

FALL 2015 : WINTER 2016 VOLUME 1 : ISSUE 1

# CONSERVANCY

*for* CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

## From Toxic Waste to Sunflowers

The \$50 million evolution of the Krejci Dump

**Spotting the Monarch**  
*Citizen science is on the wing*

**Hines Hill**  
*100 years of history*

**East Rim Trail**  
*Constructing CVNP's first mountain bike trail*



## CONSERVANCY

for CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

### CONSERVANCY MAGAZINE

Fall 2015 : Winter 2016, Volume 1 : Issue 1

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COVER PHOTO: Tickseed sunflowers at the restored Krejci Dump site, Jeffrey Gibson



PHOTO: RICK MCMEECHAN

#### A LETTER FROM THE CEO & BOARD CHAIR

Welcome to the Conservancy Magazine! We're proud to present this new publication to you and hope you'll take time to explore its articles and photos. Within, we're focused on telling rich stories about Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Telling stories about this place and its community is one of the Conservancy's most important jobs. By sharing these essential stories with you, we can reflect upon the past, celebrate the present, and embrace the future of the Cuyahoga Valley.

Take a moment to read and reflect upon all that you, as a member of the Conservancy, helped make possible this year. From new trails to habitat restoration and environmental education, you are protecting real places and changing the lives of real people. If you have any feedback about this magazine or its stories, we'd love to hear from you at [info@forcvnp.org](mailto:info@forcvnp.org).

Our success is due to the passion and support of Conservancy donors, volunteers, and advocates. Thank you to all who give their time, talents, and treasure to support Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Truly, we couldn't do it without you!

Deb Yandala, CEO

Thomas E. Green, Chair

#### A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

In 2016, the National Park Service will celebrate its Centennial anniversary. As we recognize the incredible accomplishments of the past 100 years, we're also aiming to reach new audiences and share the magic of CVNP with the *next* generation of park stewards.

As part of the *Every Kid in a Park* Centennial initiative, we're gearing up to connect youth to their national park. Together with the Conservancy, we're aiming to bring thousands of students to CVNP for an immersive, place-based education experience—at no cost to the students.

We also recently completed the first phase of the East Rim off-road biking and hiking trail. As the first mountain biking trail in our national park, this trail will introduce new bikers, hikers, and runners to the Cuyahoga Valley. Look forward to the grand opening in the spring of 2016!

As always, I'm grateful for our partnership with the Conservancy and its supporters. I look forward to continuing our work to protect and preserve our national park together.

Craig Kenkel, Superintendent

#### THE CONSERVANCY'S PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- > Teaching children about nature at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center.
- > Co-managing the park's award-winning volunteer program.
- > Fostering a rich cultural arts program through music, art, adult education, & more.
- > Providing visitor services including space rental, lodging, and retail shops.
- > Raising money for national park projects and programs.

Our Mission

Connecting you to  
your national park.  
Preserving it for  
future generations.



PHOTO: PHIL MASTURZO, AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

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# REMEMBERING MORT NOVEMBER

BY DEB YANDALA, CONSERVANCY CEO

**M**ort November, an avid Conservancy donor and friend of the park, passed away on July 12, 2015. Although we miss him greatly, his legacy lives on in the children and programs of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC).

Mort made a lasting impression at the Conservancy and within our national park. His support funded the construction of a much-needed program building at the CVEEC, dedicated in 1999. Each year, he supported a school from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to attend our flagship residential program. Mort was also an avid fundraiser and community connector for our programs, often inviting people to visit and support our scholarship fund.

Mort's engagement was far deeper than simply writing a check, though. He hosted send-off parties for children before they got

on the bus to the CVEEC. He was relentless in obtaining donations of gifts for the children, from sleeping bags to toiletry kits for camp. His birthdays were celebrated annually in the park, either with our staff or with large events for his friends. Whenever Mort spoke in public, he talked about the CVEEC and what it meant to him to give children such a valuable and fun experience. His warmth and sense of humor inspired us, and we always looked forward to his visits.

Thanks to Mort's foundation and the ongoing involvement of his wife, Iris November, children will continue to attend the CVEEC for years to come.

Mort was a philanthropist, a successful businessman, and a loving husband and father. To all of us here in CVNP, Mort was a dear and wonderful friend and an important part of our park family. We will miss him.

