

# Application #: 08

## 1598 - The Native Meadow Project: Creating Equitable Access to Natural Urban Educational Spaces in Fonticello Park

### Application Details

Funding Opportunity:	1524-Get Outdoors Fund (GO) - FY23 - Spring Round
Funding Opportunity Due Date:	Mar 7, 2023 5:00 PM
Program Area:	Get Outdoors Fund
Status:	Submitted
Stage:	Final Application
Initial Submit Date:	Mar 6, 2023 12:19 PM
Initially Submitted By:	Teresa Cole
Last Submit Date:	Mar 7, 2023 12:29 AM
Last Submitted By:	Teresa Cole

### Contact Information

#### Primary Contact Information

Active User*:	Yes
Type:	External User
Name*:	Ms. Teresa Ann Cole Salutation First Name Middle Name Last Name
Title:	Officer
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Address*:	2607 Bainbridge St  Richmond Virginia 23225 City State/Province Postal Code/Zip
Phone*:	(804) 316-4556 Ext. Phone ###-###-####
Fax:	###-###-####
Comments:	

#### Organization Information

Status*:	Approved
Organization Name*:	Friends of Fonticello Park
Organization Type*:	Non-Profit Organization
Tax Id:	92-1594639
Organization Website:	<a href="https://fonticelloparkva.com/">https://fonticelloparkva.com/</a>

**Address\*:** 2607 Bainbridge St  
Richmond Virginia 23225-  
City State/Province Postal Code/Zip  
**Phone\*:** 804-316-4556 Ext.  
###-###-####  
**Fax:** ###-###-####  
**Benefactor:**  
**Vendor ID:**  
**Comments:**

## GO Fund Grant Pre-Application Questionnaire

### Project Information

The project title will be used in public relations and grant documents should funding be awarded.

**Is the project title the same as application title?\*** Yes

**Are you affiliated with a federal governmental entity, a for-profit entity, or are you an individual?\*** No

Proposals for the same concept may be submitted twice, but resubmissions must reflect significant revision to be considered.

**Has this proposal been submitted to the GO Fund previously?\*** No

**Amount of Funding Requested (\$500 min, \$25,000 max)** \$20,000.00  
Partial funding is possible.

\*:

**Would you like to be considered for any other VOF grant program if eligible?\*** No

Please select which category best describes the project.

**Category\*:** Park Improvement

### Project Location

(Latitude/longitude required\*, other location info such as street address or tax parcel ID optional)

\*See [Google Maps Guide](#) for directions on using Google Maps or contact grants@vof.org to ask for help getting latitude/longitude coordinates.

**Project Location\*:** 37.515944780  
Latitude (00.00000)

**Longitude\*:** -77.46062448  
Longitude (-00.00000)

Please provide any additional location information to help locate the project site.

**Other Location Information (such as street address or tax parcel ID):** 2715 Bainbridge St, Richmond, VA 23225

Is the project located on a property owned by the grant applicant?

**Located on Property Owned by Applicant\*:** No

Does the landowner agree to the proposed use of their land?

**Landowner Agrees to Use:** Yes

### Project Description

#### Project Description\*:

The native meadow will be an educational natural space, where children and community members can learn about native, local ecosystem plants,

how they support wildlife and pollinators, increase soil health, and contribute to cleaner waterways. We will facilitate work with neighborhood schools and organizations to have kids part of the project, including plant selection, design of the space, prepping the land, planting, and participating in future maintenance and educational programming.

**Community Needs**

Community Need
time in nature improves mental health
time in nature has physical health benefits (e.g., lowers blood pressure, improves immune system)
reduction of city pollution and runoff
reconnect those in cities with nature
reduce urban heat island effect
provides shade and cools the air
our community deserves access to equitable park facilities like other wealthier communities have

**Community Support**

**Community Support\*:**

Richmond Parks and Rec has agreed to partner on this project and has prepared the 6000 sq ft land in the park for planting. Through ongoing fundraising efforts, the community has already contributed nearly \$2000 in less than a week. We have a local artist and arborist who volunteered to build a natural fence. Our work is predicated on the input and community support garnered during the master planning process that was conducted and approved after the tragic death of Markiya Dickson in 2019.

