

Carolyn Parr Nature Center

2026–27 Application for Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission Grant Funds
Project Focus: Children's Nature Education Programming

I. Description of Organization / Eligibility

1. Type of organization or business

Non-profit 501(c)(3) Corporation.

2. Purpose for which organization was formed

The organization's fundamental purpose is to provide engagement and education toward the preservation, protection, and conservation of Californian and Napa County natural habitats. The organization's goal is to operate and maintain a natural science museum where individuals of all ages may acquire a greater understanding of, appreciation for, and opportunities for a closer relationship with, their native flora and fauna.

3. Tax exempt status

501(c)(3) non-profit. Federal Tax ID (EIN): 94-2496573.

4. Date formed as Non-profit

April 11, 1978.

5. Membership

No restrictions. Yearly membership from date of sign-up; current count 30–40 members. Membership levels and fees: Student \$5, Individual \$10, Family \$25, Patron \$50. Admission to the Museum is free, including several community events held throughout the year. Educational presentations are free to all members and children under 13, with a \$5 fee for non-members; reservations required unless otherwise noted.

6. Names of Board of Directors

- Stephanie Dahl, President
- Rabbit Hardt, Vice-President
- Nancy LaFortune, Chief Financial Officer
- Joyce Nichols, Secretary
- Karen Swain, Member
- Adrienne Molieri, Member

Contact Phone: 707-738-1916

II. Needs Assessment / Problem Statement

1. Clear statement of problem

The Carolyn Parr Nature Center, in order to further its mission of conservation education, requires funding to develop a dedicated children's nature education programming area, a resource that has long been improvised from limited shelving, an aging book collection, and materials that have not kept pace with current K–6 science curriculum standards. As Napa has grown increasingly shaped by tourism-oriented development, the CPNC remains one of the few consistently free, accessible points of entry for local children to encounter conservation education directly. That accessibility is undermined, however, by a children's area that has not been substantively updated in years.

Our current children's corner lacks adequate shelving and organization, leaving books and hands-on materials difficult for young visitors to browse and for volunteers to maintain. The book collection itself is dated, with many titles no longer reflecting current native species information, contemporary conservation science, or the bilingual accessibility our community needs. Volunteers who lead programming for school groups and families are working without a developed, standards-aligned curriculum, relying instead on improvised activities that vary in quality and consistency from visit to visit.

This gap affects both our on-site and off-site programming. On-site, family and school-group visitors encounter a children's area that does not match the quality of the rest of the Center's exhibits. Off-site, our ability to bring conservation education directly into classrooms, senior living facilities, and community events such as Earth Day is limited by a lack of portable, durable materials designed for travel and repeated use. Our educational outreach is intended to complement state curriculum guidelines for Life Sciences, Earth Science, and Ecology across Kindergarten through 6th Grade, and a properly developed programming area is essential to delivering on that intention consistently rather than incidentally.

Beyond books and shelving, the children's area's exhibit infrastructure has not kept pace with what it needs to be: a single static tactile exhibit anchors the space but has gone without restructuring or updates in years, and the area's skins and skulls cubby, a hands-on favorite for young visitors, has not been restocked with new specimens in some time. Neither offers the rotating display capacity that gives repeat visitors a reason to return. Every other exhibit at the Center is static once installed, which serves our adult and general-audience galleries well but does little to sustain a child's attention or curiosity over multiple visits. Restructuring and updating the existing tactile exhibit, restocking the skins and skulls cubby with new specimens, and building the rotating display infrastructure needed to keep the space fresh going forward would let the children's area function as a living, evolving classroom rather than a fixed corner, directly supporting the Center's mission to conceptualize and inspire engagement with our shared Napa ecology.

