

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2020)	RESOLUTION NO. 20-5114
NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS NATURE)	
EDUCATION AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer Marissa
COMMUNITY GRANTS)	Madrigal in concurrence with Council
)	President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Metro Council established an initiative designed to protect and restore our region’s significant fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature as provided in Resolution No. 05-3574A, “Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods,” adopted May 12, 2005;

WHEREAS, to fulfill the goals of this regional initiative, the Metro Council approved Resolution No. 05-3580A to establish the Nature in Neighborhoods grant program for local communities;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council reaffirmed the grant program’s purpose, eligibility and funding criteria via Resolution No. 12-4398 when the council referred a 5-year local option levy for Metro’s parks and natural areas to the voters, and called for the creation of a committee to review grant applications and make award recommendations to the Metro Council;

WHEREAS, in May 2013, voters in the Metro region approved the 5-year local option levy which included new and expanded funding for this grant program, referred to in the levy as Nature in Neighborhoods community grants;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the first round of Nature in Neighborhood Conservation Education community grants in July 2014 via Resolution 14-4549;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the second round of Nature in Neighborhood Conservation Education community grants in July 2015 via Resolution 15-4635;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the third round of Nature in Neighborhood Conservation Education community grants in June 2016 via Resolution 16-4723;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council confirmed the grant program’s purpose and funding via Resolution No. 16-4690, when the council referred the renewal of Metro’s local option levy for Metro’s parks and natural areas to the voters;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council approved Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion via Resolution No. 16-4708, which directs the agency to incorporate racial equity into all aspects of its work;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the fourth round of Nature in Neighborhood Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences community grants in June 2018 via Resolution 18-4896;

WHEREAS, Metro has solicited and received applications for 2020 Nature in Neighborhoods Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences grants, and the grant review committee has identified the proposals which best meet the grant criteria and the goals of the Nature in Neighborhoods community grant program; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby approves the award of the 2020 Nature in Neighborhoods Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences community grants to those recipients listed in Exhibit A and for the amounts listed for each individual award.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 25th day of June, 2020.



Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:



Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

Nature in Neighborhoods Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences Community Grants

2020 Grant Review Committee Recommendation to Metro Council

(In alphabetical order)

Organization name: African Youth and Community Organization

Program title: East African Youth Environmental Leadership Program

Amount requested: \$70,000

Program Partners: Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Camp E.L.S.O., Zenger Farms, and Leach Botanical Garden

Potential Partners: Blueprint Foundation.

Program summary: Launches an environmental literacy and leadership program for 3rd-12th grade youth of the Pan African Diaspora that connects the climate emergency in Somalia to issues of environmental injustice and sustainability impacting Somalis in Portland.

Organization name: Camp E.L.S.O. Inc.

Program title: Culturally Responsive Nature Education

Amount requested: \$100,000

Program Partners: Blueprint Foundation, US Fish and Wildlife, Lower Columbia Estuary Partners, Tualatin Riverkeepers, Friends of Tryon Creek, PGE- Project Zero Greater Than, Morrison Child and Family Services, SUN providers

Program summary: Improves and expands year-round, culturally specific environmental STEAM education programs for children and youth, designed by and for communities of color in partnership with schools and community organizations, with a focus on STEM career pathways.

Organization name: Columbia Slough Watershed Council

Program title: SLOUGH SCHOOL 20-22

Amount requested: \$40,755 (partial grant award)

Program Partners: Portland Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Environmental Services, Portland Water Bureau, City of Gresham, City of Fairview, Multnomah Co Drainage District, Native American Youth and Families Center (NAYA), Verde Club Aves, and Schools: Cesar Chavez, King, Rigler, St Andrew Nativity, Woodland, Fairview, Salish Ponds

Potential Partners: UNIDOS, Project Blueprint, Wisdom of the Elders, Portland Harbor Community Coalition, and Schools: Reynolds Learning Academy, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc. and Rosemary Anderson High School (POIC+RAHS), Alliance HS at Meek, De La Salle North HS, Rose City Park, Sabin, Astor, Sacramento, Prescott

Program summary: Provides free K-12 education for schools in the Columbia Slough Watershed that reduces barriers to outdoor learning for students in Title I schools in Portland, Parkrose, Reynolds, and Gresham-Barlow Districts with classroom lessons and field trips.

