



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: October 19, 2020

Re: BGCI/ArbNet Grant Agreement and Appropriation

Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting Council approval to execute an agreement with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and Arbnet to accept a \$2,500 grant and to appropriate the grant funds. The Parks and Recreation Department has been awarded the grant to pay for two tree collection trips to Central Arkansas to collect acorns and scions from two varieties of oak trees: *Quercus acerifolia* (Maple Leaf Oak) and *Quercus arkansana* (Arkansas Oak). Both species of trees are listed as either vulnerable or endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) red list. The goal of the project will be to create collections of the two oak tree species in the Stephens Lake Park Arboretum and other park locations to conserve the tree species with the hope of removal from the red list in the future. The two trips will take place in 2021 with the goal of completing in-ground plantings of the two trees no later than 2025.

Discussion

In 2017, Stephens Lake Park was awarded Level II accreditation by the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and the Morton Arboretum. This was earned for achieving high standards of professional practices deemed important for the arboreta and botanic gardens, including planning, governance, public access, programming and tree science, planning and conservation. As the arboretum has continued to grow, park staff has looked at different options for new tree plantings and park development, including the introduction of a conifer collection in the northwest corner of the park and a magnolia collection in the northeast corner of the park. The grant funding provided by ArbNet and BGCI represents a unique opportunity to introduce new species of trees in the arboretum with the hopes that it will continue the longevity of the *Q. acerifolia* and *Q. arkansana* tree species.

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting Council approval to execute an agreement with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and ArbNet to accept a \$2,500 grant and to appropriate the funds. The grant funding will pay for the travel expenses for the Department's Horticulturist to make the two tree collection trips to Arkansas in 2021.

During the two trips, the Horticulturist and one volunteer will collect acorns and scions for the two tree species, *Q. acerifolia* and *Q. arkansana*, to bring back to Columbia, Missouri for plant propagation. The acorns will be planted in individual pots until a mature size for transplanting into the park system. The scions are cuttings from parent trees in Arkansas that will be grafted onto rootstock to propagate new trees that will eventually be transplanted into the arboretum and park system. The timeline for project completion is in-ground planting of the two tree species by 2025. Once the trees are established in the arboretum,



park staff will have the ability to share acorns and scions with other arboretums throughout the nation to continue to improve the quantities of the two endangered species of oak trees.

As part of the grant agreement, the Department will provide ArbNet with a short narrative report describing the project outcome and provide BGCI and ArbNet with photos and videos of the collection trips after the completion of two trips.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The total grant funding provided by BGCI and ArbNet is \$2,500 and will be spent in 2021 for the two tree collection trips.

Long-Term Impact: None

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Operational Excellence, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Environmental Management, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Approve the legislation authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with BGCI/ArbNet to accept a \$2,500 grant and to appropriate the grant funding.