**Project Status**

**Project Status\*:**

This proposal was supported and approved in our monthly community meetings. Parks and Rec has tilled and leveled the land. We have raised money to purchase the additional soil and compost. We also have the commitment of two local native nurseries to grow the needed local ecotype plants. We are working with Amy Robins (council liaison) to connect with Communities in Schools and The Boys and Girls Clubs. We have reached out to Lewis Ginter requesting a partnership for educational programming.

**Project Implementation**

Implementation Step
Soil preparation: Compost and topsoil added, weeding after solarization
Solarization of current soil
Schedule timeline of student education and participation
Identify and solidify partnerships for student participation in project (schools and orgs)
Purchase plants from local ecotype nurseries
Organize and hold community workdays for planting co-led by children
Outreach to schools about programming and opportunities in park
Install walkways and fencing
Order and install educational signage

**Funding**

**Funding is Essential\*:**

Little progress has been made in implementing the approved master plan. When the Friends group approached the city after documenting the deferred maintenance and crumbling infrastructure, we were told there was no funding for park improvements. Without funding, we will not be able to purchase the local ecotype native plants. Without the meadow, we can not implement our long term vision of environmental education and park rewilding, which we are pursuing to reduce the urban heat island effect.

**Total Estimated Project Cost**

Please indicate the total estimated cost of the project. Include all expenses related to the implementation of the project, not just those submitted for the GO Fund grant.

**Total Cost of Project\*:** \$0.00

**Funding Sources**

Please indicate the amount of funding secured for the project and the amount requested from non-VOF sources.

**Secured Funds\*:** \$0.00

**Requested Funds (non-VOF)\*:** \$0.00

**Additional Information**

**Additional Information\*:**

While the funding of this project would go towards the installation of the meadow, the long term impact of this funding is in the programming we will offer during the design, implementation and long-term rewilding of the park. It is our goal to be the first urban park to pursue an effort to rewild an underused, turf lawn park in an underserved community for the health and well being of the community and the ecosystem. The implementation steps above did not populate in order entered

## Get Outdoors Grant Application

### **Project Description**

Provide a brief summary of this project in the space below. Please note this summary will be shared with the public and replicated for press releases and grant documents should funding be awarded.

**Brief Summary\*:**

This project is a beautification project composed of local ecotype native plants grown by local horticulturalists. It will also be an outdoor educational classroom to educate the community on the benefits of rewilding urban greenspaces, including support to wildlife and pollinators, increased soil health, cleaner waterways, and improved community health and wellness. The design and implementation project will be done in collaboration with nearby schools and organizations.

While an explanation of the project has already been provided, please share some additional information about the project.

**State the purpose of the project\*:**

Fonticello Park is a turf grass park with few plants and decaying infrastructure. The purpose of our project is to start revitalizing the park to provide equitable access to urban green spaces in our community. The project would revert an approximately 6000 sq foot area of the park back to a natural green space, which has a myriad of benefits for communities, including improving mental and physical health, reduction of pollution and runoff, providing shade, and reducing the heat island effect.

### **Planned Deliverables**

**Deliverable**

Beautified urban native green space in an otherwise barren turf grass park
Educational outdoor meadow with self-guided activities via interpretive signage
Outdoor classroom for environmental education programming

### **Project Goals/Results/Outcomes**

**Goal/Result/Outcome**

Ongoing seed sharing and community education space with events hosted in the meadow
Ongoing community involvement in park beautification through student led workdays
Long term community resource about the benefits of urban rewilding and native plants
More educated and invested community in rewilding and environmental stewardship

### **Community Description**

Expand upon how this project addresses specific needs in the community.