Organization name: Confluence

Program title: Confluence Outdoors

Amount requested: \$20,000

Program Partners: Sandy River Watershed Council, Beaverton School District's Title IV Indian Education Program, Hillsboro School District's Title IV Indian Education Program, Native American Youth and Families Center (NAYA), and the Cottonwood School for Civics and Science

Program summary: Connects Native American students from Hillsboro, Beaverton and Portland with Indigenous educators at the Sandy River Delta to learn lessons in history, culture, ecology and art.

Organization name: Friends of Tryon Creek

Program title: Healing Generations and Land through Cultural Ecology

Amount requested: \$70,000

Program Partners: Friends of Tryon Creek, Parrott Creek Child and Family Services, Cultural Lifeways Community, The Inn Home for Boys, The I Am Academy, CASA of Clackamas County, Clackamas Women's Services, Northwest Family Services, Redstone Collective

Potential Partners: Clackamas Education Services District, Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Oregon State University Forestry & Natural Resources Extension Program, Red Lodge

Program summary: Brings healing to the community and landscape through Traditional Indigenous healing practices that involve healing youth alongside the land, stabilize healthy families, and build ecosystem resilience for future generations.

Organization name: Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization - IRCO

Program title: IRCO Slavic Youth Environmental Stewardship program

Amount requested: \$80,000

Program Partners: David Douglas School District, Parkrose School District, Multnomah County SUN Service System, Clackamas County Water Environment Services, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Johnson Creek Watershed Council.

Potential Partners: Wild Salmon Center, Clackamas Web Academy

Program summary: Fosters environmental stewardship in at risk youth via education with conservation and outdoor activities that connect underserved immigrant and refugee students with nature.

Organization name: Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc.

Program title: Student Crew Leadership Training Program

Amount requested: \$50,000

Program Partners: Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc. and Rosemary Anderson High School (POIC+RAHS), Friends of Trees, Portland Parks & Recreation, Gresham Parks and Recreation, Outgrowing Hunger, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Friends of Columbia Children's Arboretum, Ecology in Classrooms & Outdoors (ECO)

Program summary: Provides low-income youth and youth of color with the opportunity to restore local habitats and receive career-track natural resource mentorship/education.

Organization name: The Forest Park Conservancy

Program title: Nature Education Outings Program

Amount requested: \$39,000

Program Partners: Elevate Oregon; ViveNW

Program summary: Builds and executes curriculum for nature education outings in Forest Park and Metro-owned Natural Areas for 7th and 8th grade students at the Park Rose Middle School, with the objective of supporting their academic and personal development.

Organization name: The Wetlands Conservancy

Program title: Partners in Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Amount requested: \$38,750

Program Partners: Wisdom of the Elders, Cascade Education Corps, Bridgeport Elementary, Greenway Elementary, Ecology in Classrooms and Outdoors, Clean Water Services, Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District

Potential Partners: Mary Woodward Elementary, Oregon Community Foundation, Portland Garden Club, TE Connectivity, Grey Family Foundation

Program summary: Improves the health of various Washington County communities and environments using indigenous knowledge methods of natural area enhancement to urban wetlands.

Organization name: Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

Program title: Nature Experiences and Workforce Training (NEWT): Changing the Face of the Field

Amount requested: \$90,795

Program Partners: Adelante Mujeres, Beaverton School District, and Clean Water Services

Potential Partners: Friends of the Tualatin Hills Nature Park

Program summary: Provides after school nature programming for Latino audiences and expand our current multi-year, workforce development program focusing on Latino students.

Organization name: Tualatin Riverkeepers

Program title: Growing Green: Environmental Workforce Training Program

Amount requested: \$80,700

Program Partners: Centro Cultural de Washington County

Potential Partners: Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District; Washington County, Oregon Department of Forestry, Forest Grove School District, Pacific University, Portland Community College

Program summary: Collaboratively provides career development opportunities with culturally-specific partners to promote and improve pathways to environmental careers within communities of color.

