

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	39020	Agenda Number	7.
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Meeting Date:	1/29/2015	Department:	Parks and Recreation
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Subject

Approve a resolution authorizing the City to apply for up to \$40,000 in grant funding from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Community Outdoor Outreach Program for nature based interpretive programming.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding in the amount of \$40,000 is available from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Fiscal Note

Purchasing
Language:

Prior Council
Action:

For More
Information:

April Shaw (512) 974-6716; Angela Means (512) 974-6712; Pat Fuller (512) 978-2601.

Boards and
Commission
Action:

MBE / WBE:

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

Since the publication of Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) has collaborated with other nature education providers to concentrate efforts on encouraging young children to spend time in nature, and finding ways to unplug our teens. Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin (CiNCA) was formed and assisted by the PARD work with Into the Wild program, Discover Nature Backpacks, Recreation Center Afterschool Enhancement programs and High Adventure teen clubs. Next steps will be leadership development in collaboration with existing groups, including Park Ranger Cadets, Keep Austin Beautiful Green Teens, Explore Austin, Natural Leaders, and Nature Center CITs and Junior Counselors, to create a critical mass of young adults and teens with outdoor skills and leadership.

Nationally, teen programs have been on the decline. Creation of high adventure trainings and leadership skill building along with including individuals with accessibility needs, will increase the number of teen leaders who can become the

nucleuses in their communities for engagement into the outdoors. These teen leaders will better represent the diversity of the city, and give entry ways to outdoor experiences that remain culturally relevant. According to Louv, *"People need nature for healthy development. We know that. What we don't know enough about is the natural capacity of different ethnic or economic communities. In The Nature Principle, I introduced the term "natural cultural capacity" to describe the strengths and capacities of different cultures to connect with nature, often in unexpected and underreported ways..."* One grant project goal will focus on identifying the tools and traditions our minority or ethnic communities practice to connect to nature that could be encouraged and adopted by other groups. Our collaborations target those organizations and institutions to work with who are reaching underserved populations as we look for additional new approaches.