



**Guadalupe-Coyote  
Resource Conservation District (GCRCD)**  
*An independent special district of the State of California*

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**Community Grant Award Modification Request**

*This document has been provided in Microsoft Word format to facilitate applicant use, but may be converted to a .pdf document for submittal purposes. Please complete all lines; if something doesn't apply, enter "N/A". Handwritten applications are acceptable. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please contact the District at [gcrcd@gcrcd.org](mailto:gcrcd@gcrcd.org) if you would like to request assistance or accommodations to complete the application. Submit the request and any attachments electronically to [gcrcd@gcrcd.org](mailto:gcrcd@gcrcd.org) . Please contact Executive Director Stephanie Moreno at the same email address if you have any questions.*

**Section A: Award Information**

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Project Name: Beginning Environmental Explorers (BEE) Early Youth Environmental Education Program

Applicant (Legal Name of Organization): Guadalupe River Park Conservancy

Modification Requested (for example, change in project; change in scope of services, change in term of the agreement; change in budget):

Change in scope of services

Justification for Request:

The Beginning Environmental Explorers (BEE) program aligns nicely with GCRCD's areas of strategic focus. We would like to begin a partnership with a program that highlights our shared priorities around equity and engagement, and we are confident this program is a way to support these goals. We would also like to demonstrate our commitment to successful quality programs that meet the needs of our diverse county and communities. Through the pandemic, one of the most requested programs has been BEE, and we recognize that this is an invaluable service to our community. We would like to have GCRCD as a partner in the first launch since the beginning of the pandemic.

Grant Contact:

Name/Preferred Pronouns: Jason Su - he/him

Title: Executive Director

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Phone: (408) 298-7657

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## Section B: Project Description

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*Are you requesting a modification of your project description or scope of services? If yes, please answer the following questions. If no, skip to Section C.*

- 1. Describe the proposed project, including goals, proposed methods and implementation strategies, and list measurable outcomes.**

Our Beginning Environmental Explorers (BEE) Program is a free, drop-in series of classes designed for children ages 2-5 in English and Spanish. The program is hosted at the Guadalupe Gardens in downtown San Jose, often starting at the Rotary PlayGarden, San Jose's first all-inclusive playspace.

BEE provides an enriching introduction to environmental education through seasonal topics and developmentally-appropriate activities. Given the pandemic and the safety of our staff and participants, we will limit the number of participants to 15 per session. Offered during the school year, we project weekly BEE classes will reach an average of approximately 240 total students.

Our BEE Program curriculum is based on "Fostering A Sense of Wonder During the Early Childhood Years" by Ruth A. Wilson, PhD. The goals set out by Dr. Wilson are:

- Goal 1 - Develop an awareness and enjoyment of the beauty and wonder of the natural world
- Goal 2 - Become aware of the concepts of cycles, diversity, and interconnectedness in nature
- Goal 3 - Develop a sense of appreciation and respect for the integrity of the natural world
- Goal 4 - Develop a sense of caring for Planet Earth and an understanding of how different types of pollution might harm the Earth
- Goal 5 - Develop an awareness that people are a part of the natural world, not separate from it
- Goal 6 - Develop an understanding of how to contribute to the wellbeing of the Earth

These goals reflect the developmental needs of young children to explore their surroundings in response to their natural curiosity and their sense of wonder. Weekly activities will revolve around the following themes: scientific observation, human impact, gardening, animal behavior, natural history, art, and seasonal programs.

The weekly drop-in BEE Program classes for children ages 2-5 are developed and delivered by two Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC) Education Program staff members and/or interns under the supervision of the GRPC Education Manager. The BEE Program will alternate classes with instruction in English and Spanish. Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC) will provide 20 biweekly drop-in BEE Program classes between January and July 2022.

Topics are thematically chosen to correlate with current environmental changes and holidays. For example, our "Magnificent Monarchs" program took place during the time children could find the larvae amongst our park's milkweed plants. Participants raised a monarch caterpillar over a period of weeks so that the students could observe its life cycle before releasing the butterfly. One of our educators, Catherine, shared that after "Magnificent Monarchs," one of the students ran up to tell her about the monarch caterpillar he had found in the milkweed plants outside of the GRPC Visitor Center. He applied what he learned in our class to identify the larvae and communicate the food source without assistance.