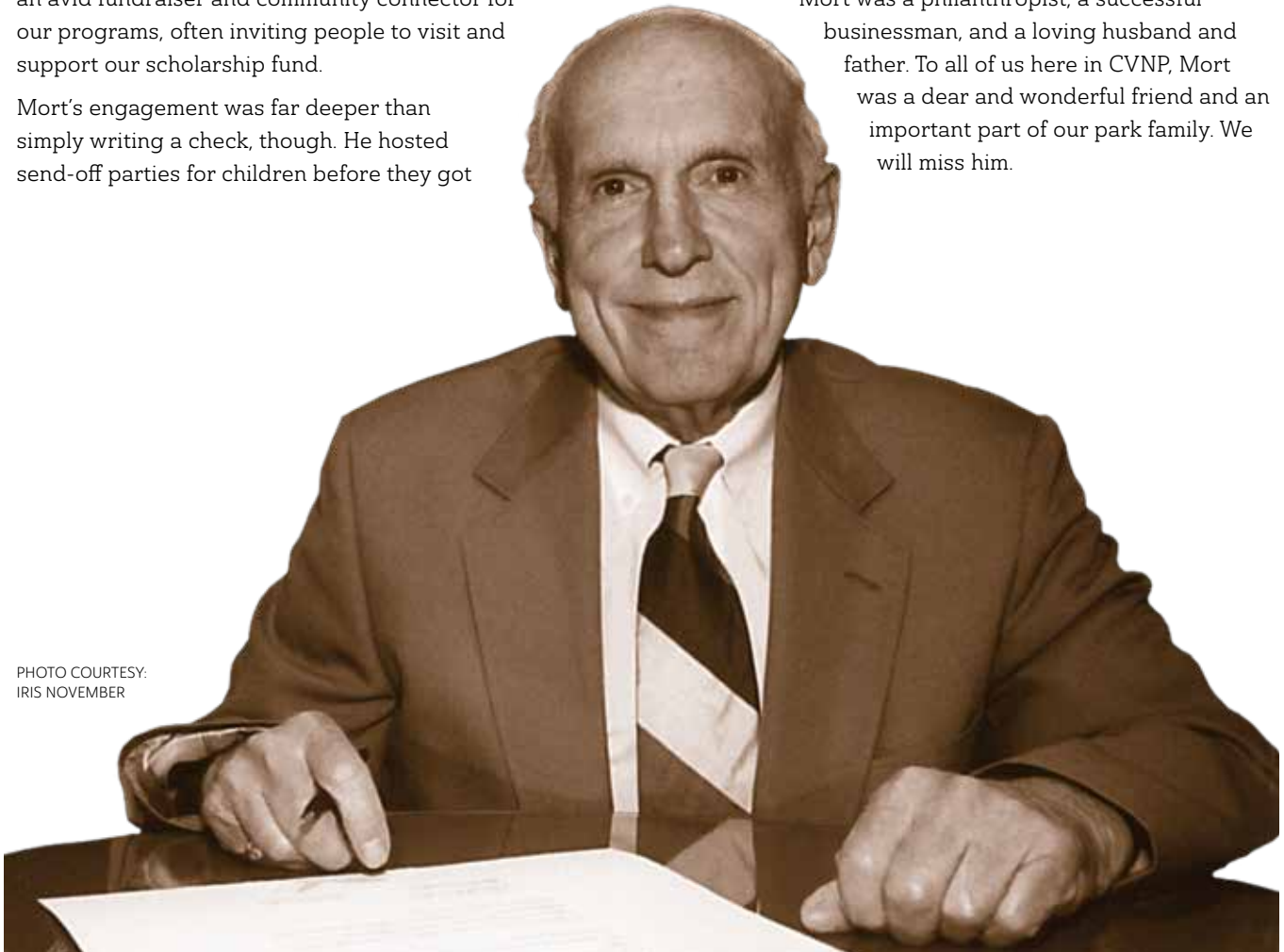


PHOTO COURTESY:  
IRIS NOVEMBER

# CITIZEN SCIENCE

*on the wing*



Every week during the summer, a team of citizen scientists counts butterflies in CVNP.

Each wing stripe, color morph, and flight pattern is familiar to them as they hunt for tiny, fluttering creatures in woodlands and meadows.



# Quick: Think of a butterfly!

Did you picture a monarch butterfly, with its tiger-striped wings?  
Or perhaps a bright yellow tiger swallowtail popped into your mind.  
Or was it a little wood satyr, unassuming and shy?

Every week during the summer, a team of citizen scientists counts dozens of varieties of butterflies like these in CVNP. Each wing stripe, color morph, and flight pattern is familiar to them as they hunt for these tiny, fluttering creatures in woodlands and meadows.

Despite their informal training, these volunteers' findings are indispensable to scientists and naturalists around the country.

## The Rise of Citizen Science

Citizen science—the collection and analysis of data by members of the public—is gaining traction nationwide. Instead of a few scientists scattered across the country collecting tiny amounts of data, CVNP can harness the power of thousands of eager volunteers.

For example, through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, over 200,000 volunteers submit data to track birds, including several volunteer groups here in CVNP. Another national program, the Galaxy Zoo, has drawn half a million people to help catalogue galaxy shapes. And there are more than a thousand sites across the U.S. tracking monarch butterfly populations.

Smartphone apps, online forums, and instant communication around the globe create a vast network for scientists and researchers to draw upon. A simple count of birds or butterflies from CVNP can turn into a data point for climate change research almost instantaneously.

