

OPRA Foundation Grant
Wild About Wetlands
Powell Parks and Recreation Department
Final Report

Wild About Wetlands was a proposed four-month (April, May, June, and July) nature event that featured the new wetlands area at Seldom Seen Park. Led by Mad Scientist Associates, LLC, Wild About Wetlands gave participants of all ages a hands-on experience and educational information about maintaining and preserving our wetlands. Mad Scientist Associates led activities that fit in the Powell Parks and Recreation Departments mission and vision to:

- Provide free family programs and activities
- Unplug and connect with the outdoors
- Enhance nature programming
- Create memories

In 2018 the City of Powell was in the planning and development phase to construct a new public park off of Seldom Seen Road. The City of Powell recognized the need to hire a wetland consultant when several wetlands areas were discovered. MAD Scientists Associates, LLC was initially retained to complete the wetland delineation and assessment, and Powell has kept the firm involved in the permitting, mitigation and construction oversight of this innovative project that will preserve the largest wetland feature and expand and enhance the wetland resource through onsite wetland mitigation.

In 2023, with an awarded program grant by the OPRA Foundation, and in partnership with Mad Scientist Associates, the Powell Parks and Recreation Department hosted "Wild About Wetlands". This once a month free special event included an educational component and hands on exploration of the wetlands at Seldom Seen Park. Each month participants learned about a variety of topics including amphibians, migrations, habitats, water education and ecosystems. The second part of each event included hands on exploration where participants caught and released a variety of aquatic life including frogs, fish, amphibians, turtles and more. MAD Scientist Associates supplied all of the nets, buckets and materials needed, and staff from MAD assisted on proper techniques to safely catch, observe and release. Each month photos were featured on the City of Powell website and social media channels. A Facebook event promoted dates and times, as well as discussion topics including FAQ's and feature photos from participants.

Events were scheduled in April (coinciding with our Earth Day event), May, June and July. The April event was canceled due to inclement weather, but May through July took place with an average of fifty participants per event. Because the wetlands are located in a multi-use sports park, we had many visitors to the education tent from secondary activities taking place in the park. The Wild About Wetlands event(s) took place in May, June, July to feature the wetlands at its peak, and were able to see the progression of growth with wildlife and vegetation.

With a fee of \$600 per event, the grant covered MAD Scientist Associates fees for the three free family outings and all needed supplies and staffing to assist MAD Scientists each month. The goal of the Wild About Wetlands event is to provide free outdoor education themed programs for all ages. Throughout the year, the Parks and Recreation Department encourages people of all ages to unplug and connect with nature by visiting one of our parks. The grant allowed us to provide one season of

activities at no cost to the public, and because of the positive feedback from attendees and our park users, we were approved to continue the program in 2024 with City funds.

Wild About Wetlands drew both residents and non-residents to Seldom Seen Park. Participants of all ages were represented, and many used our trails to bike or walk to the event(s). A variety of species including tadpoles, frogs, snakes, snapping turtles, painted turtles, insects and birds were observed and documented. Wild About Wetlands encouraged our park users to create hands on experiences in the wetlands and not just observe from afar. Our hope is to make the wetlands a destination for the public, school groups, scouts and more, and utilize the unique ecosphere for outdoor education in our suburban area.

Wild About Wetlands
2023 Budget

MAD Scientist Associates Fees

May: \$600.00

June: \$600.00

July: \$600.00

Total: \$1,800

Event Supplies

Provided by MAD Scientists Associates

Staffing

Four employees @ \$16 per hour for three hours (three events):

\$192.00

Total:

\$1,992

Grant Awarded: \$2,000