

Press Release – August 12, 2007 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BCWCID#2 receives \$25,000 grant for Lost Pines Recreational Trails

Bastrop County Water Control and Improvement District #2 received a LCRA Community Development Partnership Program grant for \$25,000 to implement restoration efforts for the Lost Pines Recreational Trails project, a 30 acre tract of land along the Colorado River. The land to be improved adjoins the 60 acres known as the Colorado River Refuge located on Riverside Drive past the golf course in Tahitian Village, owned and operated by the Pines & Prairies Land Trust organization.

The funding will help establish the intent that the property be used for structured and lawful purposes by erecting cable and bollard fencing along Riverside Drive and extending the ADA compliant hike and bike trails from the Colorado River Refuge to the recreational trails property. The project will also include the installation of an ADA accessible nature-site, picnic table, and barbeque grill overlooking the Colorado River.

The grant required a matching contribution of \$20,000 which was met by BCWCID#2, Tahitian Village Property Owners Association, Bluebonnet Electric Coop, American Youth Works, John Creamer, Environmental Stewardship and Rising Phoenix Adventures.

The funding effort was spearheaded by Denise Rodgers of Rising Phoenix Adventures, local outfitter, and Steve Box, Executive Director of Environmental Stewardship, a non-profit organization. Both feel the need to provide multiple opportunities for nature tourism and education, while focusing on the need to protect the overall quality of the river, goals that are in alignment with the water district's mission, one objective being to "protect significant open space and natural, historic, and cultural resources, and to preserve the quality of life for current and future generations."

The LCRA grant is the first of several grant efforts spearheaded by this group to improve this area. Another grant is pending with Texas Parks and Wildlife for \$100,000 intended to implement a larger scale effort to construct hiking and technical biking trails and install signage on the land. While unofficial approval has been given, official notification will be made by the end of August. Improvements to both the water district land and the Colorado River Refuge land will provide a nice 90 acre tract along 3 river miles for the multi-generational and disabled public to enjoy the river and the natural resources abiding therein.

Rodgers feels that the natural and cultural richness of the Lower Colorado River, the Lost Pines, and the State Parks have been sorely under-utilized and promoted in this area. "With the nature tourist spending an average of \$26 more a day than a regular tourist visiting, nature tourism is becoming a booming industry and vital to economic development," she added.

In this spirit, on behalf of the City of Bastrop and community partners, the Preserve America committee submitted a grant proposal entitled “Heritage Trails of Bastrop, TX” to the National Parks Service. This grant is for a total project cost of \$300,000, \$150,000 of which is matching contributions from the Bastrop Historical Society and Visitors’ Center, Woodbine Development Corporation, City of Bastrop, Bastrop Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Alliance, TPWD Paddling Trails Program, and Rising Phoenix Adventures. This grant is a re-submittal after falling short by 5 points in the prior funding round. With decisions to be announced in the fall, if funded, this grant will provide money to market historic and nature tourism in Bastrop.

For information contact Denise Rodgers at 303-7858 or Steve Box at 300-6609.