Individuals reached and duration: During the pandemic, the Beginning Environmental Education drop-in program cap is 15 participants per session, and we anticipate averaging 12 children per session for at least 240 children reached. In addition to the students, guardians are required to stay with students for the duration of our program. These joint family educational experiences model environmental learning and techniques for parents, which increases the chance of continued outdoor learning at home.

Demographics: Through the collection of zip code information, we know that our drop-in program attracts a diverse cross section of the local community representing the vast cultures of our county. In response to the diverse audience we reach, we will alternate between Friday English and Spanish sessions.

Measurable outcomes:

1. 20 BEE sessions
  - a. 10 sessions in Spanish
  - b. 10 sessions in English
2. **Is this project a portion of a larger project? If so, please include a description of the larger project and how this component fits into it.**

This program is an introduction to environmental education and outdoor learning for our youngest participants. Although this program is not directly aligned with a larger project, we view BEE as a way to catalyze exposure and comfort with the outdoors, thus increasing the likelihood of future outdoor program participation.

3. **Will this grant be used to leverage funding for another grant or funding request? If yes, please explain.**

Yes. Funds will enable us to leverage the continuation of existing grant agreements and future opportunities.

We have long-lasting partnerships with the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and the Leo M. Shortino Family Foundation to provide a portion of program support for our education program portfolio. We intend to leverage funds from the GCRCD community grant program for other opportunities related to environmental awareness and education, childhood enrichment, and community engagement that support BEE specifically and our education programs broadly. Potential other sources include Valley Water, The Health Trust, First 5, and others.

4. **Are there other organizations and/or partners participating in the project? If yes, please describe their role and level of participation.**

Guadalupe River Park Conservancy oversees the development, implementation, and outreach of our BEE program. Currently, we do not currently have direct program partners for BEE; however, we intend to leverage GCRCD funds (if granted), to extend programming throughout the year. We have broader partnerships with funders mentioned previously who support through education program funding, and relationships with organizations such as the City of San Jose and The Rotary Club of San Jose, who support the stewardship and maintenance of areas in the Guadalupe River Park where BEE is hosted.

**5. What is the need, problem, and/or opportunity to be addressed? Who else is addressing it?**

Per the North American Association of Environmental Educators, “The ultimate goal of environmental education is the development of an environmentally literate citizenry. Environmentally literate individuals understand environmental issues and how human decisions affect environmental quality. In addition, they use this knowledge to make informed, well-reasoned choices that also take social and political considerations into account. As important as knowledge about environmental issues and their human aspects are, they must be complemented by a positive and caring attitude toward the environment”.

Challenges for these young students include socializing with their peers and teachers and knowing how to listen or follow a structured class. BEE helps reinforce these skills, which are critical to academic success and life. The programs are designed to teach social and emotional skills, such as self-confidence and cooperation, and early academic skills, such as numbers and letters.

GRPC’s educators include activities that build on developmental milestones including (but not limited to) cognitive, linguistic, social, and life skills. Here are some examples of these milestones:

- Cognitive Skills - Identifying shapes, colors, counting, letters, time, reading, symbols, sorting, identifications
- Linguistic Skills - Reading, communicating, comprehension
- Social Skills - Taking turns, peer-sharing, collaboration to solve problems
- Life Skills - Sitting, staying focused, raising a hand to speak, and being respectful of peers

An example of integrating these milestones from our “Flowers to Fruit” program: students first worked together to sort yellow flowers, green tomatoes, and red tomatoes, followed by counting the number from each category. The students then collaborated with staff to discuss the process of the yellow flowers eventually turning into the red fruit. This allowed students to count, sort, and make sense of natural phenomena.

According to Latino Outdoors, “The Latino population is the fastest growing demographic in the United States, but among the most underrepresented in conservation, outdoor recreation, and environmental education.” In many ways, our BEE program is seeking to disrupt this pattern and empower our young latinx community to become actively involved in environmental conservation and education. We are committed to offering 50% of our programs in Spanish to enable our Spanish-speaking community to come and learn with us. In addition to academic learning, one of our goals is to hire staff who students can look up to, connect with, and envision themselves as becoming. We want to show students not just through curricula, but also through hiring practices, that they can become empowered environmentalists who can make and teach change.

