

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
 INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM  
 PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Malcolm Matthews, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

**THROUGH:** Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

**COPIES:** Melissa B. Vossmer; Finance; Management and Budget; Legal; File

**SUBJECT:** Ordinance Ratifying the Submission of a Grant Application to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for a Community Outdoor Outreach Program Grant

**DATE:** September 25, 2003

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This ordinance ratifies the submission of a grant application to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for a Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) Community Outdoor Outreach Program Grant and, if approved, the acceptance of a grant in an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00.

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has grant funds available in the Texas Recreation and Parks Account Community Outdoor Outreach Program (COOP). The program has been established to provide nature education and appreciation experiences to young people who may not otherwise have these opportunities.

The project that is being submitted for grant funding is based on a program initiated at the Parks and Recreation Department Fairchild Community Center in 1998. The project started as a Wildscape Garden Project under the guidance of TPWD and the Alamo Area Master Naturalists to involve youth in each phase of its development and long-term management. The project was expanded to include nature experiences, to include camping, hiking and fishing in State and local parks, birding and learning to observe flora, fauna and habitats. In 2001 it was expanded further to include an 18-mile bicycle ride from Fairchild Park to Calaveras Lake Park, in which fourteen children participated. In 2003 the program has grown to one hundred participants and includes a nature EXPO at the end of the ride, with exhibits from numerous park agencies and naturalist groups.

The proposed grant project would again provide nature education and appreciation activities through naturalist classes and a biking, nature EXPO and campout event. The proposed 2004 event will increase in size to 300 young people at-risk in the community, with 150 to attend the nature EXPO and 150 to participate in the bike ride. Grant funds will be utilized to:

- purchase camping equipment, bicycle repair kits, Wildscape Garden supplies and other costs
- provide rental fees for portable toilets and a first aid station
- hire security support
- obtain State Park Vehicle Passes for six Parks and Recreation vans
- pay fees for exhibition costs

Many of these supplies will be utilized throughout the year to provide a capability through Parks and Recreation Department Community Centers to continue nature appreciation experiences in Texas State parks throughout the year.

In addition to the Fairchild Park program participants, this grant will also be of assistance in the inclusion of youth in and around the Lockwood Community Center area on the eastside of the City and other community centers in west and south San Antonio.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

It is the long-standing policy of the City to utilize grant funds to provide services for the residents of our community. Submission and acceptance of this grant from the TPWD is in compliance with this policy.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The application will request \$30,000.00, the maximum allowed under the TPWD COOP grant. The grant will allow approved projects to request up to 10% of their approved funds in advance to provide a start-up allocation if needed. The balance of the grant is paid on a reimbursement basis. Funds are available within the proposed General Fund allocation to the Parks and Recreation Department to cover expenses until the payment is received.

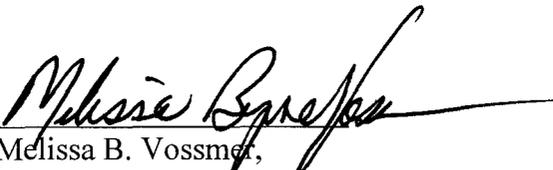
### **COORDINATION**

This grant application has been coordinated with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

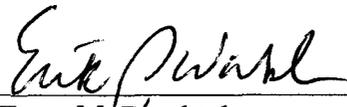
**SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS**

This program does not require the filing of an Ethics Ordinance Disclosure statement.

  
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Malcolm Matthews,  
Director of Parks and Recreation

  
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Melissa B. Vossmer,  
Assistant City Manager

Approved:

  
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Terry M. Brechtel  
City Manager

**General Information**

***PROJECT NAME:***

Outdoor Nature Education – Kid’s Nature EXPO and Campout

***NAME OF PROJECT SPONSOR:***

San Antonio Parks & Recreation Department (SNPAR)

***WHOPREPARED THE DOCUMENT:***

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**Description of the Proposed Project**

The mission of the project is to provide nature education experiences to low income, at-risk, inner-city kids and to inspire these kids to become conservation minded-responsible users of natural resources through outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, wildlife observation/ photography, camping, and fishing.

