



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FORTLANDIA

An Outdoor Exhibition at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
October 2020 – January 2021

The University of Texas at Austin Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center seeks proposals from creative individuals, groups, firms and students to design, construct and display forts as part of its recurring temporary outdoor exhibition Fortlandia. Forts should inspire the appreciation of our natural environment through their innovative and sustainable designs, materials and construction while evoking memories of childhoods spent escaping into nature to build structures and play with friends.

About the Wildflower Center

The Wildflower Center is the Botanic Garden of Texas and is dedicated to inspiring the conservation of native plants. Founded in 1982, it is one of the leading voices for native plants and sustainable landscapes in the country and welcomes more than 230,000 guests annually to its gardens. Its 16-acre Mollie Steves Zachry Texas Arboretum features collections of native trees from across the state as well as savanna landscapes, a one-mile trail, picnic areas and swings.

Exhibition Description

Many children grow up exploring the outdoors and using their sense of imagination to build forts using found and gathered materials. Fortlandia seeks to tap into those memories and bring to life forts of all kinds. Fort designers and builders will be selected through a competitive process to exhibit one of up to 10 forts in predetermined locations (see map on page 8) within the Texas Arboretum from October 2020 - January 2021.

Winning designs will:

- Gracefully integrate into the Center's oak savanna landscape
- Inspire playful interaction and provoke the imagination
- Promote sustainability through the use of sustainable products and locally sourced, recycled, and repurposed materials
- Inspire interaction with nature and the environment
- Be structurally sound, safe and resilient to weather, climbing and other high impact activity

Key Messages

The Wildflower Center would like to convey the following messages with this exhibition:

- To create emotional souvenirs through the interaction with forts created with natural materials and inspired by childhood memories
- To inspire children and their families to explore their environment
- To highlight environmentally responsible designs and materials and how they relate to the landscape
- To create nostalgia for childhood time spent exploring and building forts

Exhibition Objectives

- To engage people's sense of adventure and imagination by seeing forts as a special place to celebrate plants, wildlife and nature
- To demonstrate how the built environment can complement the landscape
- To create and promote partnerships with architects, students, artists, designers/builders and cultural organizations
- To increase awareness and understanding of public art, architecture and design
- To provide a showcase for local, regional and national designers, groups and firms

Stipend and Recognition

Selected designers will receive a \$10,000 stipend for exhibiting their work for the duration of the show. A third (34 percent) of the stipend is awarded upon signing the Exhibitor Agreement, a third (33 percent) is awarded after installation is satisfactorily completed and the remainder (33 percent) once the fort is removed upon completion of the exhibition. All structures must be completed prior to exhibition opening in October 2020 and remain displayed through January 2021. Before any payments are processed all designers must be set up as vendors with The University of Texas at Austin (Center staff will assist with this process).

Fort builders will be listed in printed exhibition materials, on exhibition panels and in other appropriate media. All builders will be provided 20 free passes to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center during the exhibition.

Selection Process and Criteria

Fortlandia is coordinated by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. To ensure the highest quality exhibition, designs will be chosen by a panel of jurors which includes architects, arborists, landscape architects, engineers, playground risk assessors and child behavior specialists. Judges will rate each fort based on the overall design, connection to the theme, materials, impact on the environment, safety and durability. Chosen fort builders will work closely with Wildflower Center staff during the construction, installation and removal process.

Please consider the following criteria for the design:

- Incorporation of native plant materials and native plant themes
- Creativity, imagination and sustainability
- Site-specific integration
- Durability of structure for weather and heavy use by children and adults
- Ability to be climbed safely up to but no higher than six feet by children and adults

- Creative use of materials that have minimal impact on the environment (e.g. recyclable, not adding to the waste stream, etc.)
- Connection to themes of childhood and nature
- Engaging for the entire family
- Range of accessibility for all guests (ADA accessibility desired)
- Sensitivity to public safety of all guests

The following materials are not allowed:

- Artificial turf
- 50-lb. plastic cable ties (any cable ties used must be rated at least 200-lb.)
- Imported soil
- Live plants

Qualified fort builders must have:

- Experience designing and constructing functional structures
- Interest in working as part of a creative team that will include Wildflower Center staff

Each submitted design requires the following:

- A narrative of the design concept
- Design in the form of digital rendering, schematic, architectural drawing or other images with plan view showing scale; 3D models and other graphic representations are welcome but not required
- Estimated budget for the fort
- General statement of materials, construction methods and construction equipment needed for installation
- Identification of desired fort location and consideration of whether the design is flexible for other locations (see map on page 8)
- An explanation of the source of inspiration for the fort design and any stories the fort may tell
- A description of the ultimate fate of the fort and fort materials after the exhibition is over. Will the fort be capable of being relocated permanently to another site? Will materials be repurposed, reused or recycled? Will materials end up in a landfill?

