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Lorain County Metro Parks Announces Official Opening of Cassell Reservation

[Vermilion, OH, June 15, 2023] Lorain County Metro Parks is pleased to announce the official opening of the Cassell Reservation in Vermilion. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held on Thursday, June 22, at 10 a.m. Attendees are invited to join us at the Highbridge Trailhead parking area at 815 Highbridge Road, Vermilion, Ohio 44089.

This reservation first began in 2004 with an initial donation of land by the Ken Cassell family and Cassell Enterprises, Inc. Through additional acquisitions (substantially funded by Clean Ohio grants) and a 2023 land donation from the Sommer Realty Company, Cassell Reservation now stands at nearly 290 acres.

Due to the site's unique hydrologic features, and somewhat acidic soils, Cassell Reservation is a haven for unique plants, including several listed by the State of Ohio as rare or endangered. In fact, one identified plant has not been found throughout the state since 1894. In 2017, researchers identified Carey's Smartweed (*Persicaria careyi*) within wetland areas of the park.

Currently, the reservation features more than a mile of trail to explore. The trail was cautiously built to avoid negative impacts on the site's soil and plant life. The gravel trail is constructed of sandstone rather than traditional crushed limestone to eliminate altering the soil's pH.

Cassell Reservation's geology, soils, and plants set it apart from all others in Lorain County. Future development plans include a picnic shelter, supplemental parking areas, and additional trails. With time, protection, and stewardship, Cassell Reservation may ultimately be recognized as one of Northeast Ohio's premier natural areas.

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