2. Specific objective & specific dollar amount requested

Objective: The organization's fundamental purpose is to provide engagement and education toward the preservation, protection, and conservation of Californian and Napa County natural habitats, with young learners as a particular focus of this cycle's request. To meet this objective, we are asking the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission for \$10,000.00 to develop our children's nature education programming area across five coordinated components:

- Reading nook and shelving development for the children's area
- Expansion of the children's book and media collection, including bilingual titles
- Development of curriculum-aligned early education materials for K–6 standards

- Development of on-site and off-site outreach programming and materials
- Fabrication and installation of kinetic, hands-on children's exhibits with rotating display infrastructure

Should the Commission's award fall short of the full request, our priority order for these five components is: first, Children's Interactive Exhibit Fabrication & Installation; second, Curriculum & Educational Materials Development; third, Reading Nook & Shelving Development. This ordering reflects which components deliver the most durable, standards-aligned educational value if funding must be scaled to a partial award.

3. Anticipated results, with time-line

The anticipated result of a \$10,000.00 grant from the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission will be a fully developed, standards-aligned children's nature education area, physically organized, well-stocked, paired with curriculum our volunteer educators can deliver consistently, and anchored by hands-on exhibits that draw repeat visitation. Shelving and reading-nook improvements will begin immediately upon grant approval and are projected to take 2–3 months to complete. The book and media collection can be procured and catalogued within a similar window. Curriculum development, requiring coordination with an educational consultant and alignment to state standards, is projected to take 4–6 months. Off-site outreach materials will be developed in tandem, with new programming ready to deploy to schools, senior living facilities, and community events such as Earth Day within the same period. Design and fabrication of the kinetic children's exhibits and rotating display infrastructure is the longest-lead component, projected at 5–7 months from design through installation, with the first rotation of exhibits ready to open within the grant period.

4. Detailed description of methods planned to achieve objective

Reading Nook & Shelving Development

- Select and purchase shelving and seating suited to young visitors
- Install shelving, seating, and storage/display bins
- Reorganize the children's area for browsing and program use

Children's Book & Media Collection

- Identify current gaps in native flora, fauna, and conservation titles
- Purchase youth field guides and bilingual (English/Spanish) titles
- Catalogue and shelve the expanded collection

Curriculum & Educational Materials Development

- Engage a curriculum consultant to align activities to K–6 state standards
- Develop and print/laminate durable activity materials
- Assemble tactile and specimen-based learning kits

On-Site & Off-Site Outreach Program Development

- Assemble portable outreach travel bins for classroom and event use
- Purchase outreach supplies (magnifiers, collection trays, nets)
- Train docents and educators on new curriculum and outreach materials
- Schedule and conduct off-site visits to schools, senior facilities, and community events

Children's Interactive Exhibit Fabrication & Installation

- Restructure and update the existing static tactile exhibit into a kinetic, hands-on display
- Restock the skins and skulls cubby with new specimens
- Design additional kinetic, hands-on didactic elements that let children physically engage with Napa's ecological systems
- Fabricate durable, child-safe exhibit components from sustainable materials
- Build lightweight rotating display infrastructure to support a changing exhibit calendar
- Install the initial exhibit rotation within the children's programming area

5. Clear statement of benefit relative to the goals of the Commission

A developed children's nature education programming area allows the CPNC to serve the future of Napa's conservation goals directly at their root: through the children who will inherit stewardship of our native habitats. Improved shelving and an expanded, bilingual book collection will make the Center more welcoming and accessible to families across our community. Curriculum-aligned materials will let our volunteer educators deliver consistent, standards-based learning rather than improvised activities. Expanded on-site and off-site programming will extend our reach into classrooms and community spaces that might not otherwise encounter conservation education. Kinetic, hands-on exhibits paired with rotating display infrastructure will give the Center's youngest visitors a physical, memorable way to conceptualize our shared Napa ecology, and a changing exhibit calendar that gives families a genuine reason to return. These goals are in service of California Fish and Game Code §13103(a), and align with the Commission's stated priority for educational proposals that meet state curriculum standards and can be integrated into the classroom, as well as proposals offering long-term educational value over one-time events.

