

Cuyahoga County's Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund Round 5 Application  
Mill Creek Environmental Center & Interpretive Trail Project

**Attachment A1**  
Application Summary Document

**1. Goal of the Project:** Cuyahoga County will request \$3 million from the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund (CORF) program to complete environmental remediation activities at the 54.34-acre former General Chemical property located at 5000 Warner Road in Garfield Heights and Cuyahoga Heights, Ohio. This grant is critical to help fund the cleanup of impacted soils, including two former wastewater lagoons, and removal of old building foundations. This cleanup addresses significant environmental issues and will lead to a \$2.5 million property redevelopment of the Mill Creek Environmental Center that includes:



- Offices, an indoor environmental education facility, and meeting rooms for the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Management District, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Cleveland Metroparks;
- State-of-the-art special waste convenience collection facility to serve the Solid Waste District's 59-member communities;
- Hike/bike trail that connects the Cleveland Metropark's Towpath Trail to the Mill Creek Reservation and Garfield Park Reservation; and
- Restored floodplains, wetlands, meadows, and forests that will provide an outdoor environmental education facility providing historical and environmental restoration interpretation opportunities.



Proposed convenience center

**Economic Benefit:** A CORF grant award and the resulting environmental remediation activities will lead to \$2.5 million capital investment for construction of the 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> office space and the 21,000 ft<sup>2</sup> special waste center. This project will also result in the creation of positions for eight part-time employees through a professional contractor to operate the special waste collection facility and will permit the retention of 17 employees working in the office space with the Solid Waste District, Cuyahoga SWCD, USDA NRCS, and facilities for Metroparks employees providing interpretive services.

The buildings on this property will be constructed using sustainable designs and will follow the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. The implemented green building techniques and technologies will be highlighted in the facility's environmental education programming targeting both the general public and local governmental officials. The development partners will showcase this green design to promote the benefits of green building and to spur the "greening" of other facilities in Northeast Ohio.

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**Community Benefits:** The Mill Creek Environmental Center & Interpretive Trail Project will result in the cleanup of a very large brownfield site that has been vacant for years because of known and perceived pollution problems, and complicated regulatory and land transfer issues. Many years of negotiations resulted in a creative land transfer agreement, which promotes the exciting redevelopment plans to create an environmental center where many of Cuyahoga County's environmental educators will work, teach and inspire stakeholders throughout the County and State of Ohio. We anxiously await the opportunity to demonstrate sustainable practices, conservation efforts and recycling on a redeveloped brownfield with trail access to restored wetlands, meadows and floodplains. The new office space and indoor and outdoor environmental education facilities will become a center for environmental education in Cuyahoga County and convenient meeting space for students, local officials, and the public on a variety of environmental topics.

Easily accessible from major highways, this property's central location will also provide convenient access to the 59 communities in Cuyahoga County that will use the center for "special wastes" recycling. The center will receive household hazardous wastes (HHW) collected by all county communities on a year-round basis. Materials to be collected at the facility will include oil-based paint, solvents, lawn and garden chemicals, automotive fluids, and other wastes that are not suitable for landfill disposal. At the center, materials will be consolidated and shipped to various recycling and processing facilities. The development of this collection center was the number one priority recommendation made by the 34 municipalities that participated in strategic planning sessions for the Solid Waste District's state-required update to the County Solid Waste Management Plan. Access to a year-round drop-off site for HHW will increase the volumes collected for recycling and reduce the incidence of illegal dumping of materials.

All public entities associated with this project support the remediation and redevelopment of this prime property for redevelopment into office space and as an improved conservation greenway. The City of Garfield Heights recently amended its master plan to specifically support the planned redevelopment activities outlined in this grant application and the Village of Cuyahoga Heights master plan supports greenways and trails as a strong economic development tool. The Cleveland Metroparks' Lower Mill Creek Valley Conservation Greenway plan specifically recommends the restoration and conservation of the land in our CORF project area and the linkage of the Southern Trail Segment of the Canal Towpath Trail within the Mill Creek Greenway. This project fulfills many of the goals in the greenway plan, including providing better stream protection and floodplain management, protecting wildlife habitat, improving water quality, providing space for passive and active recreation, encouraging environmental and cultural education, and promoting personal fitness.

**Other Funding Sources:** A CORF grant will provide the necessary funding to address the majority of the environmental issues and demolition needs on the property. The Solid Waste District will provide \$1.5 million in matching funds toward environmental remediation, demolition and environmental insurance. These funds will be provided through the District's general budget with funds derived from a solid waste generation

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fee. The Metroparks committed \$300,000 toward remediating the property and also contributed matching dollars to this CORF grant through their dedication of \$154,800 in U.S. EPA brownfield assessment grant dollars. General Chemical invested \$362,942 in 2007 to complete asbestos abatement, demolition, and site clearance activities. This investment is also part of the CORF match. Their \$119,360 toward assessment activities in 2004 and 2005 is also noteworthy, though not match eligible since it exceeds the two-year CORF match-look-back policy. The transfer agreement being finalized between Cuyahoga County and General Chemical provides that a nominal fee of no more than \$10 dollars will be required by the County to acquire this property. While this land valuation can not be considered a part of the CORF match, it is a noteworthy contribution to the project.