Organization name: Wild Diversity

Program title: Rooted Youth Ecology

Amount requested: \$20,000

Program Partners: Latino Network, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, Portland Audubon

Potential Partners: Verde, Brown Girls Rise, Boys & Girl Club, Betties 360, Kairos PDX, Native American Youth and Families Center (NAYA)

Program summary: Builds youth of color's relationship around the water and waterways, makes the outdoors more accessible for communities of color and fosters a respect for nature and outdoor experiences.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 20-5114, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2020 NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS NATURE EDUCATION AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES COMMUNITY GRANTS

Date: June 9, 2020

Prepared by: Crista Gardner, 503-797-1627

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chú, 503-797-1856

BACKGROUND

For nearly two decades, the Metro Council has provided funding for grants to community groups, non-profits, and other organizations designed to support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

In May 2013, voters approved Measure 26-152, providing new funding for Metro's parks and natural areas and providing increased funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants, which were referred to the voters by Metro Council (Resolution 12-4398). The Metro Council awarded Conservation Education grants in July 2014 (Resolution 14-4549), in July 2015 (Resolution 15-4635), in July 2016 (Resolution 16-4691) and in June 2018 (Resolution 18-4896). In November 2016, voters renewed the Metro parks and natural areas levy with Measure 26-178, which continued funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants, which were referred to the voters by Metro Council (Resolution 16-4690). Furthermore, in June 2016, the Metro Council adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Resolution 16-4708), which directs the agency to incorporate racial equity into all aspects of its work.

Grant program staff used the framework provided by Metro Council in Resolution No. 12-4398, Resolution No. 16-4690, and Resolution No. 16-4708 to develop an outreach plan, application materials, review committee and evaluation criteria for these community grants, referred to as Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences grants. Staff aligned Metro's grant criteria with state, regional and community initiatives in order to achieve multiple benefits.

Grant Evaluation Criteria

The following are the purpose and three goal categories for funding. Fulfillment of these purpose and goals are the primary evaluation criteria for the proposals submitted to the Nature in Neighborhoods community grants program:

Purpose

Nature education grants support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

Cultural equity

People of all cultures, races and traditions connect with nature and with one another in the region's parks and natural areas.

Environmental equity

Communities of color in greater Portland region enjoy the benefits of conserving land, air and water and equitable access to safe and welcoming parks, trails and natural areas; communities enjoy learning about, helping restore, experiencing and connecting with nature and the region's natural areas.

Economic equity

Communities of color prosper economically from the business of Parks and Nature in greater Portland.

Review committee

Jonathan Blasher, Parks and Nature Director, selected this year's review committee from a pool of applicants. Participation on the grant review committee is by application, open and advertised to all community members. The review committee included local experts in nature education, outdoor experiences, cultural programs, mentorship and job skill development, diversity, equity and inclusion, community partnership development, philanthropy, grant management and related fields.

The members of the 2020 Nature in Neighborhoods Nature education and outdoor experiences grants review committee are:

- Bill Weiler, Youth Stewardship Education Coordinator, Sandy River Watershed Council
- Catherine Pedersen, Project Director, Oregon Health & Science University, Endocrinology: Bone & Mineral Unit
- Elizabeth Lopez, Program Coordinator, Division Midway Alliance
- Ely O'Connor, Senior Public Affairs Specialist, Education & Outreach, Clean Water Services
- Georgia Sinimbu West, Management Analyst, Office of Community & Civic Life
- Jeffrey Lee, Bilingual Nature Program Specialist, Johnson Creek Watershed Council and Natural Areas Technician, Metro
- Kevin Pozzi, Field Trip Naturalist, Portland Parks & Recreation, Environmental Education
- Nell Tessman, Program Officer, Gray Family Foundation
- Patricia Lyons, Associate Director, The Wetlands Conservancy

Committee members declared any direct conflict of interest in the proposals and did not score or participate directly in the discussion or ranking of an application where there was a conflict. Perceived conflicts were also noted and recorded in meeting minutes.

2020 Nature in Neighborhoods nature education and outdoor experiences grants review discussion

Due to the large number of applications, Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods nature education and outdoor experiences grant program follows a two-step process including a pre-application phase and a full application phase. The review committee evaluated pre-applications and full applications based on the information submitted by applicants, the stated evaluation criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment.

Overall, the review committee appreciated the breadth, depth, partnerships and geographic distribution of nature education and outdoor experiences programs included in the proposals.

Some proposals included unique program elements, such as incorporating art or applying a trauma informed care model, or distinctive approaches to the work, such as workforce training and development.

The committee admired the extent of thoughtful, authentic partnerships built upon partners' strengths to develop a wide variety of programs across the region. They noted that many conservation, recreation, community-based and/or culturally-specific organizations collaborated and created programming together. The committee appreciated the variety of new and well-established programs and different communities represented in the proposals. The committee was compelled by those established programs that demonstrated continuous improvement based on previous experience, evaluation, and the responses of the participants, the community, and partners. They valued programs that centered the programs on community identified needs. They valued family involvement in the programs, especially when it reflects community values.