6. Describe how you intend to determine if the proposed activity is successful

We will measure success through growth in the number of children and school groups engaging with the Center's programming, both on-site and off-site; the number of off-site visits conducted to schools, senior living facilities, and community events; feedback from teachers and program partners on curriculum alignment and quality; return visitation associated with each new exhibit rotation; and the continued ability of volunteer docents to deliver programming confidently and consistently using the new materials. Beyond these measures, we consider our deeper metric of success to be the number of children who leave a CPNC program with a genuine, lasting curiosity about the native flora and fauna of their own community.

III. Attachments

1. Expenditure Detail

The following is a good-faith estimate; final vendor quotes and consultant rates will be confirmed prior to execution and reported per the Commission's grant agreement terms.

Item	Rate	Units	Total
Custom Shelving Units	\$140	4	\$560
Reading Nook Seating & Rug	\$400	1	\$400
Storage & Display Bins	\$20	12	\$240
Installation Labor	\$200	1	\$200
Reading Nook & Shelving Development Subtotal			\$1,400

Item	Rate	Units	Total
Native Flora & Fauna Picture Books	\$18	30	\$540
Youth Field Guides	\$15	20	\$300
Bilingual (English/Spanish) Nature Books	\$20	13	\$260
Children's Book & Media Collection Subtotal			\$1,100

Item	Rate	Units	Total
Curriculum Consultant Fees (K–6 Standards Alignment) \$35/hr		20 hrs	\$700
Printed & Laminated Activity Materials	\$10	30	\$300
Tactile / Specimen Learning Kits	\$50	6	\$300
Curriculum & Educational Materials Development Subtotal			\$1,300

Item	Rate	Units	Total
Portable Outreach Travel Bins	\$75	4	\$300
Outreach Program Supplies (magnifiers, trays, nets)	\$20	25	\$500
Off-Site Transportation Stipend	\$250	1	\$250
Docent/Educator Training Materials	\$75	2	\$150
On-Site & Off-Site Outreach Program Development Subtotal			\$1,200

Item	Rate	Units	Total
Rotating Display Framework & Track System	\$1,000	1	\$1,000
Kinetic / Interactive Didactic Components	\$300	7	\$2,100

Fabrication Materials (durable, weather-safe)	\$40	30	\$1,200
Skins & Skulls Cubby Specimens	\$50	6	\$300
Installation & Fabrication Labor	\$400	1	\$400
Children's Interactive Exhibit Fabrication & Installation Subtotal			\$5,000

GRAND TOTAL

\$10,000

2. List of other funding sources

- Membership fees
- Educational events fees
- Fundraising events
- Expanded grant applications
- Gift shop sales
- In-kind donations

3. Letters of support

Letters of support from Karla Bunter, Aftercare Education at Stone Bridge School, Amy Heitzmann, and Alex Lyman, Director of the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum, speaking to CPNC's long-standing value to Napa families, children, and the broader museum and education community, are included below.

To the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission,

I am writing to express my support for the Carolyn Parr Nature Center's 2026-27 grant application to the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The Carolyn Parr Nature Center has long served the Napa community as a free, accessible resource for conservation education, and this year's request will strengthen that mission specifically for young learners. The proposed project will expand the Center's children's book and media collection, develop curriculum-aligned early education materials, and create new hands-on, kinetic exhibits that give children a direct, memorable way to engage with Napa's native ecology. These improvements will support consistent, standards-aligned educational programming both on-site and in outreach visits to schools and community events.

Programs like this give young people accessible, hands-on opportunities to learn about the natural world around them, and they build a foundation of environmental awareness and stewardship that carries into adulthood. I believe this project is a strong and worthwhile use of Commission funds, and I fully support the Carolyn Parr Nature Center's request.

Sincerely,

Karla Bunter

Aftercare Education, Stone Bridge School

karla.b@stonebridgeschool.org

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the Carolyn Parr Nature Center (CPNC) in their application for 2026-27 Wildlife Conservation Commission Grant funding. I believe the CPNC deserves conservation grant funding because the Center provides many free and low-cost opportunities for the Napa community, and in particular Napa children, to participate in educational and conservation efforts that align with the goals of the Commission, and of the California Department of Fish and Game. It's been quite a few years since I've visited the Center, but it was a mainstay of my son Alex's childhood in Napa. The Center's resources and activities contributed to his early, and enduring, deep love of and appreciation for animals and their role in nature and conservation. He spent many hours at the Center, and participated in many camp days. He loved it so much, he's back at the Center as a volunteer.