The 2004 proposed project would be the third experience of providing nature education and appreciation activities through a biking, nature EXPO and campout event. The 2004 project design is the culmination of lessons learned over the past two years. The 2004 project will:

- Provide comprehensive nature appreciation training to low income, inner-city, at-risk youth via habitat/ecosystem awareness pre-training, followed by a weekend of nature appreciation via an 18-mile bicycle ride from an inner-city park through urban, suburban and rural areas to a rural Lake Park nature EXPO and campout.
- Provide a capability through SNPAR Community Centers, to continue nature appreciation experiences in Texas state parks throughout the year.

The 2004 project requires funding to purchase tools and plants to complete nature education exhibits and kiosks used to introduce inner-city kids to habitat and ecosystem issues, to create a fund to aide in making inner-city kids bicycles safe to ride; initiate safety stations on the bicycle path and at the EXPO site and to provide each of the SA/PAR Community Centers with the basic camping equipment to be used in the May 15 through 16 event and continue to use throughout the year to provide inner-city youth affordable and accessible follow-up nature activities in Texas State Parks.

## **HISTORY OF PROJECT**

The nature education project was initiated in October 1998 under the guidance of Rufus Stevens, Urban Biologist, TPWD and the Alamo Area Master Naturalists. It involved developing an interactive medium to help youth develop an appreciation for natural resources of Bexar and surrounding counties. The project began as a Wildscape Garden Project with the objective of involving youth in each phase of its development and long-term management.

The garden's exhibits are designed (although not completed) to provide a medium to communicate ecological habitat messages to youth via examples of habitats/ecosystems and kiosks with educational information about natural areas that the exhibits represent. . The garden is also used as an example for schools, community centers and individuals in the community to start Wildscape Gardens and to provide co-habitation areas for humans and area fauna.

Out of this project grew expanded kid's nature experiences, to include:

- Camping, hiking, and fishing in state parks to include Choke Canyon, Guadalupe, Blanco, Lost Maples, Kerrville, Bastrop, Buescher, Palmetto, Lake Livingston, Tyler, Mustang Island, and Galveston state parks.
- Birding teams that have birded most ecosystems in Texas and competed in the 2000, 2001, 2002 and the 2003 Great Texas Coastal Birding Classic resulting in Central Division first place winners in the two youth categories of the 2002 and 2003 Classics.
- Learning to observe flora, fauna and habitats using their (participant's) own mode of transportation, bicycling. This included an 18-mile ride from SA/PAR's Eureka Fairchild Wildscape Garden to Calaveras Lake Park in November 2001 where fourteen (14) kids enjoyed a full course Thanksgiving meal, fishing and campout.

In an effort to expand this learning medium and target a larger population of inner city youth, the Bike, Kid's EXPO and Campout event was created under the guidance of Siri Lindholm, Area Coordinator, TPWD. The event was adapted as an activity of the 2002 San Antonio area "Hike & Bike for Health Month". Forty (40) kids from six SA/PAR Community Centers in east San Antonio participated in the 2002 event.

The nature education opportunities were provided in 2002 by initiating a 17-mile bicycle ride starting from the Eureka Fairchild Park Wildscape Garden, riding the Mission Trail along the San Antonio river observing birds and habitats and ending the ride at the San Antonio River Authority's Braunig Lake Park south of San Antonio. State and local area organizations provided a nature EXPO with exhibits by Texas Parks and Wildlife, Alamo Area Master Naturalists, Bexar Audubon Society, San Antonio Audubon Society, San Antonio Water Systems, San Antonio River Authority, and Texas Wildlife Association. Texas Parks and Wildlife provided kayaks as a fun activity. This was followed by a campout with camp cooking and fishing activities.