**Community Needs\*:**

The Swansboro neighborhood, where the park is, has no other immediate access to thriving green spaces. The neighborhood is diversifying, but is historically and still predominantly marginalized and economically disadvantaged people of color. The park's amenities are largely in disrepair. According to a 2021 dissertation by a VCU student that studied the equity of 11 smaller parks in the city, Fonticello Park scored the lowest of all parks, with our nearest neighbor, scoring the second lowest.

Describe how this project provides a unique service or resource to the community.

**Community Service or Resource\*:**

In 1923, Councilperson Carter Jones said "when the city playgrounds open for the white children of Richmond, not so much as space for a baseball diamond will be available for the 1,300" black children of the Southside. While he was successful in acquiring the land for a park, the problems of 1923 persist. The park still lacks high quality park amenities for the children and community. This project will be the first of many by the Friends to finally remedy that inequity for future generations.

### **Community Support**

Describe how the community has been involved in the development of this proposal.

**Development\*:**

The Master Plan was developed with wide scale community input and this final plan included multiple natural spaces. From that vision, we have worked with Richmond Parks and Rec to prepare the land for planting. Neighbors and community members have volunteered their time and

resources to installing the meadow, including growing the plants and building the fences. We have raised over \$2700 dedicated to the meadow from the community via our Go Fund Me.

Describe how the community will be involved in the implementation of this project.

**Implementation\*:**

The meadow will be installed through collaboration with local schools, organizations and local horticulturalists. We will collaborate to lead environmental education with groups of children, who will learn about the benefits of local ecotype native plants, help select plants for the area based on their water and sun needs, help prepare the land, plant and provide ongoing maintenance. They will also help lead community work days for the planting and maintenance.

**Additional Information**

If the location of the project or the focus of the project has special significance to the community, please describe it here.

**Additional Information:**

The land was important to native people who used the natural springs as a meeting place and source of clean water. Well into the early 2000s, the spring on the property was a source of clean water for the community. The park has hosted a myriad of well loved community events. Due to long term deferred maintenance and violence, the park has seen declining community use. The native meadow is a first step towards ensuring the park is returned to its place as a beloved community gathering spot.

## Estimated Timeline/Plan of Work

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*Estimated Timeline/Plan of Work*

Start Date	Completion Date	Activity	Status	Responsible Party
11/01/2022	11/01/2024	Grow local ecotype plants	Underway	Bill Shanabruch and Ashley Moulton
01/03/2023	05/01/2023	Identify and solidify partnerships for student participation	Underway	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
01/11/2023	01/11/2023	Remove weed barrier and level/grade area	Completed	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities
03/21/2023	05/31/2023	Soliciting guest speakers/presenters for students	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
05/01/2023	11/01/2023	Phase I: Work with students to research, design and install Phase I of native meadow	Underway	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
05/01/2023	05/15/2023	Phase I: Place silage tarp over approx half of area for solarizing invasive plants and turf grass	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park
08/31/2023	10/31/2023	Phase I: Student led community workday(s) to remove silage tarp, remove plant debris, work soil	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
09/01/2023	10/15/2023	Install fencing around perimeter of entire area	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park and Luke Swenson
10/01/2023	10/15/2023	Phase I: Preparing the soil, placing cardboard as weed barrier, spreading topsoil/compost	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
10/15/2023	11/15/2023	Phase I: Community workday(s) for planting	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
11/15/2023	12/31/2024	Continue scheduled observation and maintenance with kids	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
11/15/2023	05/01/2024	Continue scheduled observation and maintenance (weeding, watering) of planted area by children	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
11/15/2023	05/01/2024	Research and revision of original plan for Phase II planting with children based on observation	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
03/01/2024	05/01/2024	Monthly community workdays, as needed	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
03/01/2024	07/31/2025	Ongoing monthly educational programming and community engagement	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
05/01/2024	05/15/2024	Phase II: Place silage tarp over area for solarizing invasive plants and grass on remaining area	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
08/31/2024	10/31/2024	Phase II: Student led community workday(s) to remove silage tarp, remove plant debris, work soil	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Programming Committee
10/01/2024	10/15/2024	Phase II: Preparing the soil, spreading topsoil/compost over remaining area	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee
10/15/2024	11/15/2024	Phase II: Community workday(s) for planting	Not yet started	Friends of Fonticello Park - Park Beautification Committee

