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Towpath Trail in Cleveland Awarded \$500, 000 from Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Cleveland- The Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works has been awarded a \$500,000 grant for Stage 3 of the Towpath Trail from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

The funds were part of \$6.1 million in grants awarded to 16 projects around the state through the Clean Ohio Trails Fund. The Clean Ohio Trails Fund improves outdoor recreation opportunities for Ohioans, it is one of four components of the Clean Ohio Fund which was created in 2000 to restore, protect and connect Ohio's natural and urban places.

Stage 3 of the Towpath Trail Extension Project will add one mile of the remaining five miles necessary to connect the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail from Harvard Ave. to Canal Basin Park. This stage of the trail, according to Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, "will provide an important off-road linkage between the employment hub Steelyard Commons and the recreational area Clark Field." Cuyahoga County is the project manager of the Towpath Trail Extension Project, in charge of tracking project funds and contracts.

Cuyahoga County is joined together in a project development agreement with the City of Cleveland, Cleveland Metroparks and Canalway Partners. The City of Cleveland will own the property associated with the project and contributes staff support from the departments of City Planning and Capital Projects. Chief of Sustainability Jenita McGowan said "This portion of the Towpath Trail fills in a key portion of our trail network that will connect Cleveland residents to parks, jobs, neighborhoods and our waterfront areas." Cleveland Metroparks will handle day-to-day management of the Towpath Trail in Cleveland. Metroparks CEO Brian Zimmerman said "this Clean Ohio grant from ODNR provides critical funding to the trail network in Cuyahoga County."

Canalway Partners Executive Director Tim Donovan adds that "building the Towpath Trail through Cleveland's industrial valley presents a myriad of challenges. Cobbling together the right mix of federal and state funding that complements shared goals and meets individual criteria is a constant challenge. In

this case, the Clean Ohio Trail Fund fits perfectly. We are appreciative of their award which will deliver a mile of Towpath Trail from Steelyard Commons to Literary Avenue.”

Canalway Partners is chief fundraiser for the Towpath Trail in Cuyahoga County, taking the lead in strategic decision-making, grantwriting, and community outreach

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