



## Parks Amenities Matching Fund Program Application Form

*Please print to complete or enter the information and save the document.* Please provide all information requested. You may attach additional sheets and/or materials to support your request.

### 1. Grantee Information

Name of Individual or Organization:

Friends of Grant Park

Contact Name:

Richard L. Kaiser

Mailing Address:

Street

City

State

Zip

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WI

53172

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### 2. Project Title:

Educational Signage Supporting Preservation of the Seven Bridges Ravine

### 3. Funding Requested: \$ 2,830.00

*(Funding matches are granted up to a dollar-for-dollar match.)*



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### 4. Project Description:

Provide a detailed description of your project. Provide as much detail as possible to assist evaluators in clearly understanding the proposal. You may attach drawings or specifications of materials. If educational or marketing materials are proposed, provide a mock up or example of how the product will look, how it will be posted or distributed, and an example of the content. Other acceptable attachments include detailed map and other visual materials, site plans, drawings, photos, cross sections or mock ups of your project and what the finished product will look like.

The Friends of Grant Park (FoGP) is a nonprofit volunteer organization working to conserve, preserve, and improve Grant Park to enhance all that it has to offer the public in general, and the people of Milwaukee County in particular. The FoGP engages in several ongoing projects in this regard. These include invasive species eradication, replanting of native vegetation and trees, litter collection, maintaining bird houses and gardens throughout the park, as well as other larger projects. In particular, approximately three years ago the FoGP invested \$5,000.00, on top of a \$5,000.00 matching grant from another organization to replant a badly eroded hillside in the Seven Bridges Ravine area in Grant Park. The group also engages in ongoing fund-raising efforts to finance its projects.

The current proposed project involves erecting two educational signs, identical in format and narrative, at the two trail heads at the Seven Bridges Ravine. Attached are pictures of the proposed locations for the educational signs (Attachments 1 of 2 and 2 of 2). As described in the Milwaukee County Parks website, the Seven Bridges Ravine area is unique, forested with old stands of American beech, maple, white ash and yellow birch. Native wildflowers cover the slopes in the ravine throughout the spring and early summer, including trout lilly, jack-in-the-pulpit, May Apple, and trillium. Another unique aspect of the bluffs is that they are home to a wet "fen" or meadow which supports a population of plants rare to the area. For several weeks each spring over 200 species of migrating birds populate the area.

In the 1920's a system of stair cases which permit visitors to descend into the ravine, and a series of trails along the ravine floor leading to Lake Michigan, all of Iannoni stone, were created. The lower trail includes a series of wooden foot bridges. There is also an upper trail along part of the ravine. The entire system has been maintained for the most part and was improved upon during the 1990's.



The educational signage being proposed by our project is aimed at reducing serious environmental damage occurring in the ravine. Specifically, over the years far too many visitors have chosen to bypass the stone stair cases described above and instead, walk down the hillsides of the ravine to get to the lower trail. Over decades this foot traffic has resulted in the formation of dozens of "social trails" descending down the hillsides in the ravine and the bluffs facing Lake Michigan. These social trails are now so worn, and the ground so impacted, that significant environmental damage is caused yearly in the ravine. Specifically the vegetation is trampled and killed, and during rains serious erosion results. This erosion has buried a significant amount of the lannon stone trail at the bottom of the ravine in mud. It likewise is in the process of washing out the foundations of more than one of the wooden bridges which must be crossed for people to access the lake. The erosion has also exposed the tree roots of those trees standing in and around the areas of the social paths and thus reduced their stability. Many hikers mistakenly believe these tree roots are natural stair cases for them to walk up and down on.

The social trails described above have been identified by Milwaukee County Parks Department as an issue which should be dealt with. This summer Brian Russart, the Natural Areas Coordinator, along with his staff and in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy, has been working with a group of volunteers mapping the social trails, doing some invasive species eradication, and using the removed vegetation to cover up a number of the social trails. FoGP and a group of 12 volunteers recently assisted Mr. Russart's group for a day in this effort. The FoGP has also constructed a brush barrier this summer hoping to block access to one of the more worn social trails in the park.

However, these are temporary solutions. The agreed upon goal is to keep people off the slopes. FoGP's proposed project is meant to augment the above described work by Mr. Russart and provide long term protection to the ravine. It is believed that most of the visitors who utilize these social trails do not understand the damage that they are causing. Most of the trails appear to offer an off the beaten-path alternative for people to use. It is further hoped that when visitors are informed about the damage caused by using these social trails, they will refrain from doing so. This is precisely the goal of the proposed project.

