

December 4, 2025

Dear members of PHURAC:

First, we want to express our deep appreciation for each of you as dedicated community members and knowledgeable business owners who have been charged with a critical decision for the future of Phoenix. We appreciate your thorough consideration, thoughtfulness, and leadership in ensuring that Phoenix continues to be a wonderful place for people to live, work, and play - and learn!

Knowing that discussion time is limited, we are providing a document with answers to questions that have been raised previously during meetings and conversations, or maybe not yet asked, that might be helpful for your decision, including a summary of estimated expenses. Of course, we will be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information at the meeting.

Also attached are additional letters of support from community members we have received since our last meeting.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve the City of Phoenix.

Kristina, Pat, Erin, Sally, Paul, and Al
Board of Directors of Pollinator Project Rogue Valley



1) Community Benefits

A primary benefit of this project is the opportunity to connect with so many different partners on so many different levels, with the organizations, people, and businesses who will bring their expertise and constituents to the area for tours, classes, art events and festivals. We see the opportunity to bring people here from throughout Southern Oregon and beyond for biking and birding excursions, or just to explore Bear Creek and the Miracle Mile. And, with Phoenix's friendly and inviting 'vibe', they will be likely to visit downtown Phoenix to eat, drink, shop, and make new friends.

From the beginning, we have seen this project as critical to the "Phoenix Springs Nature Complex" - it is the "keystone" to the entire plan, providing a landing spot at the beginning or the end of a hike, bike ride, birding walk, and more. Speaking of birds, **Figure 1** in the Appendix provides statistics several volunteer biologists researched showing the importance of birders and birding to the US economy, including our local area. We already have birders enjoying our parks and the Greenway - let's bring them *into* Phoenix with trails, an educational center, exhibits, art, native plant gardens, butterfly house, and more.

Although this project is all about "ecoeducation," it is worth noting how important 'Nature' is for a community's financial well-being. **Figure 2** in the Appendix provides additional estimated projections about numbers of visitors and their associated economic impacts: "Nature observation and environmental education rank among Oregon's highest-value recreation activities. According to the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (2024), nature observation generates an average of \$61 per visitor per day, while visits to nature centers average \$53 per day in local spending." (*this was Exhibit 7 in our initial Letter of Intent*)

We know that the businesses of Phoenix are integral to the success of this project. Our goal is to encourage people to visit the shops and businesses on Main Street and beyond - from 'wayfaring' signs with business names, to coupons, to sponsorship signage, plus business workdays, all celebrated on our website, social media, and in the newsletter.

2) Funding and Growth

PPRV has developed a strong and ongoing relationship with many foundations in Southern Oregon, such as Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, Gordon Elwood Foundation, The Carpenter Foundation, Pacific Power Foundation, and others. The majority of these funders provide support to an organization for multiple / ongoing years. Other funders we will approach include The Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Southern Oregon Education Service District, Watchable Wildlife, and agencies such as Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Fish and Wildlife, and others. In addition, we anticipate that several Oregon art-focused organizations will consider the many ways this project can connect art to education and community and provide funding for murals and exhibits. As noted in our letter in this Agenda packet, a 25-year lease arrangement would be acceptable.

Jim White, Executive Director of the statewide [Nonprofit Association of Oregon](#), has recently taken an interest in this project and attended the PHURAC meeting on 11/20/25. Jim is available to provide guidance on partners, funders, and more.

Please enjoy PPRV's year end reports [here](#) that highlight some of our community connections throughout Jackson and Josephine counties - and beyond! - in 2025.

3) Educational Opportunities (Year-Round)

PPRV is primarily an educational organization. Everything we do - from growing native plants for sale, to tending our demonstration gardens, to raising butterflies, compiling and sharing photos and data, and of course, teaching classes and hosting workshops - is with the goal of educating community members of all ages about the wonders and importance of the pollinators and plants that are native to our local ecosystems.

The EcoEducation Center and Butterfly House will be a perfect location for these topics - but so much more. We envision other nonprofit organizations (Our Community Forestry, Save the Phoenix Wetlands, SOCAN, Klamath Bird Observatory, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Rogue Valley Council of Governments, and more), plus businesses and schools, using the space to teach and demonstrate on related topics: water, fish, birds, trees, climate change, water catchment, solar power, etc, and *how and why people can choose to make simple, everyday actions that will help create a more vibrant, resilient, and beautiful Southern Oregon for all.*

Butterfly houses have been a successful draw to communities throughout the country. **Please enjoy [this StoryMap](#) about other Butterfly Houses we have researched as models.** This is just one of the three StoryMaps created by our long-time [Rogue Buzzway](#) volunteer (one of PPRV's SOU interns prior to graduating).