Citizen science might be easier today with current technology, but it's not necessarily a new concept. Carl Linnaeus, the father of biology's modern naming system,

relied heavily on submissions from amateur researchers for his work. Even Charles Darwin worked with a network of amateurs to gather observations about the natural world for *The Origin of Species*.

Today, we continue the tradition of citizen science in Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

## Chasing Butterflies

The park's butterfly monitoring program is one of the longer-running citizen science projects in CVNP. Since 1997, a group of passionate volunteers has been keeping track of the butterfly population with park biologist Meg Plona.

Twice a week from May to October, Plona leads a team of volunteers, interns, and students into the park to look for butterflies.

The team walks the same routes each week, following a pre-determined "transect" line. As they walk, they look for butterflies within 15 feet of the transect and identify as many as possible. Afterward, they submit their data to a statewide database run by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

From there, scientists from The Ohio State University use the data in their research and post findings to an Ohio butterfly tracking group, The Ohio Lepidopterists. Along with hundreds of other submissions from around the state, these observations are key to butterfly research.

For instance, in a 2014 study led by Sarah E. Diamond from Case Western Reserve University, scientists used this data to analyze the effects of climate change on Ohio's butterfly population.



Each week during the summer, CVNP citizen scientists collect butterfly data that's instrumental to researchers and scientists around the country.



Each fall, monarch butterflies travel thousands of miles to overwinter in Mexico, passing through CVNP on their way south.

"This analysis would not have been possible without the huge data set generated by the [butterfly] monitoring program," said Dave Horn from The Ohio Lepidopterists.

The CVNP team currently monitors transects in Terra Vista Natural Study Area, Indigo Lake, and Pine Hollow. The Terra Vista transect is the longest-running project, with data going back to 1997.

A few years ago, the team also started monitoring sites near the Stanford House and Boston Store Visitor Center specifically for monarch butterflies. This group submits their data to the national Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, based out of the University of Minnesota.

All told, CVNP's volunteers have collected countless data in the name of scientific research.

### Reading the Data

CVNP volunteer observations are just one slice of a much bigger pie. Researchers use these observations to look for trends, draw conclusions, and predict the future.

In the 2014 climate change study mentioned earlier, scientists discovered that the combined effects of climate change and urbanization were causing delays in the early life cycle of Ohio butterflies. Essentially, butterflies were emerging later in the season and shortening their larval development process.

For many native butterfly species, these findings weren't good. Tiger swallowtails, red admirals, and pearl crescents all suffered from the shift. In short, their future in Ohio is uncertain.

Non-native species, on the other hand, were less affected—and in some cases, they even benefitted from the shift. Does this mean that the future of butterflies in Ohio means a less diverse, non-native population? It's hard to say at this point, but you can bet that citizen scientists will contribute to future research.

Another study from Karen Oberhauser at the University of Minnesota confirmed that parasitism is a threat to the monarch butterfly population. "A study of this magnitude would have been impossible without [volunteer] contributions," she concluded.

Each year, hundreds of ordinary people journey into CVNP as citizen scientists. Their observations are crucial to butterfly studies, not to mention other plants and animals. Like the "big data" of Google and social media, citizen science lets us make big connections across the natural world.

### Interested in becoming a citizen scientist yourself?

The CVNP volunteer program, co-managed by the Conservancy, is always looking for more help.

**Learn more at [www.conservancyforcvnp.org](http://www.conservancyforcvnp.org).**

# HINES HILL:

## *Building on History*

A summer home in the country. A private collection of art and architecture. A bustling headquarters. A peaceful site for a wedding ceremony.

In the past 100 years, the Hines Hill campus has been all of these. Today, it is home to the Conservancy's main office as well as a coveted wedding venue and meeting space, but its history is anything but ordinary.

The Hines Hill House was originally built in 1904 by Charles H. Jaite, who owned the paper mill down the road. During the summers, though, the family would retreat to "the farm" on Hines Hill for peace and solitude.

After several decades, the Jaite family moved away, and their summer home was sold. Eventually, the farm landed in the hands of Robert and Phyllis Gioia in 1975.

Robert "Bobby" Gioia was a demolition contractor with a passion for art and architecture. In his work, he was constantly on the lookout for pieces to salvage and bring home to Hines Hill.

Today, many of these salvaged pieces still remain. For instance, stone reliefs featuring a baker, tailor, and scholar were recovered from the old University School building. The impressive stone chimney on the conference center was constructed from a torn-out curb in Cleveland.

Ultimately, the property was purchased by the National Park Service in 1988, and the Conservancy

moved there in 2004. The story came full-circle, though, when the great-great-grandson of the original owner recently returned to Hines Hill for his wedding.

On a warm August afternoon, Bob Jaite and his wife Laura were married in the same place where generations of Bob's family spent their summers.

Bob said the choice felt natural. "The valley has been the center of our family's heritage for many years," he said. "At the wedding, everyone felt like they were part of something special."

