

2018 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2021

PROJECT TITLE: Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park

PROJECT MANAGER: MaryLynn Pulscher

AFFILIATION: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

MAILING ADDRESS: 3800 Bryant Ave S

CITY/STATE/ZIP: Minneapolis MN 55409

PHONE: 612 313 7784

E-MAIL: mpulscher@minneapolisparcs.org

WEBSITE: www.minneapolisparcs.org

FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 05h as extended by M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$500,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$500,000

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$0

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

The new Nature in the City exhibit at North Mississippi Regional Park features compelling design with interactive components that spark curiosity about Nature, increase knowledge about Nature, entice visitors to explore the outdoors, and become better stewards of the environment.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

Nestled between I-94 and the Mississippi River in north Minneapolis, North Mississippi Regional Park serves more than 300,000 annual visitors. Located within the park is the Carl Kroening Interpretive Center which featured an outdated and worn educational exhibit focused on human relationships to the Mississippi River as drinking water, transportation corridor, and job source. However, park staff discovered that what visitors really wanted was to learn more about the natural resources found in the park - the land, the water, animals, birds and insects - and connect with Nature in a hands-on, immersive way.

The overarching objective of the project is to educate and inspire park visitors so they can make better decisions to positively impact the natural world. Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board staff worked with Split Rock Studios (SRS) to imagine and develop content and components for a new educational exhibit titled Nature in the City. SRS then designed, fabricated, sculpted, and installed the landforms, interactives, super graphics, taxidermy, technology, signs and more. The exhibit features current research, compelling interpretation and visuals, and interactive components to spark wonder and curiosity about the Mississippi River, stormwater runoff, native plants and pollinators, wildlife and their adaptations to city living, plus migration, the Mississippi flyway, and more. Designed to foster repeat visitation, parts of the exhibit can change out seasonally, while others provide space to add stories and information in response to park visitor interests. The exhibits, along with programs led by staff, promote ways people can take action to benefit land and water. Park visitors are also encouraged to apply their new knowledge while exploring the park and contribute to citizen science field work.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Due to the pandemic, the Kroening Interpretive Center remains closed to the public. When restrictions are lifted, staff look forward to welcoming the estimated 326,000 annual visitors to North Mississippi Regional Park to explore the new Nature in the City exhibit.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

M.L. 2018 ENRTF Work Plan Final Report (Main Document)

Today's Date: February 2, 2021

Final Report Date of Work Plan Approval: June 5, 2018

Project Completion Date: February 2, 2021

Does this submission include an amendment request? No.

PROJECT TITLE: Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park

Project Manager: MaryLynn Pulscher

Organization: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

College/Department/Division: Environmental Management

Mailing Address: 3800 Bryant Ave S

City/State/Zip Code: Minneapolis MN 55409

Telephone Number: 612 313 7784 or 612 499 9240

Email Address: mpulscher@minneapolisparcs.org

Web Address: www.minneapolisparcs.org

Location: Metro Region. Hennepin and Anoka County serving Brooklyn Center, Columbia Heights, Fridley, Minneapolis, Robbinsdale

Total Project Budget: \$500,000

Amount Spent: \$500,000

Balance: \$ 0

Legal Citation: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 05h as extended by M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2

Appropriation Language: \$500,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to develop new interactive exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park to encourage the approximately 326,000 annual visitors to better understand and explore the river and surrounding natural area.

M.L. 2020 - Sec. 2. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND; EXTENSIONS. [to June 30, 2021]

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board proposes to create compelling, new, interactive exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park to spark curiosity about Nature, increase knowledge about Nature, entice visitors to explore the outdoors, and become better stewards of the environment.

The exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park's Carl Kroening Interpretive Center are old and worn, and one-third of them have been removed due to safety concerns. The old exhibits focus on human relationships to the river (transportation corridor, job source, and recreational use). However, the last 15 years of on-site public programs prove this is not what most park visitors are interested in. People want to learn more about the natural resources found in the park - the land, the water, animals, birds and insects - and connect with Nature in a hands-on, immersive way.

