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Media Advisory: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA TOUR FOR SHARON LAKE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

What:

Great Parks will provide a behind-the-scenes tour of the Sharon Lake Improvement Project for members of the news media. Several features that are visible now will become obscured by water when the lake refills.

Where:

Media should park at Sharon Woods Harbor, 4631 E. Kemper Rd.

When:

9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. on Friday, July 11.

Who:

Great Parks CEO Todd Palmeter, Chief of Planning Janet Broughton Murray and other Great Parks team members will point out construction highlights.

Details:

Because this is an active construction zone, attendees will be asked to wear personal protective equipment provided by Great Parks and check in to the site via a posted QR code. There is the possibility that the site will be very loud. Please wear long pants and sturdy, closed-toed shoes and be prepared for muddy, rugged terrain. Access will be provided by Great Parks to three sites:

1) Sharon Woods Harbor overlook, to see a partly constructed boardwalk

Sites to which Great Parks will drive you in a Great Parks vehicle:

2) Northwest view of wetlands under construction ([Dropbox view](#)). This site also provides a straight view all the way south to the Kemper Road bridge and Kreis Dam.

3) Kreis Dam, for another view of the partly constructed boardwalk, plus ongoing renovations to the dam under a separate project ([Dropbox view of boardwalk](#))

Visuals:

The lakebed will be largely empty of water unless significant rain falls shortly before the tour. Media will be able to see partly constructed wetland areas, weirs for future lake maintenance, and one partly constructed boardwalk.

Background:

The Sharon Lake Improvement Project, one of the largest in Great Parks' history, is a revitalization of the 35-acre lake that will create improved recreational opportunities, new

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wildlife habitat and access to natural areas. Great Parks is constructing a new boardwalk and fishing pier. The lake has been mostly empty of water for construction since early summer 2024. Paddling, boating and fishing at the lake is planned to resume in spring 2026, although fish stocking may not be complete by then.

During construction, Great Parks has been repositioning about 10 Olympic-size swimming pools worth of sediment at the bottom of the lake to optimize depth in some areas and create new wetlands in other areas. The new wetlands will improve water filtration and wildlife habitat. The project was necessary because years of inflow had introduced sediment and nutrients from the surrounding watershed, leading to increased aquatic vegetation and diminished recreation opportunities. This type of maintenance is normal for the manmade lake and essential for Great Parks' stewardship of Sharon Woods.

This project meets several priorities in the Great Parks Comprehensive Master Plan such as providing access to conservation areas, building ecological resiliency and sustainability, and expanding access for all users.

Great Parks secured multiple sources of funding to pay for the \$15.4 million project. This includes outside funding from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Dorothy B. Francis Charitable Foundation, Duke Energy Foundation, Land & Water Conservation Fund and State of Ohio Capital Improvement Fund. These add to Great Parks project funding from the 1-mill levy voters approved in 2016 for ongoing operating support for Great Parks.

Great Parks is also working on additional projects in Sharon Woods that are separate from but adjacent to the Sharon Lake Improvement Project. Routine maintenance work is underway on Sharon Lake's Kreis Dam while the lake is empty. Great Parks is adjusting a portion of the Sharon Lake Loop Trail to address ADA, safety and maintenance concerns. And Great Parks is creating future designs for a renovation of the Sharon Woods Harbor area, after taking public comment for the project last winter. Completion of design work and the start of construction at the harbor are planned for late 2026.

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