



**SOUTH TEXAS  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS  
& NATURE CENTER**

March 13, 2024

Dear Type B Board Members:

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center is requesting an additional extension of the grant through December 31, 2024. This trail addition will transform the Nature Center portion of the Botanical Gardens and help with nature tourism endeavors such as our Birdiest Festival in America.

As you recall, the trail grant you provided is a match for a Texas Parks & Wildlife Recreational Trails Grant in the amount of \$200,000. We originally submitted the grant to them in January, 2020, and we were notified on May 27, 2020 that we had received the award but that it may take 9-12 months for their legal department to provide the final contract. It took 22 months due to delays on their end associated with COVID with their contract coming on April 6, 2022. It also required an archaeological survey before any work can be done. Their grant also states that matching funds cannot be used until this survey is completed and approved by TPWD.

That process was delayed with due to outrageous costs for the original survey bids in 2022 that came in at \$50,000. We reissued the RFP last summer and got the survey done for \$4850 by Burton Archaeological Services, LLC, out of Wimberly which was completed in October 2023 and was immediately submitted to Texas Historical Commission. TPWD submitted the information to their TxDOT partner who requested four points of clarification on January 30. The corrected archaeological survey was submitted to TPWD and TxDOT and should be approved within the next week according to our TPWD contact, Chris Scheffield. Again, we are unable to begin construction until that final approval is issued.

In the meantime, we have already had firms rebid the trail project. JBird Construction has the winning bid and said they are able to begin construction within 2 weeks of approval by TPWD. The portion you are funding should be able to be completed within a couple of weeks since the pathway is already cleared and ready with completion expected by late April or early May. We truly believe that construction can begin before the end of March and be completed in April in time for our Birdiest Festival in America. However, in the event of a weather problem or an addition delay from TPWD or TxDOT, we are asking for an extension until December 31, 2024.

Thank you for your consideration on this extension.

Sincerely,

Michael Womack, Ed.D.  
Executive Director