At the reception, kids played lawn games where the old vegetable garden once grew. Guests remembered old family stories and toasted marshmallows where chickens once wandered.




Today, you're more likely to spot wedding guests or a red fox than chickens on the Hines Hill campus, but its rich history is still evident everywhere you look.





# Give the gift of an acre in Cuyahoga Valley National Park!

By sponsoring an acre, you help:

-  Restore native habitat in the park
-  Maintain the trails of CVNP
-  Protect our national park

To choose your gifted acre, visit [conservancyforcvnp.org](http://conservancyforcvnp.org)

**CONSERVANCY**  
for CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK





# A Restoration LEGACY

Cleaning up the Krejci Dump in  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park





LEFT PHOTO: NPS, BELOW: NPS ARCHIVE



Far left: Fields of native wildflowers flourish at the restored dump site in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Left: Rusty barrels leak toxic chemicals into the ground prior to cleanup.

The sun rises over the Cuyahoga Valley, revealing a glowing landscape. On the eastern slope edge of the national park, birds announce the new day over a peaceful backdrop of wetlands and meadows. Native grasses and wildflowers sway in the breeze.

Difficult as it may be to believe, this serene landscape was once the site of the Krejci Dump, one of the most notorious contamination sites in national park history.

Thirty years ago, this area was dominated by toxic waste, not black-eyed susans. Decades of unsophisticated waste management had turned wetlands and meadows into a sludgy, dangerous garbage dump.

Ultimately, responsible parties paid more than \$50 million for a decades-long cleanup effort. The remarkable transformation of the Krejci Dump site back to its natural state—and the legal battles associated with it—were landmarks of the environmental movement, with impacts that reached far beyond northeast Ohio.

### Decades of Dumping

In the 1940s, the Krejci (pronounced Cretch-ee) family began operating a small dump on the eastern edge of the Cuyahoga Valley. By 1980, the site covered more than 200 acres on both sides of Hines Hill Road, with about 50 acres used for dumping.

The dump started innocently enough: In a time before city-wide trash pickup, everyone was responsible for disposing of their own waste. The Krejci family simply offered an out-of-the-way place for “tipping” household trash.

Over the decades, though, the dump grew bigger, ultimately evolving into a full-fledged municipal and industrial dump and salvage yard.

As solid and liquid waste arrived on the site from local towns and corporations near Cleveland and Akron, it was haphazardly sorted and stored on site. Some waste was burned, while other material was buried or stacked in loose piles. Unlike today, paper records were inconsistent, and in some cases, nearly nonexistent.

“There wasn’t a lot of paper regarding site operations in this case,” said Shawn Mulligan, the National Park Service (NPS) attorney who led the Krejci enforcement effort and whose leadership was instrumental to its success. “A lot of [the information] was anecdotal. Krejci had a journal, or notebook, which was helpful, but the best documentation was invoices from a particular stamping plant where they painted and constructed doors.”

The invoices were for a tar-like material called “dumdum”—yes, really—that was used to give weight and sturdiness to doors. The Krejci family accepted shipments of this dumdum material for many years, disposing of it on site and leaving a trail of invoices that would be key to the NPS case for cleanup.

The dumdum waste itself was nothing to laugh at. In its liquid form, it was highly flammable. “They would often dump it on the ground, then light it on fire to create a road,” said Mulligan. Years later, John Krejci, the son of the original owner, described an instance when a fire at the dump caused a barrel of dumdum to rocket 300 feet into the air.

The Krejci Dump operated until 1980. Over just a few decades, the site had accumulated a host of toxic materials, including many carcinogens and environmental dangers. By the time the NPS acquired the land and realized what was on their hands in the mid-1980s, the site was a disaster waiting to happen.

### An Unpleasant Discovery

In 1974, President Gerald Ford signed the bill designating Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, later to become Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP).

When creating the park, Congress intentionally drew the park boundaries to include the Krejci Dump, assuming it could be easily cleaned up. In late 1985, the park took control of the dump site without knowing the true extent of the contamination.

As the story goes, soon after the park took control, a visitor was out picking up bottles but was overcome by fumes and became ill. Park rangers also began reporting headaches and rashes.

Worried about hazardous substances, the park brought in the Ohio and U.S. Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA)



PHOTO: NPS ARCHIVE

for a thorough investigation. Their discoveries weren't what the park was hoping to hear.

"There were a lot of scary things out there," said Veronica Dickerson, current NPS project manager for the site.

The site was chock full of toxic waste, much of it posing a serious threat to human health and the surrounding environment. An alphabet soup of chemicals followed: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), arsenic, dioxin, heavy metals, and thousands of drums leaking industrial waste like paint, ink, herbicides, and pesticides.

Needless to say, in 1986, the Krejci Dump site was closed to the public. Because of the degree of risk to human and environmental health, the EPA performed an emergency cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental

Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), more commonly known as the Superfund.