The goal of the project – **Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park** – is to better serve the park's visitors and respond to interests of diverse user groups. The exhibits will feature current research, compelling interpretation and visuals, and interactive components to spark wonder and curiosity. Utilizing hands-on elements, technology, and equipment, the exhibits will engage visitors on these major themes:

- Water: the Mississippi River & Shingle Creek, what impacts its health, who lives there
- Native plants and pollinators: wild bees and honeybees, butterflies and moths
- Wildlife and their adaptations to city living: coyotes, crows, and beavers
- Flight: dragonflies, monarch migration, flight mechanisms, the Mississippi flyway
- Citizen science: phenology, sharing data, opportunities to take action

Portions of the exhibits will change with the seasons and will also promote ways people can take action to benefit land and water. Supporting components of the exhibits will allow park visitors to apply new knowledge in the park, engaging them in citizen science work while using hip waders, dip nets, turbidity tubes, binoculars, and beekeeper suits. The exhibits will encourage visitors to get outside and explore the park and make better decisions to positively impact the natural world.

North Mississippi Regional Park attracts 326,000 visitors a year, serves the north metro and Minneapolis, and is adjacent to a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty (RCAP) with 50% or more of the residents below the poverty line. There is no entrance fee to enjoy the park or to visit the Kroening Interpretive Center and its exhibits. Kroening Center staff lead public programs, school fieldtrips, summer and winter break camps, and free pop-up programs for all ages. Many of the Centers programs are free, and scholarships are readily available. New exhibits will provide a means to better serve the park's visitors and respond to interests of diverse user groups.

II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 31, 2019

Due to staff turnover in the Environmental Management work group, the MPRB is behind on this project by a few months. The current plan is for the RFP to go to the City next week for SUBP goals, release the RFP after that, and have the consultant contract approved at the MPRB's April Board meeting. We will work with consultant to see how (and if) we can compress the project timeframe and make up for lost time.

In the meantime, please know that the nature emphasis at North Mississippi Regional Park continues to expand, with plans for a new nature play space to be built adjacent to the building with funding from People for Parks and the National Recreation & Park Association with the Walt Disney Company, as well as additional funds from Paul's Pals to increase accessibility of nature play. The new Minneapolis Nature Preschool has made the Kroening Center and the park their home, and we have a new Nature Box (repurposed shipping container) on site to support naturalist staff as they provide pop-up nature programs for park visitors. Staff and park visitors are all looking forward to having new nature-focused exhibits at the Center.

Second Update Due: June 30, 2019. **Actual:** July 3, 2019

Our timeline did not go as anticipated. Submission of the RFP to the City's Civil Rights Department to determine project goals for Small and Underutilized Business Program (SUBP) was delayed until June 3. The goals were received on July 1. With these goals in hand the RFP will be released next week with proposals due at the end of the month.

Third Update Due: January 31, 2020

The consultant selection process is complete. Split Rock Studios was selected, and their contract approved in September. Concept development and schematic design was completed with input from MPRB staff, partners, and scientists. Design development I is complete. Final design of the floor plan, exhibit arrangement, dioramas, hands-on activities is about two weeks from completion. Review of graphic panels content is ongoing. MPRB staff from environmental, planning, trades, IT, and maintenance are developing and scheduling work to support installation of the exhibit in June.

Project extended to June 30, 2021 by LCCMR 6/18/20 as a result of M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2, legislative extension criteria being met.

Fourth Update Due: July 1, 2020

Building prep work has been completed for the new exhibits including moving electrical outlets, shifting the lights, and adding new carpeting (not LCCMR funded). Fabrication of the exhibits is well under way with major components nearing completion. Due to COVID19, there have been a few shortages and back orders of some materials, such as acrylic needed for signs. Currently planning for installation to begin July 20.

Fifth Update Due: January 1, 2021

The impacts of the COVID19 pandemic continued to affect the project into late fall. During two rounds of installation in November and in December contractors placed land and water forms, taxidermy, interpretive signs, graphic wraps, reading rails, interactives, and more. The project is very close to completion! It is anticipated that a walk through with the design team will occur in early January for the final punch list.