## Budget

### Expenditures

Item	Expense Estimated or Actual Cost?
60 Plant Plug Trays (50 plants each - 300 plants)	\$9,000.00 Actual
25 Western Red Cedar Wood Fence Split-rail Line Post	\$422.00 Actual
4 Western Red Cedar Wood Fence Split-rail Corner Post	\$67.52 Actual
60 Idaho Timber 2-in x 3-in x 10-ft Western Red Cedar Wood Fence Top Rail	\$820.80 Actual
2 Western Red Cedar Wood Fence Split-rail End Post	\$31.36 Actual
Mita 4.75-ft W x 7.31-ft H Brown Garden Arbor	\$335.00 Actual
10 cub yard of Walkway Material - Gray Crush N Run	\$389.50 Actual
3 - Large Interpretive and Educational Signage	\$7,483.88 Estimated
6 No Spray/No Mow Signs	\$131.94 Actual
2 Benches	\$1,318.00 Actual
	<b>\$20,000.00</b>

### Other Fund Sources

Match Source	If other, please list	If Grant Program, please list Grant Funding Source Name	Funding Status	If requested, please list the anticipated award date	Match Type	If other, please list	Planned Use	Match Amount
Applicant's Organizational Budget			Secured		Cash		Additional costs over the \$20,000 requested	\$2,700.00
Grant Program		Community Foundation Conserve the Future Grant	Requested	04/21/2023	Cash		Expansion of proposed project to include greening of additional square footage in the park	\$10,000.00
								<b>\$12,700.00</b>

**Budget Summary**

<b>Total Requested Amount:</b>	\$20,000.00
<b>Total Match Amount:</b>	\$12,700.00
<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$32,700.00
<b>Match Percentage:</b>	38.84%

**Supplemental Material**

*Supplemental Material (If Applicable)*

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include supplemental material.

Selecting yes and saving the form will pull up a section where materials may be uploaded for submission.

**Will you be providing supplemental material?\*** Yes

**Supplemental Material**

Description	File Name	Type	Size	Upload Date
Short narrative about Friends of Fonticello Park and the Native Meadow Project. Includes survey results and master plan documentation in support of a native meadow/garden installation.	VOF Native Meadow Proposal - Friends of Fonticello Park.pdf	pdf	1 MB	03/04/2023 03:15 PM



# FRIENDS OF FONTICELLO PARK

## The Native Meadow Project Proposal

On June 6, 1923 , Richmond's The News Leader reported that "when the city playgrounds open on June 15 for the white children of Richmond, not so much as space for a baseball diamond will be available for the 1,300" black children of the Southside. In that article, Councilperson Carter Jones was quoted as saying there was no greater need in the city at the time, as children on the southside had no space for outdoor play. Carter Jones authored the resolution to take over the Fonticello Springs property from the Taylor Estate and turn it into what is now Fonticello Park (Carter Jones Park). It wasn't until 1928 that the petition for the acquisition of the land cleared court hurdles and officially became Carter Jones Park. Between the 1930s and the 1970s, the park saw heavy sports use from local high schools and organized sports leagues. Since that time unfortunately, the park has fallen victim to a lack of funding, deferred maintenance, blight and violence.

### **FRIENDS OF FONTICELLO PARK HISTORY**

The mission of the Friends of Fonticello Park is to honor the history of our park, while creating a safe, welcoming and nourishing outdoor space for our community and neighbors. The park was established in 1915 after land previously owned by W.G. Taylor was sold off for the development of the current Woodland Heights and Swansboro neighborhoods. Eleven acres of land was set aside for the establishment of a park. In 1924, the park was in danger of being developed until a local city council person, Carter Jones, advocated for the park to be permanently set aside as greenspace for the predominantly black children of Southside. After a lengthy legal battle, the city eventually acquired the park. Since then, the park has seen upgrades, including the installation of a playground, tennis courts, skatepark, and a food forest/community garden.