In the years to follow, the park site would undergo extensive cleanup, including removal of the hazardous waste, safe disposal of polluted soils, and revegetation of the land. Initially, the NPS and United States EPA managed the project, removing leaking barrels and consolidating solid waste.

Soon, though, it became clear that the NPS could not—and should not—bear the cleanup costs alone. Somewhere, someone had to be held responsible.

### In the Courts

During the first phase of the project in the late 1980s, the NPS spent millions of dollars on cleanup. Soon, though, it became obvious that simply removing the standing waste wouldn't be enough, and the cleanup would require more sophistication, work, and money than anticipated.

Under the Superfund law, parties can be held financially responsible for environmental contamination that they caused, even if the actions were legal at the time. The

**"There were a lot of scary things out there."**

trouble in the Krejci case was first identifying those responsible parties, and then finding enough evidence to build a case against them.

The process of bringing the case to the courts was difficult. In 1991, the Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor submitted a referral to the Department of Justice (DOJ) on behalf of the NPS, requesting to file suit under the Superfund. The DOJ declined to file, saying the case needed to be further developed before any action could be taken.

John Debo, superintendent of the park at the time, provided NPS oversight and leadership to the cleanup effort throughout his 21-year tenure with the national park. After the DOJ declined to file suit, he brought the issue to Ohio Congressman Ralph Regula, who had been instrumental in the creation of CVNP and who championed continued funding for the development of the park.

That connection brought in some annual federal funding so the NPS could continue its research efforts, but the project still wasn't picking up much speed.





PHOTO: NPS

In the early '90s, the NPS engaged Shawn Mulligan, the NPS attorney who would take the Krejci case to its finish. They asked him to help find the responsible parties and build a strong case for the national park.

The project was outside of his regular scope of work, but Mulligan knew he had to take it on.

"It was unfair to the American public to bear all these costs," he said. "The National Park Service should not contain sacrifice zones. Every parcel of property is held in the public trust, and we have a responsibility to do everything we can to protect and preserve that resource."

Because of the magnitude of the project, which he said included "almost every legal and technical issue that you can have," Mulligan, a former Assistant Attorney General for the State of Colorado, was very interested in building the legal action. In 1994, the Office of the Solicitor gave him the authority to act, and the NPS began legal enforcement.

Based on the sparse Krejci records that the NPS could find, more than 100 potentially responsible parties were identified.

Ultimately, this list would be whittled down to just a handful of corporations: Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, 3M, and Chevron, with others added in later years. In 1997, the DOJ filed the NPS suit, and legal battles began in earnest.

By this point, the DOJ had been approached again and had taken the case, but was doubtful of its success. "They told

me we'd be lucky to get 10 cents on the dollar," Mulligan laughed.

The opposition to the NPS suit was nothing to scoff at. As some of the most influential corporations in the country, the defendants had formed a powerful joint defense group.

The NPS case was strong, though. Even with the sparse paperwork from the dump, they steadily built their case based around the dum-dum invoices, business records, site interviews, information requests, and liability analyses. It was looking more and more like a messy court fight would follow.

A critical breakpoint came in the late 90s. The NPS team had flown to Chicago to meet with the joint defense group. Before meeting with the entire group, Ford privately took the NPS team aside and proposed a quicker fix: They would step up to pay for the entire cleanup themselves.

It was an ideal solution. With close ties to landfills and other resources, Ford could pay for the cleanup at a lower cost than the NPS could do itself. Mulligan seized upon the unexpected offer, and a deal was struck: Ford would cover the dump cleanup costs, with financial help from General Motors.

In June of 2000, all but 3M settled with the NPS. 3M was taken to trial but was defeated the next year. Ultimately, the park recovered over \$50 million from responsible parties and 100 percent of project costs—a far cry from the

“By the end of the cleanup, 375,000 tons of contaminated soil and debris were removed.”

PHOTOS: NPS, JEFFREY GIBSON



New England aster, swamp milkweed, sunflower and foxglove now thrive in fields that once were toxic.

pessimistic “10 cents on the dollar” estimate from the DOJ during the case’s early stages.

“I’ve been doing this for 30 years,” said Shawn Mulligan. “This particular case represented an exceptional combination of team players. ...It was probably the best team I’ve ever been associated with.”

From here, though, the work of removing the contaminated materials and restoring the park land was just beginning. The next decade would hold many challenges and rewards as the recovery project began in earnest.

### A Long-Awaited Restoration

When Ford took over the cleanup in 2002, the Krejci site was still immensely contaminated with dangerous chemicals. Many of the waste containers and other large debris on the surface had been removed, but there was no telling what was under the surface.

The main issue was the impact to the environment of the Cuyahoga Valley, including the health of visitors, park staff, plants, and animals. Of particular concern was the spread of toxins through surface water, debris, and stream sediment.

That meant that the contaminated soil and debris had to go.

Ford hired contractors to start digging. They expected to skim off the top layer of debris, hoping it was only a foot or two deep. As with so many other pieces of this story,

they made an unpleasant discovery: the debris went much deeper than they thought, as did the contaminated soils beneath.