The all-volunteer staff at CPNC maintains the Center and offers its activities relying on local financial resources that come directly from low-cost memberships and donations from community members. Over the years, these funds have stretched only so far, leaving some of the CPNC materials outdated and in need of a refresh and replenishing. Additional resources from the Commission will allow CPNC to update and resupply its Center signage and educational materials to reflect current conservation practices. With the Commission's help, I believe CPNC can further conservation efforts in Napa County, by continuing its free and low-cost activities with new, and more relevant conservation and educational materials and activities to be enjoyed by those who want to see Napa County wildlife thrive.

For these reasons, I hope you consider CPNC as a top contender for this grant.

Yours sincerely,
Amy Heitzmann

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in my capacity as Director of the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum in St. Helena to express my support for the Carolyn Parr Nature Center's 2026-27 application to the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission.

As the director of a fellow Napa Valley cultural institution, I have seen firsthand how much local museums rely on community trust, volunteer dedication, and modest but consistent public funding to keep their doors open and their programming relevant. The Carolyn Parr Nature Center has been a steady presence in Napa's educational landscape for decades, offering free and low-cost access to conservation education at a time when that kind of accessible, hands-on learning is increasingly hard to find.

Our two institutions have collaborated directly on the Silverado Safari program, through which CPNC helped connect natural history to local Napa Valley history in a way that felt genuinely seamless rather than bolted together. That partnership showed me how effectively CPNC bridges disciplines, giving visitors, especially young ones, a richer, more intersectional understanding of both the land and the history layered on top of it. It is exactly the kind of interpretive skill that makes their proposed children's nature education area such a promising investment.

This cycle's request, focused on developing a dedicated children's nature education area, including expanded materials, curriculum-aligned programming, and new hands-on exhibits, reflects the kind of forward-looking investment that keeps a small nonprofit museum relevant to the next generation. I know

from my own work how difficult it is to build standards-aligned educational programming and physical exhibit infrastructure on a volunteer-driven budget, and how meaningful outside funding is to making that possible.

I fully support the Carolyn Parr Nature Center's request and hope the Commission will give it favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Lyman

Director, Robert Louis Stevenson Museum

4. Completion/progress report of projects completed over the past 5 years using Fish & Game Fine Monies

With the support of a \$10,000.00 Wildlife Conservation Commission grant awarded for the 2023–24 cycle, the CPNC completed a three-part project addressing our Napa Native Garden, our interior exhibits, and our community outreach capacity.

The Napa Native Garden was restored and expanded with new native plant specimens, an improved irrigation system, and new identification and interpretive signage, creating a stronger habitat and way-station for local pollinators while giving visitors a self-guided introduction to native flora before they enter the building.

Interior exhibits were upgraded with newly designed, professionally produced signage, including Spanish-language translations to better serve Napa's Hispanic community, along with an interactive bilingual audio component and a tour-guide speaker system for outdoor tours. The Education Outreach Fund allowed the Center to expand its free public events and school-outreach materials, supporting presentations aligned with Life Sciences, Earth Science, and Ecology curriculum standards for Kindergarten through 6th grade.

Building on that foundation, the CPNC's 2025-26 Wildlife Conservation Commission request of \$15,000.00 proposed continued work across three areas: further restoration and expansion of the Napa Native Garden to support larger and more frequent use by school groups and the public; improvements to the Center's Nature Library, early education materials, and exhibit housing; and expansion of public event and outreach programming, including a sustainable stock of materials to support a growing calendar of free community events and school partnerships. The Commission awarded approximately \$5,000.00 of this request, and CPNC prioritized that funding accordingly.