

Project Year-End Summary Report 2021

Title of Project: Educational Signs for Graze Days

Begin answering in the shaded box right beside or below each question and it will expand to accommodate as you type. Use up to a total of two pages. More detailed presentations, articles or posters are welcome separately (See final instructions at the end of this form.)*

1. Organization name or Individual who received the grant: Railyard Park Conservancy

2. Amount of Grant: \$500

4. Was additional outside funding obtained? (check box that applies) Yes No
Other funding source(s) if you checked "yes."

5. Briefly, how was the grant money from the Carter Conservation Fund used?

Grant funds were used to design and purchase a large, light-weight, plastic A-Frame sign with an educational infographic in English & Spanish that introduces native plant species to the public while also explaining the "why" behind the use of grazing animals to support native landscapes.

6. Write an abstract or summary of the activities performed and the progress that was made this year on your project. Save any conclusions, lessons learned, and benefits achieved for the final sections, 7&8.

During 2021, the Railyard Park Conservancy (RPC), with support from the Native Plant Society and the Carter Conservation Fund, designed and purchased educational signage material for the RPC's popular Graze Days project - a project that utilizes grazing animals for the care of native landscapes within the Railyard Park. The first step to this process began in early spring and included consulting with the RPC's Horticulture Advisory Committee to determine how best to convey the "why" of the Graze Days. The final design came into fruition after about a month of back and forth between the RPC's Marketing Director and the Horticulture Advisory Committee. The final design highlights riparian and upland native plant species and explains the benefits of using grazing animals to support native landscapes. The final design was translated into Spanish and both the English and Spanish versions were sent to a local print shop (Allegra) ahead of the summer session of Graze Days.

7. State how your project furthers a Native Plant Society mission area. Pick the best fitting area: achieves plant or ecological education, contributes to conservation/restoration of native plants and habitats, adds to botanical research, or promotes appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land and/or wildlife.

This project, Educational Signs for Graze Days, furthers the mission of the Native Plant Society by educating the public on native plant identification, on the benefits of native landscapes, like water conservation, and on the care of native landscapes using grazing

animals. Educating the public on the benefits and components of a native landscape has the long-term effect of shifting public sentiment towards supporting native landscapes in general. Besides educating the public, this project is a part of a larger multi-year native grassland restoration effort within the Railyard Park. In this way, this project is directly contributing to the conservation/ restoration of native plants and habitats in a highly visible, downtown setting

8. State any other conclusions. Include any lessons learned that would assist others. What benefit to you, the community or the environment resulted or do you hope will result from your use of this grant?

The educational A-Frame sign has been a very effective way to communicate the "why" of Graze Days. Due to staff and volunteer limitations, it's not always possible to engage with every single person who stops by to see the sheep and goats grazing in the Railyard Park. However, we want to make sure that the public understands that Graze Days isn't just a cute gimmick. Graze Days is a part of a larger native grassland restoration project and there is a why behind the use of grazing animals to support our native landscapes. The sign helped reach more people than we were able to reach before and it offered educational material in a safe, socially distanced way. We will be using that sign at all future Graze Days and are so grateful for the opportunity to amplify not only the mission of the Native Plant Society, but also our organization's educational goals around Graze Days.

Final Instructions

Please send your completed form in MS Word as an email attachment to cartergrantapps@gmail.com by November 31.

** To remain in good standing for any future funding from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, plan to write an article (600-1000 words, illustrations welcome) for our newsletter, **or** create and present a poster at our annual state conference, **or** send us a copy of or link to a published article connected with the past year's work, **or** work with a local chapter of NPSNM to make an educational and visual presentation to a group.*

What are your intentions in this regard? I'd be happy to write an article about our work restoring and caring for the native landscapes in the Railyard Park.

Our next state conference is scheduled for August, 2022 in Albuquerque. Contact our Albuquerque chapter if you wish to contribute in that way. Write to cartergrantapps@gmail.com at any time with questions.