Established in 2020, the Friends advocate for and collaborate with the Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (DPRCF) to maintain and improve the park after years of neglect, deferred maintenance and violence. As a response to the tragic shooting death of nine year old Markiya Dickson in May 2019, DPRCF worked with the Timmons Group to develop and gather feedback on a Master Plan for the park. The plan was recommended for approval by the Urban Design Committee and approved by the Planning Commission in May 2020. Funds have already been allocated to install a new playground and the city is working with several businesses to get quotes for other features in the plan, including refurbishing the pavilion and installing a splash pad, both of which are currently unfunded. Additionally, there is \$60,000 set aside in the budget for the repair of the basketball and tennis courts.

Unfortunately, in March 2020, the pandemic shut down movement on updating the park. The playground was closed and some play structures removed in November 2020 due to safety concerns from previous vandalism. In August 2022, the playground was completely removed. The baseball fields have also been decommissioned and organized sports no longer take place in the park.

In June 2022, neighbors walked through the park to document crumbling infrastructure and multiple safety issues in an effort to reinvoke the city's work on the park. Unfortunately, on September 4, 2022, another act of violence occurred in the park and three teens were shot, luckily with non-life threatening injuries. This prompted further community frustration about the continued lack of momentum on park improvements.

Our organization is driven by the need for an equitably maintained and safe park that serves the community. Our park is located in the historically black, working class neighborhood. The Swansboro neighborhood is approximately 70% black with over 50% of the population having a high school degree or less. Nearly 80% of the residents make under the national average income. The neighborhood, and park, are located in a food desert with the nearest grocery store over two miles away from the park. The parks' food forest and community garden, which hosts a weekly free farm stand have been a vital part of bringing community into the park and providing nourishment to neighbors. We envision a place where families gather, where community members can come for food, where neighbors meet each other, and where children can learn, play, and grow. As an organization, we are committed to continuing to work collaboratively with the city and community partners to bring a once lively park back from the brink. We are inspired by the resilience of the community and the park, especially in the face of continued gun violence and neglect.

## **PARK AMENITIES**

Most of the amenities in the park, with the exception of the food forest and community garden have been neglected for decades. According to a [May 2022 dissertation](#) by Molly Mallow at VCU, Fonticello Park (Carter Jones Park) has the highest concentration of low quality amenities (22 out of the total 51, or 42.3%, were rated the lowest score). Mallow notes that Fonticello Park had a "high concentration of broken and dilapidated amenities and had the lowest mean score of amenities of all the active neighborhood parks studied."

## **THE NATIVE MEADOW PROJECT**

As a first major project, the Friends of Fonticello want to create a natural and living space in the park. The native meadow will be an educational space in the park, where community members can come to learn about local ecosystem plants, how they support wildlife and pollinators, increase soil health, and contribute to cleaner waterways. Our programming committee will support seed sharing projects for neighbors to plant in their own yard gardens. Equally as important, this native space will create a diverse and safe habitat for native wildlife. While this project currently only covers approximately 6000 square feet of the park, the long term goal is to expand the project to as many areas of the park as possible to help create urban [rewilding](#), which include potential benefits such as attracting indigenous wildlife and "strengthening resilience to climate change, reducing pollution, reversal of biodiversity loss, and healthier resident populations."

During our September 21, 2022, Friends of Fonticello Park meeting with DPRCF, Deputy Director Shamar Young proposed that the city could begin immediately working on a native meadow in the old playground space. He indicated they would be willing to till and level the area and plant wildflower seed in that space as part of a large city initiative to become a "[Bee City](#)." While this idea was intriguing, unfortunately, wildflower mixes are only native to the country usually, not the region, therefore, those plants may not thrive in our ecosystem and our insects and wildlife may not be adapted to the wildflowers or from them being planted. While this type of planting would provide some immediate gratification in terms of aesthetics, the Friends of Fonticello Park would rather see this done the right way.

