

# Project Grant Application

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Project #/Name	#1902/#1010	<a href="mailto:kristina.adkins@icloud.com">kristina.adkins@icloud.com</a> / <a href="mailto:michaelmeves99@gmail.com">michaelmeves99@gmail.com</a>
Describe the activities and key purpose of the project as it is today:		
<p>The existing Bird Blinds at both Dripping Springs Ranch Park (DSRP) and Charro Ranch Park (CRP) function as specific areas where the public along with Master Naturalists and avid bird enthusiasts can observe the diversity of species of local birds. Bird feeders are located at either end of the DSRP blind and one centered at CRP blind. These feed and water stations are maintained by the HCMN to provide supplemental food for local and migrating birds. Both parks currently have detailed books which list different bird species common in this area. However, while bird watching, it is very difficult to both observe quietly and refer to the books in order to accurately identify the birds observed.</p>		
How many volunteer hours were credited to your project in the last 12 months?		30 / 456
On average, how many MN volunteers work on your project in a given year?		12/ 20
On average, how many non-MN volunteers work on your project in a given year?		3/ 4
Describe how you would use a Grant to enhance/expand your Project: (be specific)		
<p>We would like to submit a proposal to purchase Bird Identification signs for existing bird blinds in both Dripping Springs Ranch Park (DSRP) and Charro Ranch Park (CRP). These 6" square signs would be placed on 10-12 4"x4" posts at DSRP and 2-3 1"x 6" screening boards at CRP. DSRP will need between 60 and 72 signs while CRP will need 50 signs. The signs will be manufactured with Aluminum Composite Materials which are very durable for exterior use; this material is preferred over laminated signs which warp, fade and degrade outside. Another advantage is these signs can be easily replaced or added to on a case by case basis if the need arises. The quote for each sign ranges from \$8 - \$9 depending on the quantity and whether drilling for 2 holes/sign is included. The total cost for the signs ranges from \$976 - \$1,098 (again depending on volume discount and number of signs). The bird pictures were taken from Hays County Master Naturalists and a Hays County Birding Society member. Separate signs will also be posted at each blind with the HCMN logo to promote our Chapters' participation.</p> <p>The key purpose of this project is to prominently display these signs in each existing bird blind to assist in educating the public to identify local birds for their own interest along with bird enthusiasts of all skill levels. This project also highlights the ongoing research at each park which includes programs such as Feeder Watch, Climate Watch (National Audubon) and seasonal BioBlitz's. The list of birds displayed on these signs was obtained from the Fall 2022 BioBlitz and ongoing Feeder Watch data.</p>		
Amount requested (please provide line item budget plan on the following page)		\$1,108
Timeline for completion		September 2023
I thank the Board in considering funding this project to enhance the bird blinds while increasing the Outreach and Education for the Dripping Springs Community.		



3/1/23

Response to committee member questions regarding the Firefly grant application for bird signs at Dripping Springs Parks.

- Where will the posts be located in reference to the viewing stations? Will they be spread out or clumped together?
  1. At DSRP: The existing posts within the bird blind itself will be used to post the signs vertically. There are approximately 18 posts. However, the signs will primarily be placed on the perimeter of the viewing station and perhaps 4 of the interior posts on a total of 10 posts. Measurements will allow 6, 6" signs to be placed from the railing upwards (vertically) with 1-2" spacing between them. These will then be within eye level not reaching above 6' nor touching the roofline. The signs will not be placed on the posts through the entrance to the blind nor the posts which lead from the upper level to the lower level deck; access will not be hindered therefore signs and visitors will not be harmed.
  2. At CRP: The existing posts and 2" x 4" boards facing the feeding stations will be used to post the signs horizontally. There will also be a 1-2" spacing between each sign. These will also be placed at eye level and below and will not impede viewing the birds or impede visitors.
- How will visitors use the signs? (as they are walking along, while they are in the viewing station)
  3. Since the signs will be inside both the bird blinds, visitors can simultaneously observe birds at all feeding stations while viewing the bird signs to help identify and classify bird species. The related species of birds will be grouped together as much as possible. Groupings of birds will also be posted depending on whether birds can be seen seasonally: winter, spring, summer or all year around.
- Is the purpose to showcase what birds you can find there, help visitors with identification when they see a bird, or what do you envision?
- Will the metal signs be in color?
  4. The purpose of these colored signs is definitely to include bird species that have been observed at both the feeders and watering stations along with birds in nearby shrubs/trees, at the pond or simply flying nearby. The birds selected include birds observed at the recent Fall Bioblitz 2022 and the listings of birds in the notebooks at the blinds themselves. Birds signs will be grouped according to the season in which they spend time at the park: spring, summer, winter or all year long. The primary purpose is to assist the beginning birder and the general public in identifying the species easily without having to go back and forth to the existing detailed books causing movement which will in turn result in the birds taking flight and visitors losing an identification opportunity. Each colored sign will have the common name of the bird to enhance recall and thus creating a learning experience for both youth and adults.

- Will the HCMN logo be included in the signs or on the post?
5. The HCMN logo will be placed in a separate sign upfront acknowledging our contribution for the design, photography and installation of this project.

Is there some reason Charro and Ranch Park applied together? Should they be separate?

6. As the designated Dripping Springs (DS) Liaison, I felt it was essential to use the same design and materials for bird signs at both parks in order to demonstrate a unified and consistent Hays County Master Naturalist presence throughout all 5 Dripping Springs Parks. This concept also aligns with the Dripping Springs Parks & Community Services Director, Andy Binz, and the DS Parks & Recreation Commissioner chair and DS Birding Club president, Paul Fushille. It should be noted that previous funding sources for the bird stations in DS have been accumulated by a combination of all these entities (HCMN, DS Bird Club, City of DS, public donations and DS businesses such as Wild Birds Unlimited). Thus, it would be paramount to develop a cohesive project for all of Dripping Springs Parks rather than design signs for each park separately.
7. Vendors contacted for quotes on pricing this project were not disposed to provide completed samples without a contractual agreement. A separate sample of the material used but unmarked was shown to the HCMN Board at a recent board meeting.

Sincerely,

Tina Adkins  
DS Project Coordinator and DS Liaison

Michael Meves  
CRP Project Coordinator

12/3/22 BioBlitz  
36 Different Bird Species

Table 1

American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Black -crested Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus atricristatus</i>
Carolina Chickadee	<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>
Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerine</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>
Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>
Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>
Harris's Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia querula</i>
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolnii</i>
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus sinus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>

Table 1-1

Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Pooecetes</i>
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>