In some areas, they had to dig 25 feet to remove all of the buried barrels, trash, and polluted soil. Just when they thought they had finished, another barrel would poke through, or more contaminants would be discovered in the soil.

By the end of the cleanup, 375,000 tons of contaminated soils and debris were removed. Everything was trucked offsite to regulated hazardous waste disposal sites for environmentally protective disposal.

After the contamination cleanup was complete, the entire area was re-graded to match the original contours of the land, and several areas of wetlands were recreated. In 2012, revegetation of the 40-acre site began, with a variety of native plants planted across the landscape.

Thanks to the oversight and tenacity of key NPS staff, including Project Manager Greg Nottingham and Park Ecologists Kevin Skerl and Chris Davis, the site was on the road to recovery..

### Krejci Today—and Tomorrow

If you go by the Krejci Dump site today, you’ll see quite a different scene from the one that appeared there 30 years ago.





# TIMELINE

- 1940s** Krejci family begins operating dump
- 1974** Congress designates Cuyahoga Valley as a unit of the National Park System
- 1980** Krejci Dump stops its operation
- 1985** CVNRA expands to include the area of the Krejci Dump
- 1986** Krejci Dump declared a Superfund site and closed to the public
- 1987** U.S. EPA initiates emergency cleanup action
- 1988** NPS assumes management of the Krejci Dump cleanup
- 1991** NPS submits first referral to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) requesting suit against parties responsible for site contamination
- 1994** NPS retains legal counsel to find responsible parties and lead legal enforcement effort; referral successfully submitted to DOJ
- 1997** U.S. files NPS suit against responsible parties
- 2000** Most responsible parties settle
- 2001** 3M defeated in court
- 2002** Cleanup by Ford (with financial support from GM) begins
- 2012** Soil removal and grading is completed; revegetation begins
- 2014** Revegetation completed
- 2015-** Site vegetation and wetlands monitoring continues



During the summer, the meadows sway with native grasses, and small mammals hunt for nuts under the oak trees. In the fall, the wetlands host migrating waterfowl, while the hillsides blaze with bright yellow flowers. You'll be hard-pressed to find any evidence that a toxic dump once sat in this spot.

Going forward, the NPS and Ford are in "maintenance mode" for the project to make sure the new vegetation is taking hold, soil erosion is minimized, and the wetlands mature. Each week during the summer, Project Manager Veronica Dickerson joins Ford contractors to walk the entire site, looking for non-native species, and making other observations about soil erosion and other site conditions.

The site ultimately must adhere to the ecological standards set for national parks by the NPS. These standards are

very strict—even higher than the regular EPA standards, according to Dickerson.

"[The Krejci site] is now as clean as any natural area in the park," she said. That's something remarkable, considering what it was in 1985.

Beyond the immediate benefit to CVNP, the Krejci case has had a lasting impact throughout the National Park System.

The Krejci Dump was the first NPS contamination case to be litigated in federal court. As other national parks around the country have faced similar situations, the lessons from Krejci have been invaluable. In particular, the case set helpful precedents supporting aggressive clean-up standards and cost recovery when addressing environmental threats on national parks and other federal land.





It also transformed the way that the NPS acquires land for national parks, setting the stage for more careful environmental investigation.

Finally, the challenges of the Krejci site emerged at a time in our country's history when environmental concerns were just beginning to be taken seriously. Along with other Cleveland-area issues like the infamous burning of the Cuyahoga River, the Krejci case stoked the fires of a nationwide environmental movement that continues today.

"Ohio was ground zero for a lot of the Superfund litigation in the 80s," remarked Shawn Mulligan. "Now, the Department of the Interior has a very robust Superfund enforcement program based, in some significant part, on the successes we had in the Krejci litigation."

**"The Krejci site is now as clean as any natural area in the park."**

For those who remember its past degradation, the transformation of the Krejci Dump seems almost a miracle. Its restoration is emblematic of our country's environmental awakening during the last

century, and it stands as a fitting tribute to the citizens, legislators, and NPS employees who have worked so hard to protect Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

The next time you drive along Hines Hill Road near the Krejci Dump site, take a moment to reflect on its past—and its future. Breathe in the fresh air, admire the wildflowers, and listen to the birds singing as the sun sets over a restored landscape. Today, its turbulent history is nothing more than a memory and a triumphant page in CVNP's rich story.

# TRAIL MIX

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# Inspiring a Whole Family at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center

During my time as a teacher at Portage Path Elementary School, I met hundreds of remarkable students. Three brothers stand out to me, though, thanks to their passion for learning in Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

BY KAREN GRINDALL, RETIRED FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER AT PORTAGE PATH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



PHOTO: PHIL MASTURZO, AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Gary Michael Hearst II, George Elliott Hearst III, and Garrison Quincy Hearst I all received their Eagle Scout badges in 2014 after their time at the CVEEC sparked a lifelong interest in science and outdoor learning.





