



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FORTLANDIA

An Outdoor Exhibition at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
October 2021 – January 2022

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. This year, The Trail Foundation is partnering with Fortlandia and the Wildflower Center and will have one installation at the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin. 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 1-mile trail, picnic areas and swings.

About The Trail Foundation

The Trail Foundation's mission is to protect, enhance and connect the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake for the benefit of all. Since formation in 2003 as a 501c3, The Trail Foundation has fulfilled its mission through careful improvements to the trail's infrastructure and environment, while honoring the original vision of the trail's founders.

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. Most forts will be lit to allow for evening activities, including but not limited to Luminations. Fort designers and builders will be

selected through a competitive process to exhibit one of up to 11 forts in predetermined locations (see map on page 8) within the Texas Arboretum and one satellite location at the Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail from October 2021 to January 2022.

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
- NOTE: The satellite location on the Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail should also bridge the gap between the urban and natural environments.

Exhibition Objectives

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

- Create emotional souvenirs through the interaction with forts created with natural materials and inspired by childhood memories
- Inspire children and their families to explore their environment
- Highlight environmentally responsible designs and materials and how they relate to the landscape
- Create nostalgia for childhood time spent exploring and building forts
- Engage people's sense of adventure and imagination by seeing forts as a special place to celebrate nature
- Demonstrate how the built environment can complement the landscape
- Create and promote partnerships with architects, students, artists, designers/builders and cultural organizations
- Increase awareness and understanding of public art, architecture and design.
- 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%) of the stipend is awarded upon signing the Exhibitor Agreement, a third (33%) is awarded after installation is satisfactorily completed, and the remainder (33%) is awarded once the fort is removed upon completion of the exhibition. All structures must be completed prior to exhibition opening in October 2021 and remain displayed through January 2022. Before any payments are processed, all designers must be set up as vendors with The University of Texas at Austin (Wildflower Center staff will assist with this process). Payments for the installation at the Butler Trail will be processed through The Trail Foundation (TTF).

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 and four free passes to Luminations, our winter lights event.

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 that 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 and The Trail Foundation staff during the construction, installation and removal process.

Please consider the following criteria for the design:

- Incorporation of natural 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 6 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

Additional criteria for the Butler Trail installation:

- Durability of the structure for open and heavy public use (design materials should be chosen for longevity and to help reduce vandalism).
- Structures should be ground mounted for safety.
- Structures located in the 100-year floodplain of Lady Bird Lake may require a structural engineer's certification (the City of Austin's Flood Pro page can be reference [here](#)).
- Design of the structure will be approved by The Trail Foundation, the Austin Parks & Recreation Department (PARD), and the Austin Watershed Protection Department (WPD); (The Trail Foundation will manage this process. PARD is currently working on the installation of one of the 2019-2020 Fortlandia forts at a city park location. The Trail Foundation is currently working on the temporary installation of one of the 2020-2021 Fortlandia forts at the Butler Trail).
- Additional requirements may include height limits, fall surfacing depth and ADA accessibility dependent on site conditions.

The following materials are not allowed:

- Artificial turf

- 50-pound plastic cable ties (any cable ties used must be rated at least 200 pounds.)
- 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 and The Trail Foundation 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 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 [here](#) by Friday, May 7, 2021. Details of the information required for the proposal are found in the Proposal Checklist.

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 Exhibit 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 6 feet above ground. A clear 6-foot 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 and The Trail Foundation 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.
- 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 a.m. to 5 p.m., during Tuesday Twilights (seasonal happy hours) 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 exhibition at the Butler Trail will be accessible for public use during general park hours from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- The Wildflower Center, The Trail Foundation and PARD reserve 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 and The Trail Foundation 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](#). Drone use at the Butler Trail must be approved by the Austin Police Department and coordinated with The Trail Foundation and PARD.
- Exhibitors are highly encouraged to attend the opening reception and to participate in interviews or other promotional activities during the installation process and exhibition.
- Exhibitors must be present at their fort on the first weekend 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 and The Trail Foundation. 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 and the Butler Trail is determined by Wildflower Center and The Trail Foundation 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. This exception may be extended to the satellite location at the Butler Trail where digging may be necessary for installation.
- Delivery of materials will be supervised by Wildflower Center and The Trail Foundation 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 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 Sept. 7 to 24, 2021, and for complete removal during Jan. 31 to Feb. 11, 2022. All installation and removal activity must take place during daylight hours. If weekend dates are needed, special requests may be submitted to Wildflower Center staff.
- Generators and batteries are allowed only during construction and removal.
- Access to the Texas Arboretum for fort installation must be coordinated with Wildflower 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. Wildflower 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. Access to the Butler Trail must be coordinated with The Trail Foundation. Some trail locations are not immediately adjacent to access/parking areas and may require hand transportation of materials.
- 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 Wildflower Center and The Trail Foundation staff. In general, no exhibit 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 and The Trail Foundation 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 Wildflower Center or The Trail Foundation staff.
- Exhibitor is responsible to make fort modifications deemed necessary by Wildflower Center and The Trail Foundation 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.
- The Trail Foundation may select one or several forts for a temporary installation on the Butler Trail after the installation period for Fortlandia is over.

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

Exhibition Schedule

Request for Proposals Announced	March 1, 2021
Information Sessions	March 23, 2021, @ 11 a.m. April 9, 2021, @ 2 p.m.
Proposals Due	May 7, 2021
Proposal Acceptance Notification	June 4, 2021
Installation of Forts	September 7-24, 2021
Preview Party	September 30, 2021
Exhibition Opens to the Public	October 2, 2021
Exhibition Closes	January 30, 2022
Removal of Forts	January 31 – February 11, 2022

Contact Information

Please direct all inquiries to:

Tanya Zastrow
 Director of Programs
 Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
 4801 La Crosse Avenue
 Austin, TX 78745
tzastrow@wildflower.org
 512.232.0122

FORT LANDIA

YOUR SECRET HIDEOUT AWAITS

FORT LOCATIONS 2021-2022



FORTLANDIA

Exhibition Proposal Checklist

The following information is required for all Fortlandia proposals. The electronic submission form is found [here](#). Proposals are due by May 7, 2021.

Contact Information

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

Fort Details

- A narrative of the design concept
- An explanation of the source of inspiration for the fort design
- Design in the form of digital rendering, schematic, architectural drawing or other images with plan 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)
- 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?)

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

Any questions, please contact:
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