Final Report Summary: February 2, 2021

Nestled between I-94 and the Mississippi River in north Minneapolis, North Mississippi Regional Park serves more than 300,000 annual visitors. Located within the park is the Carl Kroening Interpretive Center which featured an outdated and worn educational exhibit focused on human relationships to the Mississippi River as drinking water, transportation corridor, and job source. However, park staff discovered that what visitors really wanted was to learn more about the natural resources found in the park - the land, the water, animals, birds and insects - and connect with Nature in a hands-on, immersive way.

The overarching objective of the project is to educate and inspire park visitors so they can make better decisions to positively impact the natural world. Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board staff worked with Split Rock Studios (SRS) to imagine and develop content and components for a new educational exhibit titled Nature in the City. SRS then designed, fabricated, sculpted, and installed the landforms, interactives, super graphics, taxidermy, technology, signs and more. The exhibit features current research, compelling interpretation and visuals, and interactive components to spark wonder and curiosity about the Mississippi River, stormwater runoff, native plants and pollinators, wildlife and their adaptations to city living, plus migration, the Mississippi flyway, and more. Designed to foster repeat visitation, parts of the exhibit can change out seasonally, while others provide space to add stories and information in response to park visitor interests. The exhibits, along with programs led by staff, promote ways people can take action to benefit land and water. Park visitors are also encouraged to apply their new knowledge while exploring the park and contribute to citizen science field work.

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Exhibits

Description: New exhibits will be created beginning with concept development and schematic design and ending with fabrication and installation. Each phase has specific tasks and deliverables; details below.

Secure exhibit design firm (3 months)

TASKS: Issue an RFP and select an exhibit design firm; secure MPRB Board approval; award contract.

DELIVERABLES: Selection of exhibit development firm; MPRB Board approves contract; contract signed.

Concept development, schematic design and development (6 months)

TASKS: Develop messages and strategies to engage audiences; review with community; make models or prototypes; test prototypes with potential audiences; develop floor plan and exhibit arrangement; develop graphic design for signage; research images; draft sign text; describe interactive components and any audiovisual needs.

DELIVERABLES: statement of exhibits' learning goals and strategies; floor plan with sketches and elevations; final inventory of exhibit components; overall graphic look finalized and list of required signs; refined budget.

Final design (3 months)

TASKS: Develop construction/fabrication drawings; finalize lighting and electrical plan; select images and artifacts; finalize sign text including scientific review; select props; create production schedule; review budget.

DELIVERABLES: Final components list; construction/fabrication drawings for each component; production ready graphic design for signs and other elements; prop list; artifact list; specs for lighting and electricity; fabrication schedule; installation schedule; cost estimates; final budget allocation.

Fabrication and installation (6 months)

TASKS: locate fabricators and secure bids; award contracts; build exhibits; create or purchase props; purchase and/or mount artifacts; produce signs and window graphics; compile audiovisuals (if doing); install exhibits.

DELIVERABLES: Exhibits are fabricated and installed; as-builts and graphic files turned over to MPRB; staff trained on care and use of exhibits.

Within the Kroening Interpretive Center, the exhibit space will be divided into different zones with the overarching theme of Nature in the City. Final zone designations will be decided during the design phase and it is anticipated the zones will include Water: the Mississippi River & Shingle Creek; Native plants and pollinators; Wildlife and their adaptations to city living; Flight (dragonflies, monarch migration, and more); and Citizen Science incorporated throughout the exhibits. Exhibit content will be reviewed by science experts including Dr. Elaine Evans, Amy Thompson (PhD student), and others to be determined.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$500,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. RFP and selection process complete	October 1, 2018
2. Exhibits concept development, schematic design, and design development complete	April 1, 2019
3. Exhibits final design phase complete	July 1, 2019
4. Exhibits production and installation complete	February 1, 2020

Activity Status as of January 30, 2019

Work has begun on securing the exhibit design firm; the RFP goes to the City next week for SUBP goals and anticipate Board approval of the consultant contract in April. At that point we will know if we can still meet our original proposed project completion date of February 1, 2020 or if we will need to amend the timeline.

