



FRIENDS OF THE FORT WORTH

## NATURE CENTER & REFUGE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Oct. 11, 2018

Media Contact:

Haily Summerford, Executive Director  
817-999-2883 | [haily@naturecenterfriends.org](mailto:haily@naturecenterfriends.org)

### **\$200,000 Grant to Enhance Trails at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge**

FORT WORTH, Texas – Thanks to a fundraising effort led by the Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has awarded a \$200,000 Recreational Trails Grant, which will enhance trail facilities.

The Friends raised more than \$100,000 in matching funds for the project, including a \$54,000 required match by the state. The grant will fund additional parking, trail stabilization and restoration as well as a trailhead kiosk and compost toilet. The project will take place at the southern portion of the Nature Center's 20-miles of trails at Greer Island. This area suffered extensive flood conditions during 2014 and 2015 creating the need for restoration.

On October 10, Carter Smith, executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, presented the Friends with a check for \$200,000 at a reception honoring Fort Worth's own Ralph Duggins, who was appointed as Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Chairman earlier this year. The event also kicked off the initial phase of the Nature Center's plans to preserve and enhance one of the largest urban nature parks with the goal of making it one of the best in the country.

“The Fort Worth Nature Center and TPWD are natural partners in that we share a common commitment to stewardship of the outdoors and clearly understand the importance that nature plays in creating healthier and more fulfilling lives for Texans of all ages,” Smith said. “The National Recreational Trails Fund in Texas was made for projects exactly like this that provide more access and greater sustainability to facilities that serve as outdoor resources to their communities. TPWD is honored to help fund this project through the Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center and we look forward to continuing our great partnership with them and the Nature Center to protect the region's natural world so that future generations of Texans will be able to enjoy it for many years to come.”

The Nature Center trails are used by more than 60,000 visitors annually with a growth rate of six percent per year. Visitors arrive from all areas of North Texas and beyond. The Nature Center's trail system forms one of the largest and most diverse trail systems in North Central Texas.

“The recreational trail grant is a perfect working model of a public-private partnership,” said Friends Board Member George Bristol. “In this case, a federal-state program was established to encourage nonprofit organizations to work with parks and nature centers to provide new and renewed trails for the benefit of Texas, Tarrant County and Fort Worth citizens – especially our children.”

Note: Photos of the check presentation and project area available upon request.

**About Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge**

*The Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge was established in 1974 as a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization to help financially support and protect the Nature Center for future generations. For more information, visit [naturecenterfriends.org](http://naturecenterfriends.org)*

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