Although flying butterflies will not be available year round, the Butterfly House will provide a basis for many of the activities, workshops, and classes that **will** continue year round. From butterfly life identification, to life cycles, to training community members on butterfly raising protocols, plus native plant identification and propagation, seed collection and cleaning, and tending the garden, the project will bring in people as volunteers, students, and paying customers.

The native plant gardens and plantings, with educational signage, will be a draw for visitors and volunteers interested in learning about and supporting this project year round.

Gardens that attract butterflies and birds will provide a wonderful stopover for the bikers, birders, and community members out walking and shopping or passing through Phoenix – a great reason to get off the highway, slow down, and enjoy Phoenix!

Southern Oregon is replete with scientists and educators, many who have expressed strong interest in this project. While attending the annual NW Lepidopterist Conference in Corvallis recently, we received resounding support from Bob Pyle, the founder of the Xerces Society in Portland (the largest nonprofit focused on pollinators in the country) and also Dana Ross, entomologist & volunteer Curatorial Associate of Lepidoptera at the Oregon State Arthropod Collection in Corvallis, who often works in Southern Oregon. Locally, Linda Kappen is sought after for her butterfly knowledge, often teaching classes, while running the very popular and “Answers” from PPRV for Dec 4, 2025 meeting

well-used Facebook page Butterflies and Moths of the Pacific Northwest as well as David Lee Myers, who has led many butterfly walks for us over the years. Please find letters of support from Dana, Linda, and David in our previous submissions. Robert Coffan, on the PPRV Advisory Committee, is co-founder of the Southern Oregon Monarch Advocates, and has personal connections to many avid community members who have been raising and tracing monarch butterflies.

In addition to butterfly and moth scientists, many biologists in the area, such as Amanda Huffman, Steve Godwin, Max McClaron, Scott English, Kristi Mergenthaler, Jacob Youngblood, and others, have provided letters of support indicating they want to be involved! Of special note - Jacob Youngblood, SOU entomology professor, is interested in bringing students to this project in an ongoing internship program. We see classes, workshops, workparties, and more, happening throughout the year, bringing in hundreds of people to Phoenix throughout the year.

Native plants will be for sale at least four days a week, in addition to our twice-yearly sale events with other native plant growers that have been bringing 300 people - in one day - to Phoenix. Our neighbors at The Oregon Cheese Cave and Phoenix Dripp can attest to the rush of business that these events bring to their stores.

We are especially proud that this project has support from many other impactful nonprofits in the area, including Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Friends of Cascade Siskiyou Monument, Talent Maker City, ScienceWorks, The CREST, etc. There are many collaborations waiting to happen between these organizations that will all serve to provide additional learning experiences for all of our constituents. In fact, we see this project - from start to completion - as an educational "lesson," bringing in students of all ages to help design, build, plant, monitor, teach, and more. We see the opportunity to involve many volunteers and interns, as well as additional PPRV staff. We currently have two high school students from Armadillo Community Charter School working for us as paid interns through Southern Oregon Youth Works of Rogue Workforce Partnership.

This project will be an opportunity to showcase climate-friendly possibilities, i.e. solar panels, water catchment systems, rain gardens, etc., in collaboration with Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, True South Solar, and others. Our goal is that the EcoEducation Center Building be built to net zero standards. Not only will there be information and resources on site, regular tours will be offered to help educate community members on how to include these climate friendly resources and practices on their own properties.

PPRV and partners will lead ongoing, and regular classes for adults and young people on a variety of topics related to plants, pollinators, birds, etc., native to our local ecosystems. The project is within walking distance of 3 schools, and we currently have working relationships with two of them. We also look forward to partnering with educational organizations such as Southern Oregon University, Rogue Community College, and others interested in participating in and learning about the project development and the benefit to the ecosystems and communities. This space could also be available to rent to other nonprofits with similar and related missions.

As the project progresses, we can imagine that the project will see visitors from other communities traveling here to learn how to do this in their own communities.

4) Art and Culture

We are already planning to showcase artists and partner with the new Phoenix Oregon Committee for the Arts to display both permanent pieces as well as changing art displays, both indoors and out. This space will also support and enhance other regular Phoenix events such as the annual Heart of the Wild, Second Fridays, etc., and why not an annual Chalk It Up Festival (click [here](#) for photos from our collaborative 2021 event) and an annual Pollinator Pheestival? We would be honored to have this space utilized by Lomakatsi, Oregon Peace Trail, Indigenous Gardens Network, Coalición Fortaleza, B.A.S.E. and others.