The Solid Waste District will fund the anticipated \$2.5 million construction of the office space, environmental center and special waste convenience center by issuing debt. The Ohio Revised Code section 343.07 gives solid waste management districts in Ohio the authority to issue bonds for the construction of solid waste facilities. Trail development and restoration activities on this property will be funded by the Metroparks through its pending Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byways Program grant and future grants. The Metroparks has already constructed 1.8 miles of the trail in the Lower Mill Creek Valley. Since 1999, the Metroparks has invested over \$12 million toward development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation, the Mill Creek Falls Overlook and the 1.5 mile extension of the Mill Creek Trail. The Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District intends to invest \$40,000 to contribute to creating a low impact designed site with features that will help attenuate the negative effects of stormwater.

**2. History of the Project Property:** The property has been vacant since fall 2006 when General Chemical ceased operations on the property. General Chemical completed asbestos removal and demolished all of the buildings on the property in 2007. Footers and slabs remain throughout significant portions of the property. The National Chemical Company began operations on a portion of the project property in 1895. Over the years, operations were conducted on the property under several owners, including the General Chemical Company, Allied Chemical & Dye Corporation, the Industrial Division of Allied Chemical, and its present owner, the General Chemical Corporation. Chemicals produced on the property included sulfuric, nitric, muriatic, and other assorted mix acids, ammonium chloride, barium tetra-sulfide, aluminum sulfate, and liquid alum manufacturing. Other activities on the property include power production and associated coal storage and burning (prior to the 1960s, two power plants produced electricity on the property with coal-fired boilers), railcar loading and unloading, fueling of on-property equipment from several underground storage tanks, storage of sulfur and aluminum hydrate, and disposal of alum process residue (APR) and other acid production residues in surface impoundments on the property. Site closure began for the two APR settling ponds (lagoons) in 1992. The lagoons were to be closed under an Ohio EPA permit to install (PTI 02-9365) for cessation of the potential release of contaminants from the APR lagoons. In 2004, a proposal was submitted by General Chemical LLC and accepted by the Ohio EPA to temporarily suspend closure of the lagoons until a beneficial end use could be established for the

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APR materials. The remedial action plan outlined in this CORF application meets the requirements of the PTI and allows for the beneficial on-property use of the stabilized material.

**3. Environmental Improvements and Benefits:** Soils have been impacted by historic chemical manufacturing on the property and the low pH of the APR materials in the lagoons has resulted in impacted groundwater and surface water on the property. Phase II environmental assessment activities found that this property does not currently comply with applicable standards for arsenic and lead in soils and several types of metals in groundwater and surface water. More specifically, the property does not currently meet VAP standards for on-property receptor populations, including on-property commercial/industrial workers, on-property construction/excavation workers, or on-property recreational users. Our planned remedy consists of APR material removal, and amending it in a manner to mitigate the environmental impacts from the former lagoons. Once amended, the material will be suitable for use as cover over impacted on-property soils. The remedy also includes institutional controls to maintain the current integrity of the property, a risk mitigation plan to reduce risks to future construction workers, and long-term groundwater and surface water monitoring to verify the success of the implemented remedy. Our planned remedy will protect human health and the environment and will result in the property meeting applicable standards under the Ohio VAP to secure a No Further Action (NFA) Letter for the property.

The convenience center will allow the District to meet its state-mandated management of HHW and will result in an increased participation by County residents in recycling activities. The facility will be LEED certified and developed as a sustainable center using best management practices. Restoring floodplains, meadows, forests, and wetlands using native vegetation will help control invasive species and improve the Mill Creek Greenway's overall ecology. Restored lands will also provide additional stormwater capacity within the watershed, reducing the magnitude and frequency of flooding events. The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District invested \$162 million since 1998 to improve stormwater capacity and eliminate combined sewer overflows to Mill Creek. The stormwater benefits of this CORF project will enhance the earlier multi-million investment.

**4. Project's Readiness to Proceed:** Cuyahoga County is ready to begin this project immediately upon receipt of a final cooperative agreement with the State of Ohio. The County will procure a VAP Certified Professional and contractor to complete this work in accordance with CORF procurement practices. It is anticipated that a contractor will be selected for remedial activities within six months after the grant agreement is executed. Site remediation, including soil blending, is expected to take up to nine months to complete and is expected to be complete by June 2010. Remedial activities will be documented in an NFA Letter expected to be completed within four months following remediation. Construction of the office and convenience center is expected to begin once the NFA Letter is approved and the property is transferred. Design is expected to be completed concurrent with remedial activities. Construction is expected to take about two years to complete.