According to the “Analysis of the Disparities in Nature Loss and Access to Nature. Technical Report” written by V. Landau, M. McClure, and B. Dickson, people of color and low-income communities are more likely than white and affluent communities to live in areas that are nature deprived. Our organization prides ourselves on being a “Front Yard for the Whole City” - an accessible green space for

all visitors, including those who do and do not have yards to enjoy themselves. We recognize that background and income should not dictate who receives quality nature experiences, and our programming is intentionally designed to be inclusive of those who experience systematic barriers to access.

**6. How will the project provide a natural resource conservation benefit to the District and/or its constituents?**

Environmental Education programs for youth ages 2 - 5 are limited. According to Belgrade Charter (UNESCO, 1976, p.2) the purpose and importance of environmental education for early education is “to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.” Those with exposure to environmental education are more likely to understand how humans and their decisions impact the environment, and we empower them with initial tools and knowledge to make change. Science shows perspectives and attitudes are formed early in life, and programs such as ours provide positive experiences where students use curiosity, questions, and experiential learning to explore, discover, and appreciate nature. We provide experiences for students to build connections and relationships with the outdoors and nature through activities that show the importance of our natural resources.

This exposure is key. In order for us to have an empowered group of environmentalists who not only understand natural resource conservation, but also understand their power to affect change, we need to start with our youngest learners.

**7. Which Area(s) of Strategic Focus in GCRC’s Long Range Plan will be served by this project? - [https://www.rcdsantaclara.org/files/f9e01b95f/GCRCD\\_Long-Range-Plan\\_2019-2024\\_V.070721.pdf](https://www.rcdsantaclara.org/files/f9e01b95f/GCRCD_Long-Range-Plan_2019-2024_V.070721.pdf)**

We are happy to report that our program aligns with a few of GCRC’s Areas of Strategic Focus. Upon reading through these impactful community goals and strategies, our program best supports biodiversity, water quality, climate change, and public engagement. In addition to the aforementioned areas of focus, our programs can touch on Fire Risk depending on the season and conditions of our, and surrounding, parks.

**8. How will the project help the District meet its goals for the indicated Areas of Strategic Focus?**

**Biodiversity**

GRPC’s BEE program promotes biodiversity through educating our youth on concepts such as conservation and protection of natural habitats and ecosystems. We use our park as an outdoor classroom for application of content. The dynamicity of our curricula enables us to cover a wide range of topics such as invasive and native species, keystone species, pollination, seed dispersal, plant life cycles, and many more. Guardians are required to stay with children for the duration of this program and often learn alongside their children. This program organically supports GCRC’s biodiversity area of strategic focus.

**Water quality**

As a river conservancy, each aspect of our learning, in some way, connects to our watersheds and the importance of water within ecosystems. We are proud stewards of our riparian ecosystem, and prioritize educating the public on the importance of healthy water.

We recognize that in order to create long-lasting stewards of water resources, we need to start early. During our water quality lessons, instructors provide concrete practices participants can implement that benefit

water and soil resources and invite guardians to continue these practices at home. We have the unique advantage of having guardians attend with students. We strategically intertwine student learning with the extension of learning at home by directly asking and empowering parents.

### **Climate change**

Our BEE program has lessons that directly align with climate change topics, and specifically ways individuals, even at a young age, can take action. We also invite parents to continue learning at home, and invite them to return to local parks to continue observations themselves. More details are included on question number 11 of this proposal.

One of our education department's priority areas is to reach groups who typically experience barriers to environmental education opportunities; oftentimes this means BIPOC communities and other traditionally underserved populations. This is why 50% of our BEE programs are offered in Spanish to bridge language barriers and increase the likelihood of having Spanish-speaking communities engaged in environmentally-aligned opportunities.

### **9. What are the anticipated challenges to the successful completion of the project?**

Anticipated challenges to the successful completion of this project include low participant numbers depending on students and their guardian's hesitancy around being in group settings given the current pandemic. We are hopeful that their uncertainty will be met with reassurance given that we are limiting participant numbers from 25 to 15, the fact that BEE is an outdoor-only program, and that we will encourage the use of masks for all participants and staff.

