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COMPLETE

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Q1 Name of your organization.

Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Q2 Grant #

20160818

Q3 Grant Period

12/1/2016 – 11/30/2017

Q4 Location of your organization

City	Peninsula (Cuyahoga and Summit Counties)
State	Ohio

Q5 Name and Title of person completing evaluation.

Emily Heninger, Grants & Communications Manager

Q6 Phone Number:

(330) 657-2909 ext. 136

Q7 Email address.

eheninger@forcvnp.org

Page 2: Key Outcomes and Results

Q8 Total number of clients served through this grant funding:

5,400 (estimated)

Q9 Describe the project's key outcomes and results based on the goals and objectives. Use the following format: State the Goal: State Objective 1: Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 1: State Objective 2 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 2: State Objective 3 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 3:

Project Goal: Introduce more visitors to Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) by restoring and expanding key trails and thus increasing diverse recreational opportunities for Cleveland and Akron residents, as well as out-of-state visitors.

Project Objectives: Implement a two-pronged project to restore and expand trails in CVNP, specifically by 1) hiring a 2017 youth work crew to assess and restore existing trails with Sustainable Trail Design methods/management practices; and 2) completing the 6.5-mile Phase 2 of the East Rim mountain biking trail in 2017. Market and publicize these projects to the public through media channels that include the Conservancy's website and social media pages.

To achieve our stated objectives, grant funds from the S. L. Gimbel Foundation Fund supported the following activities during the grant period (12/1/2016 – 11/30/2017):

- An American Conservation Experience (ACE) youth work crew was hired for nine weeks to provide support for trail projects in Cuyahoga Valley National Park from 9/18/2017 through 11/17/2017. The trail included five individuals (one crew leader and four corps members) between 18 and 25 years old. The crew arrived with all tools, vehicles, and supplies, as needed, and was housed at Camp Manatoc, a Boy Scout camp located within the park. As part of their work, the crew assisted with the construction, maintenance, and sustainability assessment of all sections of the East Rim trail system, including installation of rock armor drains, trail grading, tread finishing, removal of fallen trees, existing trail evaluation, and enhancement of creek crossings. The careful construction and maintenance of this trail system, with emphasis on long-term sustainability, will ensure its longevity for diverse uses, including mountain biking, hiking, and running.
- The essential features of the 6.5-mile Phase 2 section of the East Rim mountain biking trail were completed, with finishing features planned for completion in the spring of 2018. The outer loop of the Phase 2 trail was "soft opened" in the late fall of 2017, and a grand opening for the entire trail system is planned for May 2018, including a ribbon cutting, inaugural trail ride, and evening celebratory event. The Phase 2 trail section was completed with contracted design and construction support from Spectrum Trail Design and features 6.5 miles of single-track, off-road bike trails north of the Ohio Turnpike, with access from the Metro Parks Bike and Hike Trail. The outer loop of the trail measures 4.7 miles and is tentatively called "Lamp Loop," while the inner connecting line (approx. two miles) is tentatively called "Edson Run." There are additional plans for a boardwalk and some areas with "stone armor" to drain water on this section of the trail, for construction in spring 2018.
- To date, a total of 380 volunteers have contributed 5,240 hours in support of the East Rim trail project. Volunteers from the Cleveland Area Mountain Biking Association (CAMBA), a local chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association, have supported the trail with regular construction volunteer work, as well as ongoing monitoring and light trail maintenance on the open sections of the East Rim trail system. CAMBA volunteers are responsible for monitoring daily conditions on the trail and posting updates to the trail's Twitter account (@cvnptmb) to let visitors know whether the trail is open each day. In addition, a Day of Service event was held on October 28, 2017 for Make a Difference Day, where 20 community volunteers supported the project by laying additional tread materials using sustainable trail building techniques.

- CVNP trail projects were consistently promoted via the Conservancy's marketing channels, including the following: 1) Regular updates on the Conservancy's website on a page specific to the East Rim Trail, for CVNP.org/EastRim; 2) a breaking-news email announcing the Gimbel Foundation Fund's grant to all Conservancy email subscribers (over 20,000 email addresses) in December 2016; 3) a blog post on the Conservancy's Field Notes blog in March 2017, for CVNP.org/east-rim-mountain-bike-trail-update; and 4) an article in the

S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund

Conservancy's Fall 2017 magazine outlining the role of trail crew interns in the park and their role in sustaining CVNP trails. Copies of these materials will be emailed to The Community Foundation.

This project supports the following long-term outcomes for Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Cleveland-Akron area:

- The new and improved trails will bolster recreational opportunities and increase quality of life for residents of Cleveland and Akron, as well as increase tourism to the national park for out-of-state visitors.
- The completed East Rim trail system is expected to attract approximately 5,000 additional visitors to the national park each year. Visitors will be able to complete long-distance trail journeys on bike trails throughout the area, including the East Rim Trail.
- Cleveland and Akron will be recognized as cities on the doorstep of a national park with excellent recreational trails.
- The number of CVNP volunteers will increase through increased awareness of CVNP volunteer opportunities, including trail monitoring and maintenance.

Q10 Please describe any challenges/obstacles the organization encountered (if any) in attaining goals & objectives.

As Cuyahoga Valley National Park continues to improve its trail system and introduce new trails, it faces challenges related to trailhead parking and access to visitor facilities such as restrooms. For example, parking at the East Rim trailhead along the Metro Parks Bike and Hike Trail is limited and frequently fills up on weekends and other popular days.