PHOTO: PHIL MASTURZO, AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Just before the next school year, I saw the boys' mother at the grocery store. She walked right up, looked at me with a very serious face, and said,

*“You got the boys and me addicted to the national park!”*

**YEARS AGO**, Cornelia and Gary Hearst sent all three of their sons to Portage Path Elementary School in Akron, where I taught until my retirement. The boys—Gary Jr., George, and Garrison—are two years apart in age and enjoyed a fulfilling childhood with their parents, who taught them to value and learn all that they could.

A key part of their education was their experience at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC), operated by the Conservancy. There, they all discovered a love for natural science in their national park.

#### **Hearst Family, Meet CVNP**

When Gary, the oldest, was in my fifth grade class, we took our usual week-long trip to the CVEEC. During the week, Gary's mom also joined the class to help out during lessons. Together, we explored CVNP, performing science experiments and learning about the Cuyahoga River watershed.

After the CVEEC trip, Gary's curiosity was saturated with outdoor learning—something he had not experienced before. He was also enthralled with his first introduction to Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Just before the next school year, I saw the boys' mother at the grocery store. She walked right up, looked at me with a very serious face, and said, “Girl, I am so mad at you!”

I quickly turned red and asked what I had done to upset her. She made me

wait for a moment, then burst out laughing. “You got the boys and me addicted to the national park!” she chuckled. “We’ve spent countless days out there this past summer, and we just love it.”

As the boys headed back to school, they began their second year in a school-based Boy Scout troop. After school one day, my own son Colin, an Eagle Scout, told them that he had spent many hours in the national park, volunteering at the CVEEC and going on scouting adventures.

The Hearst boys were intrigued. They asked Colin to tell them how they could become Eagle Scouts, too.

Shortly after that, I saw Mrs. Hearst again, and she teased me more about her boys’ “addiction” to the national park. “Now, they want to be Eagle Scouts!” she exclaimed. “I’ll be learning in the park forever.”

Indeed, she was thrilled with her sons’ desire to do more science in the national park. For the next seven years, Mrs. Hearst continued to volunteer whenever I brought students to the CVEEC, even when her own sons weren’t there.

### **Three Eagle Scouts**

Soon, with their mother and father at their side, the boys began their journey of attaining Eagle Scout ranking. As I watched them work hard to reach their goals, they became like a second set of sons to me.

Throughout school, the Hearst brothers excelled. They maintained honor roll consistently, participated in national track competitions, and spent many weekends in the park and at Camp Manatoc, a Boy Scout camp in CVNP. They often came to my classroom after school or called me to share their latest accomplishments.

On April 23, 2014, all three boys were awarded the Eagle Scout rank together. This highest honor of the Boy Scouts of America was the fulfillment of the boys’ dreams, as well as evidence of their solid upbringing and foundation in outdoor education.

At the time, the boys appeared on the front page of the Akron Beacon Journal for the unusual accomplishment of

three brothers at the same time receiving this rank—and also because so few African American boys achieve Eagle Scout rank. They were honored by the Akron Board of Education and the Akron City Council for their success.

### **Carrying on the CVNP Legacy**

Last spring, George finished his freshman year at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Shortly after he left for Atlanta last fall, his mother was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. She fought a hard battle but passed away on December 23, 2014.

At her funeral, we spoke of her love for her boys, her delightful times spent at the CVEEC watching her boys fall in love with science, the stimulation of learning how to ask questions of the natural world, and her countless hours exploring the trails, plants, animals, and beauty of CVNP.

The boys are definitely headed for success with realistic and attainable goals. Gary is studying to be a doctor, George wants to be in the field of law, and Garrison aspires to a career in engineering.

Giving students from urban schools the opportunity to spend a week at the CVEEC has so often ignited a new love of science learning. The Hearst family is one shining example of the impact that an outdoor education in CVNP can have.

PHOTO: NPS



November Lodge at Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center.





# CREATING THE EAST RIM MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

**I**t's a dream finally realized: A narrow trail swooping under tall trees, through fields of goldenrod, and around picturesque ravines. Bike spokes will flash in the sun as mountain bikers discover the latest addition to the trails of Cuyahoga Valley National Park: the East Rim Trail system.

This fall, the national park completed over two miles of CVNP's first mountain biking trail. The multi-phase project will eventually give mountain bikers, runners, and hikers nearly 10 more miles to explore in our national park.

Creating an off-road biking trail is more difficult than it may seem. Far from simply bulldozing a path through the woods, crews follow a careful design and construction process to protect the land, paying close attention to the flow of the trail.

## **PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS**

Design work for the East Rim Trail began several years ago, when the project emerged as priority in CVNP's 2013 Trail Management Plan. Since then, many players have helped make the trail a reality.

The project was overseen by key staff from both the National Park Service (NPS) and the Conservancy. In particular, Conservancy Capital Projects Manager Patty Stevens worked closely with NPS staff Kim Norley and Clint Belcher to coordinate the project, forging a close partnership.