5) Health

We believe the health - physical, mental and emotional - of the community will be improved with this project. Many studies can be found about the benefits green spaces provide for mental and emotional wellbeing. Here is a recent article that directly correlates how growing up in nature will make a difference for a person's physical health for their entire lives. [How a radical experiment to bring a forest into a preschool transformed children's health | Early years education | The Guardian](#)

6) Leadership

Finally, a question you may have as you consider PPRV's capability to succeed with this large and significant project: *What is the future of leadership for PPRV?* Yes, Kristina Lefever, PPRV's Volunteer Executive Director and Board President, is clearly the current driving force behind PPRV and the vision for the Bear Creek property. But our board is committed to ensuring that PPRV continues as an organization and will be in a position to carry on and steward the EcoEducation Center and Butterfly House project. PPRV is cultivating and preparing for greater depth of management and additional support staff, including planning for a paid Executive Director. This was already a central part of PPRV's planning for the next 5 years; if PPRV is awarded the opportunity to develop an EcoEducation Center on the Bear Creek property, hiring additional staff will be an early priority. As Kristina mentioned in a prior meeting, funding is available from foundations (many of them members of the Nonprofit Association of Oregon) and others to help nonprofits create and succeed in carrying out a viable succession plan. In concert with this goal, PPRV is taking care to ensure that our dedicated staff members are capable not only of performing their day-to-day duties for their programs, but also are involved in goal setting and decision making for the organization.

Appendix

Figure 1

Read a recent report about the economic benefit for bringing birders to the Phoenix community [here](#), supported by this excerpt from the STATE OF THE BIRDS REPORT 2025:

Nearly 100 million Americans are birdwatchers, more than a third of the adult U.S. population. No other outdoor recreational activity brings together so many people from multiple regions and demographics. The benefits of birding go beyond recreation-to supporting local economies, to uniting Americans across the outdoors spectrum, and to boosting mental health. Restoring bird populations and addressing causes of their declines therefore benefits millions of Americans.

Birding Is Big Business - Key economic indicators show the importance of birding to the American economy.

- \$279 billion - Total annual economic output generated by birder expenditures
- \$108 billion - Total annual amount spent on birding trips (such as food and lodging) and equipment (such as bird seed and binoculars)
- 1.4 million jobs - Total jobs related to birding trip and equipment expenditures, which generated more than \$90 billion in labor income
- \$38 billion - Total annual tax revenue generated by birding activity:
- \$7 billion in county taxes, \$9 billion in state taxes, and \$22 billion in federal taxes

Birds Provide a Boost for Americans' Mental Health - Recently published research is showing how birds and birding have mental-health benefits for people:

- Encounters with birds have a proven beneficial effect on the mental well-being of people with depression, which is the leading cause of disability and sick leave.
- Stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms are significantly reduced by engaging with birds. The combination of being outdoors, focusing on the beauty and behavior of birds, and gentle exercise contributed to enhanced emotional well-being and a greater sense of peace.
- A higher diversity of bird species also increases people's feelings of life satisfaction. Researchers found that a 10% increase in bird species had a comparable effect in life satisfaction to 10% growth in net household income.

Figure 2

In addition to its ecological and educational value, the EcoEducation Center & Butterfly House has strong potential to serve as a tourism and cultural anchor within Phoenix's civic corridor. The project aligns with regional tourism initiatives led by Travel Ashland, Travel Medford, and Travel Southern Oregon, each of which is advancing strategic marketing plans that emphasize authentic, experience-based travel.

In particular, [Travel Medford's 2023-2026 Strategic Marketing Plan](#) identifies key growth demographics: families and active adults seeking meaningful outdoor, food and art experiences. The EcoEducation Center supports this focus by creating a distinctive, family-friendly destination that integrates environmental learning with local culture and recreation. Extending the natural area behind the Phoenix Civic Center to include the EcoEducation Center & Butterfly House will engage visitors with larger, more impactful, eco-friendly experiences.

Community gatherings such as the Second Phriday Art Walk and Fermentopia, as well as others held at the Civic Center, will gain an engaging extension that encourages visitors to explore longer and spend more locally, two proven drivers of downtown revitalization and small business growth.

Visitor Attraction:

Nature observation and environmental education rank among Oregon's highest-value recreation activities. According to the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (2024), nature observation generates an average of \$61 per visitor per day, while visits to nature centers average \$53 per day in local spending.





Event Integration:

The City of Phoenix continues to strengthen the role of its Civic Center as a hub for regional events. Across the Rogue Valley, event attendance is also on the rise, highlighted by the Talent Harvest Festival, which reached record participation in 2025. A connected nature trail will encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more at nearby restaurants, shops, and other local businesses.

Job & Revenue Support:

If the EcoEducation Center & Butterfly House were to attract 2,000 new visitors annually, each spending on average \$57 locally, that represents approximately \$114,000 in new visitor spending each year, supporting local jobs, municipal tax revenue, and small business vitality.