The 2003 event included an 18-mile bicycle ride from the Wildscape Garden to Calaveras Lake Park. Participation increased to approximately one hundred (100) bicycle riders from twelve (12) SA/PAR Community Centers and the general public and an additional one hundred (100) participants from other Community Centers and the general public who only visited the nature EXPO. The nature EXPO was expanded to include a rock-climbing wall and fly-fishing provided by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the campout included a central campfire event conducted by Boy Scouts of America.

**Objectives and Need of Assistance(Project Justification)**

The Bike Ride, Kid's Nature EXPO and Campout event is now established by the San Antonio/Bexar County Area Hike and Bike For Health Month Planning Committee as an annual event to be held during Hike and Bike For Health Month on the third weekend of May. The 2004 event will increase the event participants to three hundred (300) kids. One hundred-fifty (150) will attend the nature EXPO only and one hundred-fifty (150) will be 10 – 17 years of age bike riders targeted from a broad range of under served low-income neighborhoods in east, west and south San Antonio. The event is designed with the capability of serving boys and girls in the community who are at-risk and who are behaviorally challenged and/or have learning difficulties.

The 2002 and 2003 events were plagued by:

- The presence of only 5 tents available in the SA/PAR system for Community Centers to access and a limited number of businesses that rent tents.
- A high incidence of participant kids with bicycles needing repairs to make the bicycles safe to ride the 18 miles and a lack of funds to buy parts for the bicycles.
- A lack of funds to purchase time from key exhibitors that provides services such as live native mammals for interactive display.
- A lack of chaperones with experience and knowledge of camping and the need for flora & fauna conservation, resulting in kids not being properly coached. One negative incident occurred at the 2003 camping event when a group of boys caught a lizard and threw it alive in the campfire.
- A lack of funds to complete the planting of exhibits and installment of kiosks for learning information in the Eureka Fairchild Wildscape.

Based on previous experience, pre-event training is required to prepare staff and participants to fully benefit from the education and enjoyment activities of the bike, EXPO and campout and to encourage continued outdoor education and recreation experiences in State Parks. For this reason the 2004 pre-education experiences will be more focused and in-depth, to include:

- Pre-event training of community center managers and staff in nature activities (i.e. camping, conservation and nature observation) with the goal of increasing the propensity for the managers and staff to involve their target populations in nature oriented recreational activities. The training will include: 1) the assignment of camping equipment to each center for ongoing use, training to use the equipment and encouragement to raise funds to expand equipment as needed and 2) providing the Centers accessibility to SA/PAR vans with state park passes

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department  
TRPA – Community Outdoor Outreach Program

encouraging the use Texas State Parks throughout the year as an ongoing medium to increase children's experiences of nature and their enjoyment of outdoor recreation.

- Pre-event nature sensitivity training of participants. Participants will be provided guided tours of SA/PAR's Eureka Fairchild Park Wildscape exhibits for the purpose of introducing participants to area habitat/ecosystem issues, followed by field trips to San Antonio Parks & Recreation Natural Areas, the San Antonio Zoo's native wild life exhibits and San Antonio Botanical Gardens' natural area exhibits.
- Pre-event on road bike safety training that supports viewing nature while riding a bicycle