The review committee noted an increase in pre-applications focused on mentorship, and workforce or job skill development programs. They liked programs that met multiple goals, especially tying the equity goals to the habitat restoration goals. The review committee appreciated programs that go beyond entry level, lower wage work (such as weed control) to prepare participants for career pathways, continuing careers in science or similar fields, and advancement or leadership opportunities.

The committee was pleased that environmental and nature-based organizations demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of equity. They appreciated when an organization's mission or strategies clearly aligned with grant program equity goal(s). They welcomed programs that offered originally-developed information, in English or other native languages, about conservation and nature, instead of just translating materials.

The committee valued clearly and concisely outlined applications that aligned with the Nature in Neighborhoods grant program goals. They appreciated programs that demonstrated a deep understanding of the communities served and strong relationship building and trust with community leaders in their descriptions of diversity, equity and inclusion. They found it compelling when proposals provided steps planned for implementation and details such as incorporating meals or transportation. They highly regarded programs with ongoing evaluation processes and identified outcomes.

As in previous years, applications for community garden, agriculture-based or food production programs were found to be more compelling when programming included strong natural resource, wildlife habitat or water quality curriculum.

COVID-19 Situation

The review committee acknowledged how much has changed due to the COVID-19 public health crisis during the course of the grant cycle in spring 2020. The grant applicants are navigating an unprecedented situation.

To reduce impacts on employees and their community during the COVID-19 crisis, grant applicants adjusted programs' scopes of work, timelines and schedules. Some obtained formal letters of support while others showed partner commitment through informal statements or communications.

The committee appreciated the thoughtful, community-responsive rapid adjustments to programming. Many organizations acknowledged the disparate impact and physical distancing challenges of the COVID-19 crisis on their own communities or communities served. As reviewers, they also acknowledged that their lenses have been impacted by these rapid changes. For example, while they previously found workforce development programs compelling, those programs are currently vital and inspiring given the tough economic situation and that job creation programs will pay dividends in the future.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the approval of the slate of grants indicated in Exhibit A of this Resolution. Metro received 42 pre-applications, totaling \$2.38M in funding requests and 20 full applications, totaling \$1.2M. The review committee reviewed the pre-applications and full applications according to the grant criteria and recommends **twelve (12)** grants for funding a total of **seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000)** to the Metro Council (see Exhibit A).

Pending Metro Council approval, grant-funded projects will begin July 1, 2020. Grant applicants may have up to two years to complete their projects.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. Known Opposition

None.

2. Legal Antecedents

Resolution No. 18-18-4896, For the Purpose of Approving the 2016 Nature in Neighborhoods Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences Community Grants.

Resolution No. 16-4690, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area Renewal of the Metro's Local Option Levy for Protecting Water Quality, Restoring Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Connecting People to Nature.

Resolution 16-4708, For the Purpose of Approving the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Resolution 16-4723, For the Purpose of Approving the 2016 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education Community Grants.

Resolution 15-4635, For the Purpose of Approving the 2015 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education Community Grants.

Resolution No. 14-4549, For the Purpose of Approving the 2014 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education Community Grants.

Resolution No. 12-4398, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area a Local Option Levy for the Purpose of Preserving Water Quality, Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Maintaining Metro's Parks and Natural Areas for the Public.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods.

Resolution 05-3580A, Transferring \$1,250,000 from the Balance of the FY 2004-05 Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve to a General Fund Reserve for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 07-1160B, Transferring \$250,000 from the Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 09-1215B, Approving \$92,500 in the FY 2009-10 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grants.

Ordinance No. 10-1235B, Approving \$150,000 in the FY 2010-11 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grants.

Ordinance No. 12-1274A, Approving \$200,000 in the FY 2012-13 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grants.

3. Anticipated Effects

This Resolution approves the award of 2020 Nature in Neighborhood nature education and outdoor experiences community grants and begins the individual contract award process for the selected grant applicants with an anticipated project start date on or after July 1, 2020. Projects may be up to two years in length.

4. Budget Impacts

This Resolution authorizes award of contracts in an amount previously identified by the Metro Council in the budget for this purpose. The adopted FY 2020-21 budget includes the necessary appropriation authority for reimbursement of these grants.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Chief Operating Officer recommends approval of Resolution No. 20-5430.