

Graham Creek Outdoor Classroom Construction

The City of Foley would like to propose a project within our nature park to enhance coastal access to waterways and to enhance outdoor educational programs. The project would be the construction of the outdoor classroom including a stage and six learning stations at the Graham Creek Nature Preserve. Previously the City received grant assistance from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the design of the Graham Creek Nature Preserve, the Graham Creek Preserve canoe/kayak launch and pavilion, design of an outdoor classroom and educational program, and the Wolf Creek Park canoe/kayak launch, fishing pier and pavilion.

The Graham Creek Nature Preserve is currently developing an outdoor educational program and designing an outdoor classroom with a stage area, ten unique learning areas and six learning stations adjacent to Graham Creek. The overall cost of this project is approximately \$100,000 with \$50,000 in materials, \$25,000 in sub-contractual labor and \$25,000 in salary for City staff labor. The outdoor classroom will include an arbor entrance for adults and children. There will be a nature art area, a building area, pathways through plantings, messy materials area, climbing area, music and movement area, garden area, open area, dirt digging area, sand area, and a gathering area. It will also include a stage area with seating in the open area. A “Bug Discovery” station will include sorting tables, nets, magnifying lens and bug identification cards. A “Groundwater Station” will include a water well with a pitcher pump and educational signage explaining aquifers. A “Timber Station” explaining longleaf pine forests and turpentine industry will include interpretive signage and turpentine exhibit. A “Soils Station” will exhibit soil layers with a carved out area and interpretive signage. It will also include a mock gopher tortoise burrow. The “Watershed Station” will include an Enviroscope model of a watershed demonstration. The “Carnivorous Plants Station” will have interpretive signage and display local carnivorous plants and their diet.

The City of Foley is seeking assistance from the 306A Public Access Improvement Grant to implement this project. The total project value for the construction of the outdoor classroom and learning stations would be approximately \$100,000. The City is requesting \$50,000 federal reimbursement for the project. These additions would be beneficial to the community and area visitors for recreational and educational coastal experiences. The outdoor classroom will be a partnership with Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, the Boy Scouts of America and the community in constructing the classroom, play area and learning stations. Leslie Gahagan will be the liaison for the project with the City and all the partners. The outdoor classroom construction will begin with build days in November and December. Completion of the construction would likely be January 2014. In conclusion, the City of Foley would appreciate consideration for the 306A Public Access Improvement Grant for these projects within the Wolf Bay Watershed.