We have met with two local ecotype native plant nursery owners, Bill Shanabruch from Reedy Creek Environmental and Ashley Moulton of Moulton Hot Natives, to create a landscape plan for the native area. They have conducted a site visit and are creating a plant list. They have both committed to growing enough plants from seed for the 6000 square foot

area. Ashley has already successfully planted a native meadow at Pine Camp Community Center in the Northside of Richmond.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY IN SUMMER 2022 SHOWING THE NATIVE GARDEN AS A TOP 5 PRIORITY



required question on the survey. Results are presented below in both overall votes, and votes by priority. Additional comments from respondents are included in the appendix.

### OVERALL PRIORITIES –

- 1) Markiyah Dickson Imagination Zone: Splash Pad – 75 total votes – 49% of respondents
- 2) Expanded Skate Park – 70 total votes – 46% of respondents
- 3) Refurbished Pavilion – 62 total votes – 41% of respondents
- 4) Native Plant and Pollinator Garden – 61 total votes – 40% of respondents
- 5) Fonticello Food Forest – 60 total votes – 39% of respondents
- 6) Fonticello Spring and Plaza – 50 total votes – 33% of respondents
- 7) Plaza with Overhead Structure – 44 total votes – 29% of respondents
- 8) Amphitheater and Stage – 40 total votes – 26% of respondents
- 9) TIE Multi-Use Pathway AND Loop Trail – 26 total votes EACH – 17% of respondents
- 10) Public Art and Memorial Space – 25 total votes – 16% of respondents
- 11) Existing Skate Park – 24 total votes – 16% of respondents
- 12) TIE Rain Garden and Bioretention Area AND Relocated Basketball Courts – 23 total votes EACH – 15% of respondents
- 13) TIE Picnic Shelters AND Food Forest Path – 22 total votes EACH – 14% of respondents
- 14) Skate Spot – 17 total votes – 11% of respondents
- 15) Running Trail – 16 total votes – 10% of respondents
- 16) Garden Path – 15 total votes – 10% of respondents
- 17) Existing Baseball Fields – 13 total votes – 8% of respondents
- 18) Refurbished Pump House – 12 total votes – 8% of respondents
- 19) Open Lawn – 9 total votes – 6% of respondents
- 20) Pedestrian Bollards – 3 total votes – 2% of respondents
- 21) TIE Utility Area and Cell Tower AND Vehicular Entrance with Bollards – 2 total votes EACH – 1% of respondents
- 22) TIE Existing Road AND Storage Area for Landscape Materials – 1 vote EACH – >1% of respondents
- 23) NO VOTES: Sidewalk AND Loop Drive

## FEEDBACK FROM MASTER PLAN SUPPORTING THE INSTALLATION OF A NATIVE GARDEN

Based on planning goals by DPRCF and feedback gathered during the community engagement process (see Project Background), the project team developed a site program to combine the existing features with the following additions:

1 | March 12, 2020

### Fonticello/Carter Jones Park Master Plan – Project Narrative

- A **plaza with an overhead shade structure** adjacent to the existing pavilion
- An **amphitheater and stage** oriented along an existing slope
- A **public art and memorial space** to honor the memory of Markiya Dickson
- A **Markiya Dickson Imagination Zone** with a **splash pad** and **play equipment** for younger and older children. The existing play equipment is relatively new and in good shape and can be reused here.
- **Relocated basketball courts**, placed closer to the heart of the park and a busier street, but buffered with landscaping in the form of a rain garden or bioretention area
- An **expanded skate park** adjacent to the existing skate park
- A **refurbished Fonticello Spring** surrounded by a **new plaza**
- **A native plant and pollinator garden with a garden path** to replace the existing butterfly garden
- A central **multiuse pathway** that provides an arterial pedestrian and biking path crossing from the west side to the east side of the park
- A **loop trail with skate spots**, small skating elements adjoining the path that are intended to draw the skateboarding experience out into other areas of the park

