



**THE CLEVELAND
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Blossom Music Center Lands Conserved for Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Bipartisan Congressional support for Land & Water Conservation Fund secures key Ohio lands

CLEVELAND, OHIO: The final piece of a two phase effort to protect 578 acres of the 780-acre Blossom Music Center property, situated outside both Akron and Cleveland and entirely within the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, has been conserved as an addition to the National Park, the Cleveland Orchestra, The Trust for Public Land, and the National Park Service announced today.

Funding for both installments of the purchase – a total of \$9.247 million -- came from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Protection of the iconic parklands has been effectively advocated for years by Ohio's bipartisan Congressional delegation, led by Congressman Steve LaTourette (R-14), a senior member of the appropriations subcommittee that oversees conservation spending; retired Senator George Voinovich and former Representative Ralph Regula, both of whom also served on that subcommittee; Senator Sherrod Brown; and Representative Betty Sutton (D-13), who was on hand today at an event at Sarah's Vineyard near the Blossom lands to make the announcement.

"It is essential that we secure cornerstone properties like the Blossom lands before they are gone for the recreation opportunities, clean water, and wildlife habitat that depend on them. That work is far from done, but this acquisition is a huge step forward," said Congressman LaTourette, a national leader in Congress on behalf of conservation funding. "This is exactly how LWCF, which is funded by federal energy revenues, not tax dollars, is supposed to be spent."

"Generations of Northeast Ohio's have grown up enjoying the land and water of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Blossom Music Center," Senator Sherrod Brown said. "Preserving this property in a National Park ensures that our children and grandchildren, too, will have the opportunity to experience all that this natural treasure has to offer."

The Cleveland Orchestra and its governing organization, the Musical Arts Association (MAA), own and manage the 780-acre Blossom Music Center. In 2007 MAA began the process of selling 578 acres of its property to the National Park Service (NPS) for conservation and to raise funds.

MAA asked the Ohio office of The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national conservation organization, to assist with the conservation efforts. Earlier this year the partners completed the purchase of more than 233 acres, and today completed the conservation of the remainder 345 acres, adding important forest and waterway resources to Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP).

“Our partnership with The Trust for Public Land has ensured that funding to acquire the land for Cuyahoga Valley National Park has been secured. The sale of the land has no effect on our current operation of Blossom Music Center, the most beautiful and acoustically superior outdoor musical venue in America,” said Gary Hanson, executive director of The Cleveland Orchestra.

“We are grateful to be here today to make this announcement and celebrate with all of the partners and the community that worked to enhance public access to the park while also helping Blossom sustain its programming for generations to come,” said Bill Carroll, TPL’s Ohio state director. “We are thankful for the extraordinary effort of our Ohio congressional delegation to secure federal funding to protect this cultural and recreational treasure for the people of Ohio and the million of visitors that come to the park each year.”

CVNP is the tenth most visited National Park in the United States. Conservation of this and the previous phase of Blossom Music Center properties now connect more than 5,000 acres of forest ecosystems in the CVNP.

“We are pleased to have this project come to completion,” said Stan Austin, Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Park. “With the final phase being complete we now have 578-acres conserved for future generations. This conservation will enable us to protect several watersheds and sustain critical woodland species. We greatly appreciate the partnership with Musical Arts Association, the Trust for Public Land and the support of the Congressional delegation.”

At Cuyahoga Valley National Park, TPL has been assisting NPS acquisition efforts for over 30 years having played a vital role in the park's acquisition of 25 properties protecting over 1,700 acres. One of the most notable and complex transactions was the Richfield Coliseum, which is now a new grassland habitat that is benefiting many bird species, several of which have been in decline due to loss of habitat.

Since it was founded in 1972, The Trust for Public Land has helped protect nearly 3 million acres of land in 47 states. In Ohio, TPL has protected more than 12,800 acres valued at more than \$135 million. TPL depends on the support and generosity of individuals, foundations, and businesses to achieve its mission to preserve land for people. TPL's operating support for this purchase includes private donations and grants from the Akron Community Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, John P. Murphy Foundation, Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, The Louise H. and David S. Ingalls Foundation, GAR Foundation, and Maltz Family Foundation. Visit tpl.org/ohio.

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