### **10. How will this project provide opportunities for meaningful involvement by the public, including members of disadvantaged communities within the Grantee's project and service areas?**

The BEE program aims to promote meaningful public engagement, particularly from disadvantaged communities, centered on two goals: 1) reducing access barriers and 2) inspiring environmental learning.

**Reducing Access Barriers:** The BEE program provides opportunities for meaningful involvement for community members through a lens of environmental justice. Through a collection of zip code information from previous BEE programs, and by looking at the demographics of zip codes neighboring the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, we know that this program attracts participants who represent the diverse cultures found within Santa Clara County. By holding free classes in Spanish as regularly as we provide classes in English, we hope to demonstrate our commitment to providing environmental education without language and financial barriers.

**Inspiring Environmental Learning:** For some community members, playing in the Rotary PlayGarden may be their first introduction to the park. Our hope is that once participants get a taste of the sort of programs and activities that we put on, they will be encouraged to join other education programs and volunteer opportunities as ways to continue engagement and begin to develop an interest and skill set in environmental leadership.

### **11. Does this project have a component to address impacts from climate change? If so, please describe.**

One of the advantages of a program that spans ages is the real-time application of climate-change related content. We have had students participate in the BEE program from the time they were 2 years old and continue for years to come. These years allow for critical environment-related content scaffolding. For

example, a student who attends a BEE program at four years old might see a flowing river, only to come back at six and see a trickle of water in the riverbed. Inevitably, this raises questions and curiosities about environmental changes. These conversations, questions, and curiosities organically support conversations about climate change and its impact on our park and related ecosystems. This naturally transitions into discussions about how climate change impacts all aspects of wildlife from flora to fauna, and it all begins with getting students to the park to make observations themselves.

We are also happy to share that many lessons directly and indirectly focus on climate change and human impact content goals.

**12. How will the project be sustained after the grant has concluded? Will the results provide a basis for additional projects or programs?**

We plan to sustain the BEE program after the GCRCDC grant by measuring its impact, collecting feedback and testimonials, public communications, and building a case for its importance and need for future funding opportunities.

**13. How will project results be made available to the public?**

Project results will be made available to the public through our website, quarterly print newsletter (1,000 subscribers), and monthly e-news (7,500 subscribers). We will include information on what participants have learned, what future topics will be covered, and conclude how the benefits of early childhood education can foster curiosity and environmental stewardship in youth.

**14. Add or attach any supplemental information you believe is important for the reviewers and/or approving authority to be aware of in assessing your application.**

\*Attached to the end of the application

## Section C: Project Budget

Are you requesting modification of your budget? If yes, please use the following table to provide the revised budget. If no, skip to Section D. (Please refer to original application for guidelines on budget requirements.)

Line Item Description	Grant Funding	Matching Funds *	Project Totals
Personnel Costs (list position/hours/hourly wage):			
2 Guadalupe Guide, part-time environmental educators (\$23.80/hr)- curriculum development, implementation, setup/take down, delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 hours per session, 20 sessions = 140 hours</li> <li>Matching: 4 hours for training</li> </ul>	\$3,332.00	\$95.20	\$3,427.20
Program Manager, (\$36.89/hour) - program management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.25 hours per session, 20 sessions= 5 hours</li> <li>Matching: 10 hours, management and training</li> </ul>	\$184.45	\$368.90	\$553.35
Program Associate/Coordinator (\$30.94/hour) - curriculum review, administrative assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.5 hours per session, 20 sessions = 10 hours</li> <li>Matching: 5 hours, curriculum development, organizing, outreach</li> </ul>	\$ 309.40	\$154.70	\$464.10
Communications and Administration Coordinator (\$28.56/hour) - program outreach and social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.5 hours per session, 20 sessions = 10 hours</li> <li>Matching: 5 hours, outreach</li> </ul>	\$ 309.40	\$154.70	\$464.10
Operating Costs (list general categories):			
Program supplies - \$25 per session, 20 sessions	\$500.00		\$500
<b>Personnel and Operating Expenses Subtotal:</b>			
Indirect Costs (list percentage)			
Indirect Costs (list percentage)			
7.78%	\$388.55		\$388.55
Contractual Costs: (list firm name, if known)			
n/a			
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$761.60</b>	<b>\$5,761.60</b>

## Section D: Project Deliverables and Due Dates

Are you requesting modification of your project deliverables and/or due dates? If yes, please complete the following task table. If no, skip to Section E.

