

State Of Maryland

2022 Bond Initiative Fact Sheet

1. Name Of Project		
Woodend Nature Play Space		
2. Senate Sponsor	3. House Sponsor	
Waldstreicher	Solomon	
4. Jurisdiction (County or Baltimore City)	5. Requested Amount	
Montgomery County	\$400,000	
6. Purpose of Bond Initiative		
the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of play features and other necessary improvements to create a wheelchair-accessible Nature Play Space at Woodend Nature Sanctuary		
7. Matching Fund		
Requirements:	Type:	
Grant		
8. Special Provisions		
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Easement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Sectarian	
9. Contact Name and Title	Contact Ph#	Email Address
Delegate Jared Solomon		Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us
Alison Pearce, Deputy Director for Programs		301-704-5864
10. Description and Purpose of Organization (Limit length to visible area)		
<p>The Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) inspires residents of the greater Washington, DC, region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy. ANS seeks to create a larger and more diverse community of people who treasure the natural world and work to preserve it. ANS recently launched a suite of projects at our headquarters, Woodend Nature Sanctuary, to better serve more audiences. We completed the restoration of a stream and natural habitats, as well as the construction of a wheelchair-accessible nature trail. We are finalizing designs for a wheelchair-accessible Nature Play Space at the main trailhead of the accessible trail that will welcome preschoolers and public elementary students of all abilities to learn, discover and explore in a healthy outdoor setting.</p>		

11. Description and Purpose of Project (Limit length to visible area)

This project will construct an accessible Nature Play Space at the trailhead of an accessible trail to enable more teachers, students and families to benefit from exploratory nature play. Play elements will include: 1) A Sensory Garden filled with colors, textures and smells of native plants with raised garden tables for wheelchair-users. 2) An Engineering Zone with an accessible water pump, raised sluiceway, sand and stones for creative building play. 3) A willow tunnel 4) Accessible play houses 5) Various climbing structures including a sculptural bird and nest box designed for various levels of physical ability, including ambitious climbing, as well as climbing and sliding that is achievable for children with a wheelchair transfer. 6) A wobble house that provides vestibular stimulation, including for children who can be transferred from wheelchairs. 7) benches and tables for school classes and families to gather.

Round all amounts to the nearest \$1,000. The totals in Items 12 (Estimated Capital Costs) and 13 (Proposed Funding Sources) must match. The proposed funding sources must not include the value of real property unless an equivalent value is shown under Estimated Capital Costs.

12. Estimated Capital Costs

Acquisition	
Design	\$170,150
Construction	\$1,030,850
Equipment	
Total	\$1,201,000

13. Proposed Funding Sources - (List all funding sources and amounts.)

Montgomery County Capital Grant	\$200,000
Private donations	\$401,000
Maryland State Bond Bill	\$400,000
Howard Hughes Medical Institute	\$150,000
PNC Foundation	\$25,000
Stone & Holt Weeks Foundation	\$25,000
Total	\$1,201,000

14. Project Schedule (Enter a date or one of the following in each box. N/A, TBD or Complete)			
Begin Design	Complete Design	Begin Construction	Complete Construction
6/1/2018	completed	11/1/2022	2/28/2023
15. Total Private Funds and Pledges Raised	16. Current Number of People Served Annually at Project Site	17. Number of People to be Served Annually After the Project is Complete	
476000	60,000	70,000	
18. Other State Capital Grants to Recipients in the Past 15 Years			
Legislative Session	Amount	Purpose	
2017	\$150,000	Construction of wheelchair-accessible nature trail.	
2019	\$250,000	Construction of wheelchair-accessible nature trail.	
19. Legal Name and Address of Grantee		Project Address (If Different)	
Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States, Inc. 8940 Jones Mill Rd. Chevy Chase, MD 20815		8940 Jones Mill Rd. Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
20. Legislative District in Which Project is Located	18 - Montgomery County		
21. Legal Status of Grantee (Please Check One)			
Local Govt.	For Profit	Non Profit	Federal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Grantee Legal Representative		23. If Match Includes Real Property:	
Name:	Alison Pearce	Has An Appraisal Been Done?	Yes/No
Phone:	301-704-5864		
Address:		If Yes, List Appraisal Dates and Value	
8940 Jones Mill Rd Chevy Chase, MD 20815			

24. Impact of Project on Staffing and Operating Cost at Project Site			
Current # of Employees	Projected # of Employees	Current Operating Budget	Projected Operating Budget
34	34	4065577.00	4350000.00
25. Ownership of Property (Info Requested by Treasurer's Office for bond purposes)			
A. Will the grantee own or lease (pick one) the property to be improved?			Own
B. If owned, does the grantee plan to sell within 15 years?			No
C. Does the grantee intend to lease any portion of the property to others?			No
D. If property is owned by grantee any space is to be leased, provide the following:			
Lessee	Terms of Lease	Cost Covered by Lease	Square Footage Leased
E. If property is leased by grantee - Provide the following:			
Name of Leaser	Length of Lease	Options to Renew	
26. Building Square Footage:			
Current Space GSF	13,600		
Space to be Renovated GSF	N/A		
New GSF	13,600		

27. Year of Construction of Any Structures Proposed for Renovation, Restoration or Conversion

N/A

28. Comments

In our increasingly urban and busy lives, many children and families lack the foundational experiences in nature that were common a generation ago. As people spend less time outside, they become more apprehensive about allowing children to explore natural environments, even when given the opportunity. Nature play spaces are inspirational settings that bridge the gap between common playgrounds of plastic and metal, and completely unstructured exploration of natural habitats. Nature play spaces consist of play elements crafted from natural materials and incorporate plants, as well as loose parts that encourage highly creative play that is more open-ended and less prescriptive than traditional playground equipment. This nature play space will provide students, teachers, children and families of all abilities those foundational experiences that mold them into lifelong nature stewards. It will also provide a safe and engaging space for families to spend time outdoors. The importance of such outdoor spaces for public health has become increasingly apparent during the pandemic.

Research has shown numerous benefits from outdoor nature play for physical and mental health, as well as social and cognitive development. An accessible nature play space will provide these benefits to children of all abilities. Beneficiaries will include the young children enrolled in ANSs on-site nature preschool, preschool and elementary school students visiting the sanctuary on field trips, and families visiting on their own or participating in ANS family programs. We will also use the Nature Play Space in the teacher training component of our award-winning GreenKids environmental literacy partnership with public school systems. Teachers will learn about the benefits of nature play and gain strategies for incorporating outdoor exploration of schoolyards and nearby parks into their teaching.

Nature play spaces are becoming increasingly popular across the US and globally, which is a wonderful trend. We believe that our design may be one of the first nature play spaces that is truly accessible for children with a range of mobility differences and one that has national application. We have been working for over three years with landscape architects, early childhood experts and representatives from organizations that serve people with disabilities to design a space that is engaging, enriching and inclusive for as many children as possible. We have worked creatively to ensure that the space does more than simply provide access for wheelchair users to navigate trails. Rather, we have designed features that provide stimulating fine motor, large motor and cognitive activities for children who use wheelchairs and other mobility assistive devices full-time, as well as for those who can transfer from wheelchairs. To ensure inclusive play, the feature areas provide opportunities for children of all abilities to engage in activities together, with no special equipment that is intended for exclusive use by those with mobility differences. We are excited by what this will make possible for the community that we serve. As William McGrath, Supervisor of the Physical Disabilities Program for Montgomery County Public Schools tells us, "For many children, having accessible experiences of outdoor play and nature exploration with their peers will be an entirely new experience for them."