

Stanford House

An Exceptional New Opportunity for Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association



Background The George Stanford House is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and historic properties in the Cuyahoga Valley. Built circa 1830, this stunning Greek revival structure, is located on high ground a short distance from the Ohio & Erie Canal, and was a working farm for over 140 years. Acquired by the National Park Service in 1978, the Stanford House was operated for more than 20 years as a “hostel” by a local non-profit organization, but in December of 2008 this use ended for lack of continuing feasibility. Today, the Stanford House sits vacant, awaiting a new use. The public still has access to the beautiful grounds at the property, however, as the popular Stanford Trail begins at a national park trailhead immediately behind the large Stanford bank-barn, and during warm weather months CVNPA manages backcountry campsites for park trail users in the adjacent meadow.

Vision Anyone visiting the Stanford House is struck by the inspiring beauty of the setting, its strategic location near the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and nearby Village of Boston, and the wonderful potential to put this property to use for public benefit. Taken together, the Stanford House, its inviting grounds, magnificent barn, trailhead, and nearby campsites present an opportunity for development of a new focal point in the Cuyahoga Valley for public use, ranger-led interpretive programs, and CVNPA program offerings – a kind of “Stanford center”. The Stanford House, when rehabilitated, will accommodate multiple uses – a branch campus for school groups from the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, and quality (but very moderately priced) overnight accommodations for both groups (retreats, family reunions, business meetings, etc.) and general park visitors. It is easy to imagine Stanford House guests utilizing the grounds for picnicking and tented gatherings, sitting around evening campfires, and taking full advantage of both the

nearby Stanford Trail (to Brandywine Falls!), the Valley Bridal Trail, and the Towpath Trail. With the complement of visitor facilities in nearby Boston, including the Boston Store Visitor Center, Trail Mix, Cuyahoga Valley National Park Volunteer Center, M.D. Garage art gallery, Boston Mills Ski Resort, Hines Hill Conference Center, and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad access at the Boston Mill Station, the Stanford House couldn't be better located to afford visitors a broad array of services and national park experiences. For cyclists, the Stanford House will provide inexpensive overnight accommodations enabling multi-day trips to the north or south on the Towpath Trail along the route of the Ohio & Erie Canalway. Finally, when the Stanford Barn is rehabilitated for seasonal use, it will make a wonderful location for park interpretive programs, "locavore" farm dinners, rustic meeting space, and a wide variety of other uses. Getting the Stanford House project completed will be one more very important step in the development of quality facilities for users of Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and simply cannot happen fast enough!

Stanford House Management and Operation CVNPA will operate the Stanford House through a partnership agreement with Cuyahoga Valley National Park in which each partner will have specified responsibilities. In short, CVNPA will be the operator/manager of the Stanford House, and be responsible for day-to-day operational costs, guest services, custodial maintenance, and utility costs. CVNPA will retain all revenues generated by visitor uses of the house, grounds, outbuildings and adjacent campsites. Cuyahoga Valley National Park will be responsible for exterior maintenance of the Stanford House, its utility systems, and grounds maintenance. CVNPA has developed financial projections for Stanford House operating costs, and it is anticipated that by the third year of operation, Stanford House will operate on a break-even basis. First-year operating costs will be supplemented by fundraising support (see below), while any second year operating shortfall will be absorbed in the general CVNPA operating budget.

Project Costs In order for the Stanford House to be opened for public use, CVNPA has agreed to raise the necessary funds for building rehabilitation costs, furnishings, and first-year operating expenses, as follows:

\$62,000 Total rehabilitation of three bathrooms
\$27,000 Floor repairs, lighting, window treatments, storage improvements
\$61,000 Furnishings and kitchen cabinets, fixtures, and appliances
\$42,500 First- year start-up costs
\$192,500 Total CVNPA fundraising requirement

(Cuyahoga Valley National Park has committed to fund \$98,000 of improvements to the Stanford House in the coming year, including exterior painting and building fabric repairs. The cost of rehabilitating the Stanford Barn for seasonal public use is not included in project costs, but is under consideration for future CVNP funding.

Project Schedule Once needed funds are in-hand, all necessary work can be completed within four months. Current schedule has the Stanford House open for operations in January, 2011.