Second Update June 30, 2019

After further review by other staff, the RFP received additional editing and was not submitted to the City in February as anticipated. The RFP with SUBP (Small & Underutilized Business Program) goals determined by the City's Civil Rights Department will be posted July 8 or 9 with proposals due at the end of July. Proposals will include the consultants proposed timeline so at that point we will know if need to ask LCCMR for a project extension or not. Hopefully they can complete the work by June 2020. Our new goal is to have the contract approved by the Board in late August or early September.

Third Update January 31, 2020

The contract with Split Rock Studios was approved by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in September. Concept development, schematic design, and design development are complete. Final design is nearing completion. Exhibit production will begin in February. Installation is scheduled for June.

Fourth Update July 1, 2020

Final design was completed in February. While COVID19 has impacted production, it is still nearing completion. New goal for installation is for the last two weeks of July.

Fifth Update January 1, 2021

COVID19 impacts to material availability continued to be an issue into late fall. Fabrication was completed, and two waves of installation occurred in November and December. A punch list walk through with the consultant team will occur in early January.

Final Report Summary: February 2, 2021

The new Nature in the City exhibit is complete. Designed, fabricated and installed by Split Rock Studios, the exhibit features compelling content and interactives that will spark visitors curiosity about Nature, increase knowledge about Nature, entice visitors to explore the outdoors, and become better stewards of the environment.

Outcome: Water is woven throughout the exhibit and enables visitors to see what's beneath the surface of the Mississippi River, from macro invertebrates, carp and walleye, to invasive species and pollutants. Visitors will learn about the impacts of stormwater runoff on the health of river and Shingle Creek, as well as the many creatures rely on these waterbodies.

Outcome: Hands-on components of the exhibit focus on native plants and pollinators and allow visitors to get up-close with plant and pollinators interactions and discover cavity nesting bees. Interpretive signs and graphics reveal the world of elusive moths as well as and compare the differences between wasps and bees.

Outcome: Visitors are empowered to learn about and identify urban wildlife, as well as the adaptations they've made to survive. The exhibit includes common and elusive wildlife including crows, raccoons and coyotes, beavers, red fox, songbirds and raptors.

Outcome: Visitors investigate flight mechanics with a zoetrope, see and learn about waterfowl found along the Mississippi flyway, and study the development of dragonflies and monarch butterflies.

Outcome: Visitors are inspired to participate and share their nature observations with park staff and other visitors by adding content to a specific exhibit component.

Outcome: The exhibits increase the site's capacity for K-12 programming. Environmental Education staff are currently developing programs that are supported by exhibit content. Staff plan to debut these programs in the fall of 2021 as the COVID19 pandemic recedes.

Outcome: Youth and community audiences will use scientific and field work equipment to engage in citizen work in the park. Visitors may borrow equipment plus adventure backpacks that direct their exploration of the park and the information to be collected or visitors may participate in a program led by staff.

IV. DISSEMINATION:

The new interactive exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park will serve all ages and be available for free to all visitors when the Kroening Interpretive Center is open. Currently the building is open seven days a week from May to October and is open six days a week November to April. The building is closed for some major holidays. The Center offers summer day camps for children, weekend programs for families and adults, school field trips, drop-in programs, teen adventures, and summer school classes. The Center offers both free and fee-based programs, and program fee waivers are available. In 2016, the overall park served 326,000 visitors.

Status as of January 31, 2019

Due to staff turnover in the Environmental work group, exhibit development has not begun.

Second Update June 30, 2019

The RFP, with SUBP (Small & Underutilized Business Program) goals determined by the City’s Civil Rights Department, will be posted July 8 or 9 with proposals due at the end of July.

Third Update January 31, 2020

Discussion underway with MPRB Communications staff to plan how we celebrate and share the new exhibits with the community.

Fourth Update July 1, 2020

Due to COVID19, most of our plans for a large community celebration had to be scrapped. We are rethinking when and how we can celebrate the exhibit with the community. The June issue of the Camden News had a small story about the Nature in the City exhibit and the new nature play space also under construction.

Fifth Update January 1, 2021

Due to the pandemic the Kroening Interpretive Center remains closed to the public.

