

Wolf Creek Park Expansion & Graham Creek Outdoor Classroom Construction

The City of Foley would like to propose two projects within our nature parks to enhance coastal access to waterways and to enhance outdoor educational programs. The first project is for the expansion of the Wolf Creek Park by acquiring 4.3 acres of property on the south western end of Wolf Creek Park. The other project would be the construction of the outdoor classroom amphitheater, play area 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 Wolf Creek Park property is located at the end of Hance Lane off of Wilson Road. The additional property is on the south side of the western most parcel. The City does not currently have a title opinion or an appraisal. The title opinion and appraisal will be accomplished within the next two months. At this time there is a willing seller for fair market value, which based on Baldwin County Property Appraisal Department is close to \$150,000. The property is the remaining land surrounding a noted bird rookery and cove off of Wolf Creek as well as about 510 feet of water frontage along Wolf Creek. The City is currently developing the existing park with a canoe/kayak launch, fishing pier, pavilion and picnic areas.

The Graham Creek Nature Preserve is currently developing an outdoor educational program and designing an outdoor classroom with amphitheater, play area and six learning stations. The City of Foley is also seeking assistance with the funding of the construction phase of this project. The overall cost of this project is \$50,000 with \$25,000 in materials and \$25,000 in labor. This would include approximately \$7,500 for the construction materials for the outdoor classroom stage and amphitheater seating. This would allow educational presentations to groups. Also there would be \$7,500 for the construction of a play area where children will explore nature. This would include a swing set with 6 swings, 2 infant swings and 1 handicap swing. It would also include a beaver's lodge and bird's nest play area. There would be natural balance beams. One section of the play area would be a sand pit with digging tools, and another would be an imagination area with tables and natural elements for building. The six outdoor learning stations will cost approximately \$10,000. 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 Enviroscape 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 these two projects. The total project value for land acquisition and construction of the outdoor amphitheater, play area and learning stations would be approximately \$200,000. The City is requesting \$50,000 federal reimbursement for these projects. 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. Following the appraisal and title opinion, the City would formally offer the current property owner fair market value for the property acquisition by the end of 2013. The property purchase would be complete by February 2014. The outdoor classroom construction will begin with build days in November, March and April. Completion of the construction would likely be July 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.