Task #	Task Description	Task Deliverables	Estimated Completion Dates
1	Spanish environmental education sessions for early learners (2 - 6 years old)	10 sessions	July 2022
2	English environmental education sessions for early learners (2 - 6 years old)	10 sessions	July 2022
3			

## Section E: Term of Agreement

Are you requesting modification of the term of your grant agreement? If yes, please list the requested dates. If no, skip to Section F:

January 2022 - July 2022

## Section F: Application Signature

I certify that the information contained within this modification request is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the grant recipient.



Authorized Signature:

Jason Su/ Executive Director

Print Name/Title:

November 22, 2021

Date:



# BEE Program

## Beginning Environmental Explorers



The **Beginning Environmental Explorers (BEE)** program is an enriching introduction into live environmental science taught by Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's environmental educators. This is a free, drop-in program and pre-registration is NOT required. Guardians must stay with their children and are responsible for their behavior for the duration of the program.

BEE is offered in English and Spanish (with an English-speaking aide) from 11 AM - 12 PM.

BEE is specially designed for children ages 2 - 6. Lessons are specifically written to build on milestones of this group taking into consideration cognitive, linguistic, social, and life skill development.

**Ages 2-5**  
Supported through this program

**English & Spanish**  
Offered to embrace more learners

The **Guadalupe River Park Conservancy** provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens. We envision an active, iconic, world-class Civic Greenway encompassing gardens, trails, and parks where residents and visitors alike can experience open space and natural habitats in the heart of Silicon Valley.

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# Community Feedback



GRPC asks the guardians of participants to complete surveys after each BEE session to support program development. In recent years, GRPC has put a concerted effort toward assessing family unit behavioral changes as a result of our program. As these are difficult to quantify, we ask guardians to state whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with a series of statements.

Using data collected from September to March 2020, here's what guardians said!

**96%**  
Agree or strongly agree this was a high quality program.

**87%**  
Agree or strongly agree this program provided them/ their child(ren) with skills and knowledge I intend to use with my family.

**90%**  
Agree or strongly agree after this program, they are more likely to spend time in nature with their families.

**88%**  
Agree or strongly agree after this program, their child(ren) has developed an appreciation and respect for the integrity of the natural world.

**90%**  
Agree or strongly agree after this program, their child(ren) has developed an awareness & enjoyment of the beauty and wonder of the natural world.

**94%**  
Agree or strongly agree this program impacted their child(ren) in a positive way

“Very informative, like that the children are being made aware of our local creatures, but also the fact that they need to be cherished and protected. As always, I learned lots too! Thank you!” - Guardian of a BEE participant

“Me encanto que hablen de cosas como estaciones del tiempo. Ya que los ninos aprenden y se divierten al mismo tiempo. Buen trabajo!” Translation: “I love that they talk about things like weather stations. Since children learn and have fun at the same time. Good job!” - Guardian of a BEE participant



For more information on how to support, please contact:

Jason Su  
Executive Director  
[jason@grpg.org](mailto:jason@grpg.org)  
[www.grpg.org](http://www.grpg.org)

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## Impact of Support

### Your Commitment Supports Our Children, Families, and Community

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Supporting the PlayGarden and the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy enables us to provide this cherished community resource and encourage ongoing ways to connect our children and families to nature, education, and community.

#### Your support highlights:

- A commitment to improving the lives of our youth through early environmental education experiences
- Catalyzing exposure to the environment and environmental concepts
- Nurturing environmental stewardship for our future, inclusive social connection, a passion for learning, and healthy living
- Building bridges over barriers that limit Spanish-speaking communities from engaging in environmental learning opportunities
- Investment in a deeper connection between the community, Guadalupe River Park, and the PlayGarden leveraging these, and connected park resources, as a vessel to lift up our neighborhoods