Final Report Summary February 4, 2021

The project is complete, and staff look forward to sharing the exhibit with the community when pandemic restrictions allow. Ideally, we would be able to host some sort of ribbon-cutting or grand opening with project partners and park visitors later this spring or early this summer. MPRB Communications staff are ready to promote the exhibit and related education programs and will be sure to include acknowledgement of support from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

V. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses")	AMOUNT
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: exhibit designer, fabrication, installation	\$495,000
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: scientists (content review)	\$5,000

TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 500,000
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Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: N/A

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: 0

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours:	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE:
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Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: 6

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: 12,500	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE: 6
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B. Other Funds:

SOURCE OF AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS	Amount Proposed	Amount Spent	Status and Timeframe
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:			
Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	\$100,000	\$ 100,000	Secured. Expended on project.
City of Minneapolis	\$50,000	\$ 50,000	Secured. Expended on project.
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: N/A			
	\$	\$	
In-Kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Period:			
MPRB, Project Management	\$31,000	\$31,000	In-kind service provided.
MPRB, Mississippi River Green Team (concept review, prototype testing)	\$8,000	\$1000	Because our timeline changed youth were not able to participate to the degree anticipated.
MPRB, North Mississippi Kroening Center Program Staff (concept review, prototype testing, community engagement)	\$10,000	\$5,000	Due to staff turnover, and change in timeline, program staff could not be involved to the degree initially planned on.
City of Minneapolis (clarity, message relevance, technical review of water exhibit content)	\$5,000	\$5,000	In-kind services provided
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:			
Invasive Carp Applied Research in Lake Nokomis Subwatershed. Legal citation: M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$189,936		Legally obligated
Other Funding History: N/A			

	\$	\$	
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VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:

A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Elaine Evans, Phd	Extension Educator	Dept. of Entomology, University of Minnesota	Scientific review
Amy Thompson	Conservation Biology PhD Student (researching dragonflies)	Monarch Lab, Univeristy of Minnesota	Scientific review

B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
MaryLynn Pulscher	Manager, Environmental Education	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	Project Manager
Abby Moore	Training and Community Learning Specialist	Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	Part of project team, inform and review exhibits for clarity & messages
Elizabeth Stout, PE, CFM	Water Resources Regulatory Coordinator	City of Minneapolis Public Works – Surface Water & Sewers Division	Inform and review water focused exhibits, provide technical review, message clarity

VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

In 2016, the MPRB’s long term partner at North Mississippi Regional Park’s Karl Kroening Interpretive Center reallocated their staff and resources to other sites. Beginning in 2017, the MPRB approved new funding of \$130,000 (slated to increase to \$190,000 in 2018) to support on-site staff and programs.

Our long-term strategy is to continue to fund programming staff at North Mississippi Park and utilize the new exhibits as inspiration for enhanced public programs, improved visitor self-directed exploration, and richer programs for schools and summer camps. The impacts of the project will be tangible for many years to come: park visitors will gain new Nature knowledge that impacts their decision making and changes their behavior; new user groups feel comfortable in Nature and spend more time engaged in outdoor experiences; and the number and diversity of citizen scientists increases.

The impact and use of the new exhibits will be tracked using existing MPRB systems including annual attendance and participation reports of center visitors and program participants, plus evaluations from participants, teachers, and volunteers. In addition, exhibits include social marketing components to help track what kinds of action people are willing to take to be better stewards of the environment.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- **The project is for three years, will begin on July 1, 2018, and end on June 30, 2021.**
- **Periodic project status update reports will be submitted January 31 and June 30 of each year.**
- **A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2021.**

IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:

A. Budget Spreadsheet: attached

B. Visual Component or Map: attached

D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements: N/A

E. Research Addendum: N/A

Final Attachment A:
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2018 Budget Spreadsheet



Project Title: Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with
 New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park

Legal Citation: M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 02, Subd. 05h

Project Manager: MaryLynn Pulscher

Organization: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

College/Department/Division: N/A

M.L. 2018 ENRTF Appropriation:

Project Length and Completion Date: July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021

Date of Report: 4 February 2021

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	AMOUNT SPENT	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM			
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts			
<i>Exhibit design estimated at \$70,000; exhibit fabrication and installation estimated at \$425,000; these contracts will be determined using a competitive process</i>	\$495,000	\$495,000	\$0
<i>Scientists: review exhibit content for accuracy and messaging</i>	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0