

STAFF REPORT

Date: February 12, 2025

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Acceptance of donation from the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation to support the City of Reno's new Aquatic Ecosystems Exploration Initiative, a hands-on environmental educational program, in the amount of \$6,702.05.

From: Damaris McGlone, Management Analyst

Department: Parks and Recreation

Summary:

The City of Reno Aquatic Ecosystems Exploration Initiative is a hands-on environmental educational fieldtrip designed to connect local students with the natural ecosystems in their own community. Led by the City of Reno Park Rangers, this program provides high-quality outdoor education experiences to local students who may otherwise face barriers to accessing nature. These barriers include time, transportation and ability to pay. To make this program a reality, the City applied for a grant from the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation and was awarded \$6,702.05. The funding will primarily cover materials and transportation.

| Consent Review | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Is this item an annual or standard item that comes before Council for regular approval? | | X |
| 2. Is this item an agreement required based on an item previously approved by Council? | | X |
| 3. Is this item included in the current budget approved and adopted by Council? | | X |
| Other Considerations | | |
| What percent of the total City budget does this item represent? | N/A | |

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Arts, Parks, and Historical Resources

Previous Council Action:

There is no recent Council action relevant to this item.

Background:

The mission of the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation is to advance and promote sustainable, world-class outdoor recreation opportunities throughout Nevada, including the education and engagement of Nevada's youth in outdoor recreation activities. In October 2024, applications opened for the Nevada Outdoor Education and Recreation Grant Program (NOER) for projects that provide quality opportunities for Nevada students to experience the outdoors.

The goals of the program are to improve academic achievement and personal wellness while fostering an appreciation of nature.

The City of Reno Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing access to outdoor spaces and recreational opportunities for all members of the community including youth. The City of Reno Aquatic Ecosystems Exploration Initiative is a hands-on environmental educational field trip designed to connect local students with the natural ecosystems in their own community. Led by the City of Reno Park Rangers, local students and attendees of City of Reno Vacation Station will receive hands-on lessons in local ecosystems, wildlife conservation, and water quality, contributing to a deeper understanding of the region's natural resources while activating the Truckee River corridor.

Discussion:

Through this initiative, students will participate in one indoor lesson and an outdoor field experience at Oxbow Nature Study Area or Idlewild Park, where they will explore riparian zones and stream ecosystems. The curriculum will focus on plant biodiversity, aquatic insects, water quality testing, and the overall importance of healthy water systems to the environment and community.

These hands-on activities are designed to enhance students' understanding of their local environment, instill a sense of stewardship for the Truckee River watershed, and promote physical and mental well-being through outdoor engagement.

We will offer twelve total lessons in 2025.

This grant will cover the costs of transportation, which is a significant barrier for many schools and our own participants in Sierra Kids programming. We will rent Washoe County School District transportation services, with estimated costs attached. The City will contribute in-kind support by providing Park Ranger staff time to lead the educational programming. The project will offer a meaningful outdoor experience that fosters environmental awareness, community

engagement, and an appreciation for the natural world while expanding awareness of our Ranger program and activate public parks.

Financial Implications:

None.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council

Proposed Motion:

I move to accept the grant from the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation.

Attachments:

City of Reno Outdoor Education Microgrant Application Oct 2024

City of Reno NOER Grant Agreement