As described below the FoGP has consulted with various offices within the Parks Department on an ongoing basis regarding all aspects of this proposal. Thus, Sarah Toomsen of the Parks Department, who oversees placement of signs within the park, has been provided with the overall plan for the project and with facsimiles of the signs themselves as they underwent certain changes. Mr. Russart was consulted not only to help locate an appropriate manufacturer for the signage, but also to provide input on the language of the signs themselves. Input was also sought from the Planning Department as to the manner in which the signs should be installed.

A facsimile of the proposed signage is attached hereto. (Attachment 170804, Save the Ravine, 24x30). The signage itself would be attached to a metal structure and anchored at each of the two trail heads at Seven Bridges. They would be located in such a way that people, after parking their cars and prior to getting on the trail, would encounter the signs. The signs in their form and structure would be virtually identical to three educational signs installed approximately three years ago by the Milwaukee

County Parks Department in Grant Park involving bird migration, rain gardens, and prairies. A photo of one of those signs and its structural form is provided as an attachment. (Attachment, Small Sign). The FoGP modeled its proposed signage after the existing park signage so as to insure continuity within the park. The FoGP is likewise proposing to employ Tapco Signs, the same company which produced the other three signs, to produce and install our signage. Given their previous work for the county, Tapco is a known entity which has produced a quality product.

As one can see by looking at the facsimile, the sign first describes the unique nature of the Seven Bridges. It then goes on to describe how the social paths have formed over the years and the damage they do to the ravine area. Finally, it informs visitors how to identify these social trails as they walk through the ravine so they can avoid them. The language utilized by the sign was reviewed and edited by Brian Russart and Lea

Cutsforth. Ms. Cutsforth designed the three signs installed by the Parks Department in Grant Park referred to above and is currently working in the Parks Marketing section.

Our proposal also would envision using smaller signs somewhere between 6" x 8" to 9" x 12" that would be placed at the trail heads of some of these "social trails." These smaller "no feet" signs would be of the identical type depicted in the larger educational signs, of which the public is asked to watch for as they walk in the ravine. A sample of the sign is attached. (Attachment 170804, Save the Ravine, 5x6.5). These smaller signs would be of a permanent nature, made out of metal, and bolted to the large post fence, which runs along the entire upper trail in the ravine, at the points where a number of the social trails descend into the ravine. It is currently planned to also put signs at the bottom of some of these trails to discourage people from ascending them to the upper trail. I proposed, and Mr. Russart agreed, that he could walk through the area involved with members of FoGP following the conclusion of his project at the end of August to determine which social trails remain uncovered and where the smaller signs could best be placed. Thus, placement of these signs will be pre-approved by the Parks Department.





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### 5. Public Benefits

Explain why your project is important and why it is needed. Who are the intended users? How will the public benefit? How many and what different types of users do you expect? How does this project provide new recreational opportunities for the intended users? Does your project solve a problem or provide important missing services? If your project provides for people with disabilities, in what way?

Questions asked here have mostly been dealt with in the previous section. Suffice it to say that steps must be taken to prevent the continued degradation of the ravine, of the hillsides, and the trails in the ravine. It is believed that failure to take the kinds of steps envisioned in our proposal will result in the situation only worsening. There is no question but that the Seven Bridges Ravine area is becoming more popular, seeing more visitors year round. The parking lot at the site is typically full, requiring visitors to park at the alternate lot at Picnic Area 5A. During the summer it is not unusual to see school busses daily unloading children from various summer programs and/or day care facilities at the parking area. Increase in the amount of visitors will only result in the greater use of these social trails.

The public will surely benefit from these educational signs in a number of ways. First, anything which serves to preserve and protect our county parks for present and future generations is a public benefit. Currently there are no signs in the park which inform the public of the damage caused by this kind of activity. The signs therefore fill a pressing need. Even if only half of the visitors to the Seven Bridges area read the signs and/or comply with their request, the damage currently being caused will be significantly reduced.

It is hoped that over time, if use of some of these trails can be eliminated, they will revegetate and the damaging erosion can be stemmed.

The FoGP has existed for over a dozen years, and has been conducting projects in the park over that time. A committee of three was assigned to research this project, create a proposal, communicate with the appropriate park personnel, develop facsimiles for the signs, and generate a budget for the project. The same committee would be assigned the task of ensuring that this project is completed.

