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Improvements continue at Cascade Valley Metro Park

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By Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of Summit Metro Parks

WEST AKRON — River restoration work at the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park, pictured above, is underway thanks to a \$2.5 million award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Regional Partnership. Made possible through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, this funding is in addition to a previously granted \$500,000 award for design and engineering, according to Summit Metro Parks officials.

Officials added the project will restore nearly a mile of the Cuyahoga River and includes floodplain excavation and instream habitat improvements for fish and aquatic wildlife, and make the river more accessible to the public for water-based recreation such as canoeing,

kayaking and shore fishing.

Also, parks officials recently awarded Cavanaugh Building Corp. a contract to renovate the former Valley View Golf Course clubhouse into a rentable public events facility. Originally a dairy barn built in the mid-1800s, renovations will highlight the building's soaring ceilings, historic barn stone foundation and scenic position on the property. Acquired in 2016, Valley View Area has used over \$1 million in external funding from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund to remove nonnative vegetation and restore streams and wetlands covered to create the golf course.

"These improvements are not only critical to the Cuyahoga River itself, but they ultimately help protect water quality all the way to Lake Erie," said Metro Parks Executive Director Lisa King. "This work also sets the stage for an incredible new park area that will welcome over 2 million visits a year and result in an estimated \$2.8 million in annual tourism spending for our local economy."

Parks officials stated local support has come from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Akron Community Foundation (Capital Fund, McAlonan Fund and William C. and Betty J. Zekan Fund), Burton D. Morgan Foundation and the Summit Metro Parks Foundation, as well as contributions by other foundations and individuals.