Submission process:

To submit a fort proposal, all required information, materials, references and designs must be submitted through the online application form at this [link](#) by Friday, June 12, 2020. Detailed information can be found in the Proposal Checklist on page 7.

The Wildflower Center reserves the right to use any and all images, renderings and models for the promotion of the exhibition in print or electronic formats.

Fort Exhibition Guidelines and Responsibilities

The health and integrity of the plants in our living collections are vital to our mission and institution. It is necessary to protect and maintain our collections by adhering to the following guidelines for construction, installation and maintenance of all forts.

- Fort structure must be original and suitable for outdoor display in adverse weather conditions (high winds, rain, heat, sun, freezing temperatures and ice).
- Forts will be located in high traffic areas with an unsupervised audience and must be soundly constructed of durable and safe components to last the duration of the exhibition.
- Potential fall heights must be limited to 6ft above ground. A clear 6ft radius on potential fall zones must also be observed.
- Forts must be appropriate for viewing and interaction by guests of all ages.
- Chosen fort builders (hereafter referred to as "Exhibitor(s)") are responsible for all costs, equipment and labor necessary for the delivery, installation, maintenance, and removal of the fort, materials and rubbish. Exhibitors assume all risk and damage to the work before and during installation and during and after removal. Wildflower Center staff may provide installation, maintenance, and removal assistance of forts on a limited basis with prior arrangement or notification.
- The exhibition is in an area accessible to the public during all open hours. Throughout installation and removal, a safe and hazard-free work area must be maintained at all times.
- Wildflower Center staff must be notified no later than 15 days prior to the installation date of any changes to proposed designs during fabrication so that the changes may be approved.
- The Wildflower Center will provide insurance for the work once it is installed and until it is removed from the site or by the removal deadline, whichever comes first.
- Exhibitor must provide proof of insurance (Workman's Comp, Liability).
- The Wildflower Center is not responsible for damage of the structures due to weather, vandalism, theft or misuse by guests.
- The exhibition will be accessible to the public daily during regular business hours 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., during Tuesday Twilights until sunset, and for special evening events open to the public. Private event clients may also view the forts after hours during their contract period.
- The Wildflower Center reserves the right to photograph and reproduce images of the forts for marketing and educational materials. Private event and photography permit clients may also photograph the forts as stated in their contract.
- The Wildflower Center will promote the exhibition with events, website promotions, social media posts, media releases, brochures, advertising, and calendar listings.
- Exhibitors are welcome to photograph or video their fort. Drone use is allowed only by permit and exhibitors must follow University policies as found here: <https://policies.utexas.edu/policies/unmanned-aerial-vehicles>
- Exhibitors are highly encouraged to attend the opening reception and to participate in interviews or other promotional activities during the installation process.
- Exhibitors must be present at their fort on the first day the exhibition is open to the public in order to observe how guests interact with their fort in case of unforeseen dangerous interactions that need to be addressed.
- Exhibitors are also highly encouraged to participate in programs around Fortlandia such as designer talks, Forts by Flashlight, Winter Tree Fest, Fortlandia opening weekend, and other programs and events that are planned.

Installation Criteria

- The site of the fort shall be chosen after consultation with, and the approval of, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. A fort must be able to be installed on available sites, some in grassy areas, both rocky and flat. Final location of fort in the Texas Arboretum is determined by Center staff.