Volunteer groups also played a key role, led by the Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA). Additionally, a national mountain bike trail consultant, Alex Stewart of Spectrum Design, was hired to provide design and layout expertise, while members of the Americorps National Civilian Community Corps provided construction support.





NPS staff, trail crews, and contractors use specialized mountain bike trail equipment to build a smooth, sustainable trail.

PHOTOS: NPS

### USING CVNP'S NATURAL TOPOGRAPHY

The first two-mile section of the East Rim Trail is a loop. The ground slopes down from the trail entrance at about five percent—a gentle but steady decline.

The design of the trail takes advantage of this slope, using its rhythm and flow to give a smooth, bike-friendly ride. Instead of fighting the shape of the land, the trail enhances its natural features so there are no unexpected hills or unnatural-feeling curves.

Small slopes opposite the trail's overall grade, or "reverse grade dips," remove water from the trail and help reduce speed when necessary. The crew also used boulders and fallen logs to create additional checks, or "chokes," that reduce speed, guide the rider, and control the flow of the trail.

### BUILDING THE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

After the trail route was identified and flagged, the first step in construction was to cut the initial path. Crews used a mini-excavator to define the route, leaving relatively rough edges and loose earth in their wake.

Next, a mini-skid steer refined the tread to create a smooth riding surface. Drainage features like hardened crossings, bridges, and boardwalks were installed to keep the path solid. Trail crews and volunteers used hand tools to clean up the trail, removing roots and bringing the edges up to the natural grade of the land.

Finally, the crew pulled in the leaf litter and strategically placed fallen trees or stones to identify the path. For instance, a fallen tree trunk placed near the trail's edge on a curve looks completely natural, but it also guides bikers in the right direction around the curve.

### BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS TRAIL SYSTEM

After crews test the flow of the trail and make sure everything "feels" right, the trail is essentially complete. Over time, the earth will become more compacted and solid as bikers ride the trail.

The East Rim Trail is part of the TRAILS FOREVER initiative to preserve, protect, and enhance the trails of Cuyahoga Valley National Park. TRAILS FOREVER is a partnership of the National Park Service, the Conservancy, and park volunteers.

To enable the 10-mile East Rim Trail project to happen, the Conservancy secured a \$249,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which was augmented by an NPS Centennial grant of \$183,000. The Conservancy is especially grateful to all donors to the TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund, whose gifts will help fund the future preservation and upkeep of the East Rim Trail and all trails in CVNP.

**To learn more, visit [conservancyforcvnp.org/EastRim](http://conservancyforcvnp.org/EastRim)**



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The Conservancy gratefully acknowledges the generous individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations who made gifts during the Conservancy's Fiscal Year 2015 (9/1/2014–8/31/2015). Our donors make it possible for us to support the many programs, projects, and services highlighted in this publication.

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Carlos Jones and the P.L.U.S. Band at Music in the Meadow PHOTO: NPS/DJ REISER

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# Your support adds up.

**10,761 CHILDREN & ADULTS** experienced nature at summer camps, day programs, residential programs, or Junior Ranger activities from the CVEEC.

**MORE THAN 1,000 NATIVE TREES** were planted by CVNP volunteers at six Days of Service.

**OVER 850 DONORS** attended Elevation and Topography to raise money for TRAILS FOREVER.

**50 PARK INTERNS** were recruited through the Volunteer Management Office for positions within the Conservancy and National Park Service.

**3 NEW TRAIL SECTIONS** were constructed in CVNP this past year.

**252 VOLUNTEERS** planted trees, picked up litter, and built a new trail on NPS Founders' Day—the park's largest-ever single-day volunteer event.

**1 NEW VISITOR CENTER** schematic design was executed and managed by the Conservancy in partnership with the National Park Service.

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**107 COUPLES** were married in one of CVNP's Extraordinary Spaces.

**50 MEETINGS & RETREATS** were held at the Hines Hill Conference Center and Happy Days Lodge.

**54,000 PARK VISITORS** came to Trail Mix stores for gifts, apparel, art, snacks, and more.

**10,746 VISITORS** attended cultural arts programs in the national park, including Lyceum lectures, Heritage Series concerts, Music in the Meadow, Music By Nature, and house concerts.

**92 YOUTH** from Akron Public Schools, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and Lorain City School District attended a two-week Summer Environmental Education Academy at the CVEEC.

**4,465 SNACKS, SANDWICHES, AND TREATS** were sold from the Conservancy Canteen, a new initiative serving wholesome, homemade food at concerts, our retail stores, and park events.

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Children at the CVEEC's Wilderness Survival Camp

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PHOTO



Water swirls beneath the miniature falls on Brandywine Creek, making its lazy way toward the Cuyahoga River amid the falls colors.

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A red-headed woodpecker is perched on a tree trunk. The tree trunk is covered in snow and has several pine cones attached to it. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

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