



CONNECTING YOU TO YOUR NATIONAL PARK. PRESERVING IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

March 25, 2021

Office of Integrated Development  
Development Services Division  
Attn: Abraham L. Wescott, Jr.  
166 S. High Street, Room 202  
Akron, OH 44308

Dear Mr. Wescott:

The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) is in full support of Western Reserve Land Conservancy's proposal to the City of Akron for conservation of the 45 acres of land on Theiss Road in the Merriman Valley.

The Merriman Valley is the gateway to the Cuyahoga Valley. CVNP is the only national park in the state of Ohio, covering 33,000 acres along the Cuyahoga River. Managed by the National Park Service, CVNP connects people to the natural beauty and rich history of northeastern Ohio. Though a short distance from the urban areas of Cleveland and Akron, CVNP seems worlds away. The park is a refuge for native plants and wildlife, and provides routes of discovery for visitors.

The story of CVNP's establishment highlights the impact local citizens and political leaders can have when they work together with passion and common purpose to protect aspects of America's heritage. This story is rooted in the environmental and social movements of the 20th century. It is about the desire to have scenic open spaces near to home, especially for recreation. It is about not only saving significant features but restoring a landscape to be culturally vibrant, less polluted, a better home for wildlife, and a model for sustainable living.

We believe a current story is similarly at play with regard to Theiss Road. There is significant public support to preserve the character of the Merriman Valley. Citizens are recognizing the importance of access to outdoor recreation for physical and mental well-being, as well as the permanent loss of natural resources that residential development can inflict.

We hope the City of Akron will respond favorably to Western Reserve Land Conservancy's bid to conserve the property in perpetuity. The health of our region's ecosystems and communities depends upon it.

Sincerely,

Deb Vandele