- No digging is permitted due to irrigation lines, tree roots and existing utilities. Exceptions to this rule may be granted on a limited basis.
- Delivery of materials will be supervised by Center staff. We reserve the right to restrict construction activities due to site conditions caused by weather (rain). If conditions prevent access to the site, the installation period will be extended.
- Exhibitors must specify if their fort will be constructed on site, off site, or partially constructed on site. Specific details as to which sections will be constructed on site must be provided in advance.
- It is the responsibility of the Exhibitor to arrange for the installation of their fort on weekdays during September 7–25, 2020, and for complete removal during February 1–14, 2021. All installation and removal activity must take place during daylight hours. If weekend dates are needed, special requests may be submitted to Center staff.
- Generators and batteries are allowed only during construction and removal.
- Access to the Texas Arboretum for fort installation must be coordinated with Center staff. Traffic on the arboretum access road is permitted. Access to areas not accessible by the road are allowed but will be limited to reduce impact and damage to soil and vegetation. Center staff will provide details as to which routes are accessible and when access is permissible. Exhibitors are responsible for communicating this information to everyone on their crews.
- Exhibitors must take any and all precautions to protect all plant material directly adjacent to and surrounding the installation area.
- All interaction of the fort with trees or other plants must be approved by Center staff. In general, no exhibition element may rub or attach to any part of any tree. Nails, screws, hooks or anything that penetrates the bark of a tree will not be allowed.
- No removal of plant materials will be allowed without approval by Wildflower Center staff.
- No permanent or invasive devices will be allowed to be attached to trees or in planting areas.
- Nothing can be applied which may girdle the tree or rub the bark as this can result in irreparable damage the tree).
- No painting, staining or coloring of trees or other plants will be allowed.

Maintenance

- Exhibitor is responsible for any repairs or upkeep to the forts during the exhibition. Repairs and upkeep must be completed within a reasonable period after notification by Center staff.
- Exhibitor is responsible to make fort modifications deemed necessary by Wildflower Center staff for the safety of guests.

Removal

- It is the responsibility of the Exhibitor to transport and deliver any fort sold as a result of the exhibition. No fort may be pulled from the exhibition early because of a sale.
- Exhibitors may bring interested parties to Fortlandia to see the fort.

Upon notification of selection, Exhibitors will be required to sign an Exhibitor Agreement. Center staff will work with the Exhibitors on scheduling construction and installation with final approval being made by Center staff. Up to three entries per Exhibitor are accepted.

Exhibition Schedule

Request for Proposals Announced
Information Sessions

January 31, 2020
February 10, 2020 @ 1 p.m.
February 25, 2020 @ 11a.m.
April 21, 2020 @ 1 p.m. (Zoom)
June 12, 2020
July 17, 2020
July 31, 2020
September 7-25, 2020
October 2, 2020
October 3, 2020
January 31, 2021
February 1-12, 2021

Proposals Due
Proposal Acceptance Notification
Signed Exhibitor Agreements due
Installation of Forts
Preview Party
Exhibition Opens to the Public
Exhibition Closes
Removal of Forts

Contact Information

Please direct all inquiries to:

Tanya Zastrow
Director of Programs
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
4801 La Crosse Avenue
Austin, TX 78739
tzastrow@wildflower.org
512.232.0122

FORTLANDIA

Exhibition Proposal Checklist

The following information is required for all Fortlandia proposals. The electronic submission form is found [here](#). Proposals are due by June 12, 2020.

Contact Information

- Designer/Group Name
- Address
- Construction/Fabrication Name
- Primary Contact Person
- Phone
- Email

Fort Details

- A narrative of the design concept
- Inspiration behind the design
- Design in the form of digital rendering, schematic, architectural drawing or other images with plan view showing scale. 3D models and other graphic representations are welcome but not required
- Estimated budget for the for
- General statement of materials, construction methods and construction equipment needed for installation
- Preferred location for fort
- Identification of desired fort location and consideration of whether the design is flexible for other locations (see map on page 8)
- A description of the ultimate fate of the fort and fort materials after the exhibit is over. Will the fort be capable of being relocated permanently to another site? Will materials be repurposed, reused or recycled? Will materials end up in a landfill?

Designer Qualifications

- Description of your background and experiences
- Reference list of successful exhibits and/or projects
- Photos of past projects
- Any additional details that support your interest in this project

For any questions, please contact:

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FORT LANDIA

YOUR SECRET HIDEOUT AWAITS

FORT LOCATIONS 2020-2021

