we can better serve your needs.

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

