

**Item Title:** Acceptance of 2023 DEI Grant From the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners accepts and appropriates \$3,000 in grant funding from the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association.**

**Item Summary:**

**Purpose:** In accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the Board of Commissioners must approve all amendments that increase the budget for a fund.

**Background:** The North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association (NCRPA) provides grant and fundraising opportunities and partnerships for park and recreation agencies. This opportunity was awarded to help further diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in communities.

Approximately 13% of the population of Wake County has a disability. Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space will be creating improvements to trail accessibility, as well as accessibility at trailheads for off-road cycling. The bridge and trail modifications made with grant funding will create universal accessibility so adapted cyclists can ride and enjoy the off-road trail systems at Harris Lake and Lake Crabtree County Parks with little to no assistance.

**Board Goal:** This action supports Growth and Sustainability Goal 4: Preserve open space and expand access to parks, preserves, recreation resources, and greenways.

**Fiscal Impact:** This agreement provides an additional \$3,000 in the Grants and Donations Fund for project participation. There is no matching funds requirement.

**Additional Information:**

This spring, the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association (NCRPA), in partnership with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, announced grant funding to further diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in North Carolina's park and recreation organizations and their communities. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Mini-Grants could fund projects designed to increase equitable access to park and recreation programming and facilities or provide training to park and recreation staff members. The mini-grants, for up to \$3,000 each, would be awarded to organizations interested in furthering DEI work in their communities, and funding could be requested in three different categories:

- Speaker/Events - to bring a qualified diversity, equity, and inclusion speaker to your community.
- Internal Training – to train staff to further DEI Learning; or
- Programming/Access – to improve programming, infrastructure, and access to underserved communities.

Wake County Parks Recreation and Open Space (PROS) submitted in the Programming/Access category to further work already underway with North Carolina Adapted Sports to provide equitable and inclusive outdoor recreation opportunities for people with a physical disability. Wake County and NC Adapted Sports will be increasing access for cyclists with a physical disability on the mountain bike trail systems in Lake Crabtree and Harris Lake County Parks. Participants' bikes are adapted to their physical disabilities, making them wider than upright bikes, and most trails aren't designed to this width. This project will rebuild bridges to accommodate adapted off-road cycles, build transfer stations for wheelchair users, and create trail signage to inform cyclists of five trail factors that affect trail difficulty.

In addition to Wake County, mini-grants were awarded to Southern Pines, Wilmington, Asheville, Indian Trail, Huntersville and Valdese.

**Attachments:**

1. Budget Memo - FY2024 Grants and Donations Fund