



COLLIN COUNTY

Engineering
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Date: May 1, 2023

To: Commissioners Court

From: Tracy Homfeld, PE, CFM; Assistant Director of Engineering

Re: The Nature Conservancy Proposal Regarding Future Grassland Restoration at Parkhill Prairie

PRESENTLY:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been maintaining the native and restored grassland prairies at Parkhill Prairie since 2005. Presently, the County has a contract, that covers the timeframe from 2023-2028, for the maintenance for these eastern portions (map on page 3 of the TNC proposal and page 2 of the overview PDF). The contract amount is \$41,000 over a 5 year period. That comes out to \$8,200/year to maintain the eastern portions of the park.

REQUEST:

TNC in partnership with Union Pacific has received a grant that would help to restore the western ~230 acres as a prairie grassland. This ~230 acres, that is already part of the park owned by Collin County, and is currently being mowed and hayed, lies mostly within the Arnold Creek floodplain. The attached PDF prepared by TNC outlines the benefits of restoring this area to a native grassland prairie.

There is no cost to the county to restore this area to a grassland prairie. The restoration costs are covered in the grant that TNC received from Union Pacific. Restoration is anticipated to take 2 years or from 2023-2025.

It is anticipated that additional maintenance dollars would be needed after the initial restoration is complete. The maintenance dollars would start in 2026 and would be an additional \$8200 a year to maintain this western area.

In summary, the county would spend \$8200/year from now until 2026 for the maintenance of the eastern areas and then in 2026, an additional \$8200 would be needed to include the western restored areas, for a total of \$16,400/year.

If approved, a contract with TNC will be submitted to the court for consideration on a future court agenda.

Staff, as well as Brandon Belcher, with TNC, is available for any questions.

Action Requested:

The Engineering Department requests the courts consideration of expanding the Parkhill Prairie Restoration area to include the western ~230 acres.