

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council		Item ID	39011	Agenda Number	43.
Meeting Date:	2/12/2015			Department:	Watershed Protection
Subject					
Authorize negotiation and execution an interlocal agreement between the City and the University of Texas at Austin – Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in an amount not to exceed \$35, 000, to coordinate restoring La Crosse Cave for educational purposes.					
Amount and Source of Funding					
Funding in the amount of \$35,000 is available in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Capital Budget of the Watershed Protection Department.					
Fiscal Note					
A fiscal note is attached.					
Purchasing Language:					
Prior Council Action:					
For More Information:	Jessica Wilson, 512-974-2446; Sara Heilman, 512-974-3540; Nico Hauwert, 512-974-2148				
Boards and Commission Action:					
MBE / WBE:					
Related Items:					

Additional Backup Information

This interlocal agreement will authorize the City of Austin to work with The University of Texas at Austin - Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to provide safe access to La Crosse Cave on the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center grounds for educational purposes. The City of Austin uses caves as an educational resource to teach topics such as geology, groundwater, cave formation, stormwater management and environmental stewardship. To accomplish this goal they must first make the caves accessible and safe for taking students on guided tours.

The City of Austin and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center have partnered on the City's Earth Camp program since 2002 and there are plans to expand the number of students participating in this environmental education program in FY2017 to reach a higher percentage of Austin's Title 1 fifth grade students. To offer a comparable experience to all program participants another educational cave is needed. Fourteen potential caves were evaluated and ranked by the Watershed Protection Departments geologist and education staff and La Crosse Cave was determined to be the top priority for educational cave restoration for elementary school students.

To maintain compliance with the Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) stormwater permit issued by TCEQ, Texas municipalities must implement a comprehensive Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that includes pollution prevention measures. Earth Camp is one component of the public education requirements contained in the City's SWMP. Watershed Protection's Youth Education program provides school outreach, field trips, curriculum and service learning opportunities to encourage informed decision-making about choices that impact the water quality of Austin's creeks, lakes and aquifers.