A system of documentation of the work, both past and future, is in place. All communication between the committee members by email has been preserved. Likewise, all communications between the committee and the expected manufacturer of the signs have been summarized in writing and will be preserved. The same is true for communication conducted between FoGP Committee members and Parks Department staff. The FoGP organization as a whole is briefed at each of our monthly meetings concerning the progress of the project. Photos of the damage done by the social trails, taken for possible inclusion in the educational sign itself, have been preserved. The anchoring of the signs will be documented following completion. The FoGP also has a policy of trying to document its projects in the park, most of which are then later shared on its website and/or Facebook page.



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### 6. Sponsor Commitment

What experience do you or the organization have in accomplishing similar projects? Who will be responsible for organizing and assigning the work to insure successful project completion? You will need to document all project expenditures. What is your plan for documenting the work (photos, video, written?) What is your plan, if any, for long term maintenance of your project after it is completed?

The three educational signs the county installed roughly three years ago, which serve as models for our project, have weathered quite well, apparently without the need of any maintenance over that time. In addition, conversations have already taken place between our committee and the manufacturer of the signs to insure that the design for the signs utilizes the most efficient and effective way to avoid, control, and to remedy any graffiti to the signs. The FoGP would commit to doing our best to keep its signs clean from graffiti. It is not thought that other maintenance would be necessary.





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### 7. Return on Investment

How will this project maintain or enhance core services provided by the Parks Department? Is there a budgetary savings or increased revenue potential as a result of this project? Will there be long term operating, capital, maintenance, or replacement expenses with this project and what is that estimated cost?

Part of the benefit of these signs, if successful, will be the avoidance of significant expenditures in the future by the Parks Department in maintaining the Seven Bridges area. As mentioned above, the current erosion taking place in the ravine area is burying portions of the lannon stone trail in mud. This requires teams of volunteers, sometimes under the supervision of Parks Department personnel, to uncover these trails by manual labor at certain times of the year. The FoGP, as recently as this summer, has used volunteer groups to do this type of maintenance on the trails. Stemming this erosion would free up the Parks personnel and volunteer groups to work on other critical projects in the park.

Parts of the trail through the ravine are in danger of being washed into the creek as a result of the erosion. Likewise an examination of the base of two of the wooden bridges which are a part of the trail to the lake are in danger of being undermined by the erosion. Replacing washed out trails and/or necessary repair would be a costly affair. It is hoped that this project may forestall or eliminate significant expenditures by the Parks Department in the future in this regard.



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### 8. Proposed Budget

Provide a detailed and complete budget with enough detail for evaluators to understand exactly what grant funds will be used for, how you arrived at the prices for services, labor, materials, equipment, etc. and the same level of detail about the amount and source of matching funds. If matching funding is already in place, provide necessary documentation to show balance in designated account. Please check one of the following:

Attached is correspondence from Tapco detailing the pricing for the proposed signage and its installation. (Attachment Tapco bid 8/04/17). Thus, each of the two major educational signs would be produced at a price of \$1,500.00 each, for a total of \$3,000.00.

After receiving the proposal, the FoGP contacted Brian Russart of the Parks Department to determine whether Parks had a preference between the two installation options mentioned in the correspondence. Mr. Russart advised me that he had submitted the proposal to the Parks Planning staff, which indicated a preference for the installation utilizing concrete pads at a cost of \$1100.00 per installation.

Thus, the total cost for the production and installation of the two signs would be \$5200.00.

The FoGP also wishes to install smaller signs, whose purpose is described in this proposal. This request proposes purchasing 20 of these signs at \$18.00 each. This would provide extra signage should some signs need to be replaced due to damage or vandalism. Some of these signs would be installed on an existing post fence within the ravine. Additional signage would require steel posts of their own. Our proposal includes the purchase of ten such posts at \$10.00 each. The total cost of the additional signage and posts come to \$460.00. Attached is an email dated August 9, 2017 from Tapco fixing the costs of this additional signage and posts as stated. (Attachment email from Tapco 8/9/17).

Therefore, the total cost of this project is \$5,660.00. Our matching grant request is \$2,830.00.





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The Parks Department prefers to reimburse grantees after the work is completed. *(Please note that projects that were begun or completed prior to Parks approval are ineligible for funding. All third party funding must be present in a designated account prior to grant award)*

- We understand payment by the Parks will occur after project completion.
- We must have Parks Amenities Matching Funds prior to start of the project.
- Please include W-9 for requesting agency/group.

Richard L. Kaiser  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

August 9, 2017  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Member, Friends of Grant Park  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Position

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Check Request