Additionally, as a mid-size nonprofit that has attained steady growth since formal establishment in 2002 (with a current operating budget of \$4.4 million and 76 employees), the Conservancy must always balance operating expenses and staff capacity with larger-scale projects, such as the East Rim trail system. The organization has seen steady growth in revenue from individual donations and grants and has successful earned-income programs that support operating costs. Cash reserves that would improve capacity for larger projects are a long-term goal.

Q11 How did you overcome and/or address the challenges and obstacles?

To address challenges related to parking and visitor services at trailheads, the park is currently investigating opportunities and funding for expanded trailhead parking and restroom facilities that would alleviate congestion and ensure we meet visitors' needs.

Q12 Describe any unintended positive outcomes as a result of the efforts supported by this grant.

We've discovered that a new model for volunteer engagement has worked well for trail projects -- namely, focusing on smaller, more frequent volunteer work days. This type of volunteer work allows volunteers to apply skills that they've developed on a more regular basis and helps work progress more efficiently and sustainably. The National Park Service has found they can manage an expanded trail system by engaging volunteer support in this way, which will prove useful for future trail projects. The national park is continuously seeing increased visitation and use on all its resources, including park trails, so strategies such as relying on volunteers for certain projects will prove essential as the park moves into the future.

Q13 Briefly describe the impact this grant has had on the organization and community served.

The construction and opening of the East Rim trail system, including the 6.5-mile "Phase 2" section, has introduced a new recreational opportunity for visitors in the northeast Ohio and throughout the region. Nationally, the Outdoor Industry Foundation reports a steady increase in mountain biking as an outdoor activity over the past ten years, with 8.62 million adults participating in 2016 (up from 6.89 million in 2007, according to the Outdoor Participation Report, 2017, outdoorindustry.org/participation/outdoor-foundation-research/reports). Mountain biking has previously been under-represented by trails in northeast Ohio, but with the opening of a world-class mountain biking system on the East Rim Trail, CVNP can attract new audiences to the area and increase quality of life for residents. The trail's connection to a growing system of cycling and mountain biking trails in the area only increases its value as a recreational resource and northeast Ohio's potential as a destination for biking enthusiasts.

Public reception to the new trails has been very positive. Since the original opening of the East Rim Trail in the spring of 2016, the park estimates that an estimated 5,000+ visitors have used the new trail. With the opening of Phase 2 and expansion of the trail system, we expect visitation to continue to rise. According to the park's Visitor Use survey conducted in 2015, 20% of total visitors to the park come from out-of-state -- up from 10% in 2005. We also anticipate this number to increase, with the addition of new trail systems and recreational opportunities in the park.

Page 3: Budget

Q14 Please provide a budget expenditure report of the approved line items. Include a brief narrative on how the funds were used to fulfill grant objectives.

The S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund's \$100,000 grant covered the following expenses:

- 1) \$42,900: American Conservation Experience (ACE) youth work crew from 9/18/2017 – 11/17/2017 (\$24/hour x 1,600 billable crew hours over nine weeks = \$38,400, plus \$4,500 in housing costs = \$42,900)
- 2) \$53,100: Spectrum Trail Design contractor fees (\$51,000 in initial cutting/grading and finishing design/construction of Phase 2 on the East Rim trail system + \$2,100 in housing costs = \$53,100); and
- 3) \$4,000: Conservancy staff time for project management and marketing

In-kind support was received in the form of volunteer work to provide construction and maintenance on park trails. If specific expense documentation (i.e., invoices, receipts) is required, please don't hesitate to reach out to Emily Heninger, Grants & Communications Manager, at eheninger@forcvnp.org.

Page 4: Success Stories

Q15 Please relate a success story:

The quality of the design and construction of the East Rim Trail has played a significant role in achieving project success. The park has worked with Alex Stewart of Spectrum Trail Design for on-the-ground design and layout of the trail during the construction process. The resulting trails are challenging to the intermediate rider, with banking turns, rock features (called “gargoyles” in mountain biking terminology), and boulder courses. The trail design makes use of the topography and landscapes of the site. Small slopes opposite the trail’s overall grade, or “reverse grade dips,” remove water from the trail and help bikers to reduce speed when necessary. The construction crew also used boulders and fallen logs to create additional checks, or “chokes,” that control speed, guide the rider, and regulate the flow of traffic on the trail. Combined, these elements create a superior trail-riding experience.

The East Rim Trail will eventually connect to other mountain bike trails via regional trails, positioning northeast Ohio as a recreational destination for trail enthusiasts seeking a variety of long-distance, multi-day excursions. Future maintenance for the trail is ensured through the TRAILS FOREVER initiative, a partnership of the National Park Service, the Conservancy, and park volunteers. In particular, the Conservancy’s TRAILS FOREVER Legacy Fund will help fund the future preservation, sustainability, and upkeep of the East Rim Trail and other trails in CVNP.

Q16 Please relate a success story here:

Respondent skipped this question

Q17 Please relate a success story here:

Respondent skipped this question

Page 5: Organizational Information

Q18 Which category best describes the organization. Please choose only one.

Environmental

Q19 What is the organization's primary program area of interest?

Environment/Environmental

Q20 Percentage of clients served through grant in each ethnic group category. Total must equal 100%

Unknown

100

Q21 Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each age category.

Respondent skipped this question

Q22 Approximate percentage of clients served with disabilities from grant funds.

Respondent skipped this question

Q23 Approximate percentage of clients served in each economic group.

Respondent skipped this question

Q24 Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each population category.

Respondent skipped this question