



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, July 8th, 2021

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Cuyahoga Area of Concern Celebrates Important Milestone to Revitalization of Cuyahoga River

Cleveland, OH - The Cuyahoga River Area of Concern's (AOC) Advisory Committee is holding a public celebration of the successful removal of the Eutrophication Impairment on the Cuyahoga River on July 22nd from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm at Forest City Brewery in Cleveland. In partnership with the Sustainable Cleveland Forest City Working Group (FCWG) this celebration also commemorates the 225th anniversary of the founding of the City of Cleveland by Moses Cleaveland. AOC Advisory Committee members will speak on the progress made restoring the Cuyahoga River, and representatives from the FCWG will speak about the trees designated as Moses Cleaveland Trees in Cuyahoga County and the importance of a healthy tree canopy to a revitalized city. Immediately following the event, attendees are invited to walk down the hill to the Redline Greenway Trail for a short walking tour. Attendance is free and open to the public.

“We look forward to celebrating continued progress towards a healthy Cuyahoga River,” said Jennifer Grieser, chair of the Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee. “And we are thrilled to share the event with the Forest City Working Group to acknowledge the key role of our legacy trees in maintaining Cleveland as a green city on a blue lake. Our efforts towards river health and expanded tree canopy are inextricably linked and vital to Cleveland’s economic, environmental and social sustainability.”

After the burnings of the Cuyahoga River and the creation of the Clean Water Act, an additional designation of an “Area of Concern” was created in 1987 for the lower forty-seven miles of the Cuyahoga River, from the Ohio Edison Dam in Cuyahoga Falls to the river’s mouth where it meets Lake Erie. Ten categories of impairments to the use of the river were identified, including the lack of public access to the river, fish deformities found, and eutrophication or undesirable algae, to name a few. Management

measures and restoration projects were prioritized and have been carried out as funding and capacity allows.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) has supported the river's restoration and monitors the status of each impairment and is happy to announce that conditions have met the requirements for the removal of the Eutrophication Impairment. Previously instituted due to excessive occurrences of eutrophication and algae blooms on the Cuyahoga River, this impairment's removal indicates the river system has recovered sufficiently that these occurrences have decreased significantly in frequency and severity. This will be the fourth impairment to be successfully removed, and the AOC aims to have the remaining six removed by 2024.

Dozens of partner agencies, cities, non-profits and governmental groups have partnered to work towards the removal of the impairments to the Cuyahoga Area of Concern. The AOC's Advisory Committee is made up of twenty-four elected members from diverse backgrounds representing government, business, and members of the public. This Advisory Committee's purpose is to provide crucial public feedback on governmental guidelines and actions while being a resource for local communities to voice their concerns. The committee meets quarterly, and all meetings are open to the public. Committee members continue to support restoration projects, conduct education and outreach events in local communities, and foster stakeholder relations. More information on the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern can be found at www.cuyahogaoc.org. Anyone wishing to learn more about the Moses Cleveland Trees or the FCWG should contact Cathi Lehn (clehn@clevelandohio.gov) or Courtney Blashka (cblashka@holdenfg.org).

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