

**Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council
Highlights of 2003
Meetings of the Council**

The 2003 Annual Meeting was held on Friday, February 21, at the Clubhouse at Sleepy Hollow Golf Course in Brecksville. The Executive Director presented Highlights of 2002, and the annual election was held. The principal speaker was Jerry N. Hruby, Mayor of the City of Brecksville and Member of the National Park System Advisory Board.

On March 19 at the Hines Hill Conference Center in Boston Township, the Executive Director gave a report on the federal payments-in-lieu-of taxes (PILOT) program, explaining the program and presenting an estimate of payments since 1977 to the cities, villages, townships, school districts, and other taxing jurisdictions in which properties have been acquired for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

On May 21 at the Sagamore Hills Township Safety Center, Jay Mosley from the office of the Summit County Engineer explained their Storm Water Initiative Program to assist local governments meet the requirements of Phase II of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System under the federal Clean Water Act. Also, Janice Matteucci from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association explained their formation through the recent merger of the Cuyahoga Valley Association and the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center; and describe their programs.

On September 17 at the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center in Brecksville, President Mike Kaplan reported initiation by the Board of Trustees' of a strategic planning process to determine the future of the Council, and explained the purpose of this meeting being to gain input from the Council. The Executive Director gave a presentation of the history of the Council, CVNP Superintendent John Debo presented the perspectives of the National Park Service, Trustee Steve Kenzig reported on a brainstorming session conducted by the Board of Trustees in August, and comments were invited from the members.

On November 29 at the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, on recommendation of the Board of Trustees as part of their strategic planning process, the Council adopted a mission statement which reads in part: The mission of the Council is to provide a forum through which it may assist, promote, and coordinate the efforts of its participating units of government for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of the natural, historic, recreational, and economic resources of the region of the Cuyahoga Valley from Akron to Cleveland.

West Nile Virus Workshop

On April 30 at the Brecksville Community Center, the Council sponsored a workshop for local officials to explain the West Nile Virus, county programs for its

control, and the role of local governments. Presenters were Marlene B. Anielski, Mayor of Walton Hills Village; Joseph Lynch, Program Manager, Cuyahoga County Board of Health; Lisa Petit, Wildlife Biologist, Cuyahoga Valley National Park; Kelvin Rogers, Remedial Action Plan Coordinator, Ohio EPA; Terry Tuttle, Program Coordinator, Summit County General Health District; and Joanne Kick-Raack, State Director for Pesticide Education Program, OSU Extension.

Deer Vehicle Accidents

The Council published and distributed to local officials in October a booklet showing the locations of deer vehicle accidents in the Cuyahoga Valley for the fifteen years from 1988 through 2002.

Gypsy Moth Task Force

With abatement of serious infestation in recent years but with anticipation that it may recur another year, the Gypsy Moth Task Force entered a monitoring mode in 2002, and met in March and September in 2003. The task force is working on identification of indicators which would give advance warning of degrees of infestation and enable local officials to be better prepared.

Federal Payments-in-lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

The Executive Director continued to provide assistance to staff of the Cuyahoga and Summit County Auditors in distributing these payments.

Strategic Planning

After more than a quarter century since organization of the Council in 1975, and with the pending retirement of the Executive Director, the Board of Trustees in mid-year initiated a strategic planning process to determine the future of the Council. (See Meetings of the Council, above).

Relationships to Other Groups

The Executive Director continued to represent the Council on several groups: Board of Trustees, Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy; Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Coordinating Committee; Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway Task Force; and Advocacy Committee, Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association.

Continuing Communities' Support

Communities participating in the Council again responded generously to requests for financial contributions for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003.

Seven cities, five villages, five townships, seven school districts, two counties, two metropolitan park districts, and the National Park Service continue to participate in the Council, a total of twenty-nine communities. Their representatives are the forty-eight members of the Council.

February 20, 2004