### **Project Action Plan**

1. January 12, 2004 - 2004 Bike-EXPO-Campout (BEC) Event, Inter-agency Planning Committee start planning the May 15 – 16, 2004 event. Members will represent:
  - Alamo Area Master Naturalists
  - Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
  - San Antonio Audubon Society
  - San Antonio River Authority
  - San Antonio Water System
  - San Antonio Parks & Recreation Youth Services Department
  - San Antonio Parks & Recreation Natural Areas Department
  - Boy Scouts of America
  - San Antonio Park Police
2. TBA – May 31, 2004 – BEC Event Coordinator participate on San Antonio/Bexar County Hike and Bike for Health Month Event Planning Committee.
3. March 3 – 4, 2004 – SA/PAR Community Center Management staff provided sensitivity training and issued camping equipment for their Centers. Training will be held while Camping at Choke Canyon St. Park and will include:
  - o Camping equipment presentation by the Coleman Company.
  - o Presentation of flora and fauna preservation and conservation issues by Alamo Area Master Naturalist.
  - o Presentation of recreational use of natural areas by Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.
  - o Community Center managers issued camping equipment assigned to their Centers.
  - Community Center managers cook their own camp meals, set up their tents and camp over night.
4. March 8 – 12, 2004 – Community Center chaperone staff & volunteers for the event selected and provided nature sensitivity training by Community Center Management staff.
  - Use of camping equipment (tent setup and use of cooking equipment)
  - Flora and fauna preservation and conservation issues
  - Agenda for 2004 Bike, Nature EXPO and Campout
  - Selection criteria for participants
  - Instructions for obtaining repairs for participant's bicycles

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department  
TRPA – Community Outdoor Outreach Program

5. March 15,2004 – Centers selection of at-risk participants ages 10 to 17 years of age.
  - Ethnic minorities from underserved areas of east and west San Antonio.
  - Non-minority participants equally considered.
  - Females will be targeted equally to males resulting in 50 % female participants.
  - Low-income areas of East and West San Antonio are the primary target areas.
  - Participants from other areas are eligible
  - Underserved mentally & behaviorally challenged youth targeted will include manageable AD-HD, Character Disorders, Defiant Disorders and learning disabilities. Youth not inclusive in these categories will also to be considered.
6. March 15,2004 – May 14,2003 – Pre-training of participants will include:
  - Tent set up and use of cooking equipment.
  - Visit to Fairchild Wildscape Garden for habitat discussions
  - Field trips
  - Bicycle safety training provided by SNPAR Park Police
  - Practice bicycle rides to prepare for 18-mile ride.
7. March 15 - 16, 2004 – Event begins at 8:00 A.M. on March 15<sup>th</sup> at Fairchild Park Wildscape and ends at 12:00 noon on March 16,2004.
8. March 16, 2004 – Event ends at 12:00 noon. Kids will be returned to SNPAR Centers by van and bicycles by flatbed trucks.

**Source of Sponsor Financing**

Organizations contributing to the event will include:

- San Antonio Parks & Recreation Department - in-kind contributions of office supplies, vans, gas, flat bed trucks, computers and staff to manage & chaperone the event.
- The San Antonio Parks Foundation – management of Grant funds.
- San Antonio Parks & Recreation Park Police – officers to manage and conduct the 18-mile Bicycle Ride and provide park police presence at the campout.
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – event guidance & in-kind contributions of equipment (kayaks, rock climbing wall & fishing equipment).
- Alamo Area Master Naturalists - in-kind contributions of education materials & volunteers to provide flora & fauna sensitivity training.
- San Antonio Audubon Society & Bexar Audubon Society - in-kind contributions of education materials & volunteers to provide training to use binoculars, spotting scopes and field guides, and conduct birding tours.
- San Antonio Water Systems – in-kind contributions of education materials & volunteers to provide training on water systems.
- Boy Scouts of America in-kind contributions of education materials & volunteers to provide camping & campfire enjoyment training.
- San Antonio River Authority in-kind contributions of space for the EXPO and camping events.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department  
TRPA – Community Outdoor Outreach Program

- The Coleman Company - in-kind contributions of education materials & volunteers to provide staff training on use of camping and related outdoor recreational equipment.
- Northeast Rotary Club of **San** Antonio – volunteer labor to develop the Pond and Stream Exhibit in the Eureka Fairchild Wildscape.
- The San Antonio Parks & Recreation’s Natural Areas Department - in-kind contributions of education materials & volunteers to provide nature sensitivity and stewardship training.