Indicator	Value	Project Relevance	Source
Avg. Visitor spending - Nature Observation	\$61/day	Nature Walks, Pollinator trails	OR Parks & Rec 2024
Avg. Visitor Spending - Nature Centers	\$53/day	Interpretive signage, workshops	OR Parks & Rec 2024
Travel as a Share of Regional Employment	7%	Tourism as job engine	Travel Oregon 2024
Art Walk Attendance	<i>pending</i>	Monthly Cultural Draw	Travel Phoenix
Fermentopia Festival Audience	800 people	Event visitor traffic to Civic Center	Wild Thyme Productions

 Economic Resilience	 Community Well-being	 Sustainability	 Return on Investment
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Notes / Data:

Travel Medford 2023 - 2026 Strategic Marketing Plan

Pg 13 - "Defined Audiences - Retired Affluent Couple - age 45-65 \$ 150k, Affinities, Wine + Food, Outdoor Landmarks, Shopping

"Answers" from PPRV for Dec 4, 2025 meeting

Family - age 35-45 \$ 100k, Affinities: family fun, outdoor landmarks shopping”

<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/374689135/6/>

Second Friday Art Walks

<https://travelphoenixoregon.com/things-to-do/phoenix-second-phriday-art-walk/>

*argument, helps align with tourism goals, increases walkable area and could be a place for art exhibitions / community events

Fermentopia at the Civic Center

<https://www.thefermentopia.com/schedule>

Held twice in 2025, drew a large crowd of local artisans and families. A nature art walk nearby would increase the likelihood of participants remaining in the area.

Jackson County Travel Data 2024

Jackson County Direct Travel Impact Insights, 2024p Visitor Spending Impacts Amount of Visitor Spending That Supports 1 Job Employee & Proprietor Earnings Generated by \$100 in Visitor Spending Local & State Tax Revenues Generated by \$100 in Visitor Spending Local & State Tax Revenues Generated per County Household Visitor Shares Travel Share of Total Employment Overnight-Visitor Day Share of Resident Population* pg 163

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN OREGON: 2022 UPDATE

Jackson County

Direct Spending Detail

Direct Spending Detail											Annual % Chg.	
	2003	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2023-24	2019-24
Direct Travel Spending (\$Millions)												
Destination Spending	305.7	467.6	491.5	512.2	525.3	320.7	541.2	616.9	607.4	615.8	1.4%	17.2%
Other Travel*	46.6	79.9	88.7	99.0	101.3	43.2	85.9	124.2	117.1	114.2	-2.5%	12.7%
TOTAL	352.3	547.5	580.3	611.1	626.6	363.9	627.1	741.0	724.5	730.0	0.8%	16.5%
Visitor Spending by Type of Traveler Accommodation (\$Millions)												
Hotel, Motel, STVR	142.3	238.2	254.4	264.7	269.1	175.1	280.2	323.6	312.6	319.7	2.3%	18.8%
Hotel, Motel**							248.3	286.5	272.0	278.8	2.5%	
STVR**							31.9	37.1	40.5	40.9	1.0%	
Private Home	79.6	123.1	127.9	134.4	139.1	77.4	145.9	161.8	159.6	160.9	0.8%	15.7%
Campground	22.3	26.8	27.0	28.1	29.2	24.3	27.0	30.1	33.1	31.4	-5.1%	7.5%
Second Home	3.0	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	3.8	5.3	5.8	6.0	6.1	1.3%	31.8%
Day Travel	58.5	75.2	77.9	80.5	83.2	40.0	82.8	95.6	96.2	97.7	1.6%	17.3%
TOTAL	305.7	467.6	491.5	512.2	525.3	320.7	541.2	616.9	607.4	615.8	1.4%	17.2%
Visitor Spending by Commodity Purchased (\$Millions)												
Accommodations	57.3	98.1	104.2	105.5	105.2	79.9	129.1	137.3	132.5	132.9	0.3%	26.3%
Food Service	77.4	130.3	137.6	142.7	149.8	94.9	155.2	170.9	176.1	185.0	5.1%	23.5%
Food Stores	28.6	41.2	41.4	42.0	43.4	29.0	49.1	55.0	56.6	56.8	0.4%	31.0%
Local Tran. & Gas	29.0	45.8	50.3	57.8	58.2	29.6	57.3	77.5	71.2	68.5	-3.7%	17.8%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	43.3	53.0	54.5	55.3	56.6	28.6	45.6	48.3	49.0	49.3	0.6%	-12.8%
Retail Sales	49.6	57.7	58.5	58.9	60.1	36.0	64.2	70.0	67.7	66.8	-1.4%	11.2%
Visitor Air Tran.	20.7	41.5	45.0	50.0	52.0	22.6	40.7	57.8	54.3	56.4	3.9%	8.4%
TOTAL	305.7	467.6	491.5	512.2	525.3	320.7	541.2	616.9	607.4	615.8	1.4%	17.2%

Recreation Activity	Activity Days	\$/activity day	Total Spending
Nature Observation	17,334,229	\$61	\$1,049,419
Visiting Nature Centers	2,439,010	\$53	\$129,688