

City of La Crosse Arts Board**2. Creative Development Grants**

Central Conservation: DBA The Nature Place,
Manges, Paige
789 Myrick Park Dr.
La Crosse, WI 54601, US
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Submitted: Dec 31 2025 6:31PM

Section 1 (CDG) - Contact & Project Information**1. Name(s)/Organization**

The Nature Place is a division of Central Conservation, Inc 501(c)3

2. Mailing address

789 Myrick Park Dr.

3. Email address

paige.manges@centralconservation.org

4. Phone number

(641) 903-1322

5. Website (optional)

<https://natureplacedlacrosse.org/>

6. Biography

The Nature Place is a nature-focused community center open to the public, located in Myrick Park. We provide inclusive nature education programs and community events for all ages, and our welcoming space is available for public visitation as well as private meetings and special events.

Our mission is to cultivate and inspire meaningful connections between people and nature, for the benefit of both. Through this project, The Nature Place seeks to engage new audiences in community science initiatives by merging art, technology, and environmental education.

7. 1-2 Page Resume or CV

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**8. Project Title**

Driftless Insect Mural

9. Brief Project Description

The Nature Place proposes a public mural in Downtown La Crosse designed and executed by local artist Jon King, featuring 10–15 native insects (both celebrated and overlooked) illustrated as a decorative entomology display. Each insect will include a scannable element linking viewers to online educational resources and community science opportunities offered through The Nature Place. By connecting public art with our community science initiatives, the mural invites our community to learn, participate, and protect local biodiversity through a new lens.

10. Project Start and End Dates

January-April - Content/Mural Prep
May - Wall Prep/Purchase Materials
June - Paint Mural
July (or after) - Public Unveiling Event/Panelist

11. Requested Funding Amount

3500

12. List of Participants

Paige Manges - Central Conservation (DBA The Nature Place)
Jon King - Mural Artist
Creative Partners - Fivestone Studios & BWdB (TBD - need to receive bid early Jan)
Corporate Sponsors & Education Partners - TBD, but happy to discuss in person who we'd like to be involved to make this project align with our mission

13. Conflicts of Interest

Paige Manges is on the City of La Crosse Arts Board, active as the VP

14. Previous Funded Projects

Yes - The Nature Place received funding for Summer Day Camp Scholarships in the summer of 2024.

15. Are you a non-profit that is registered in the City of La Crosse?

Yes

16. Federal Tax-Exempt Status

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Section 2 (CDG) - Project Description

1. Project Location

TBD - We've proposed a wall on 5th Ave but need guidance from the City of La Crosse Arts Board on how to secure it and/or find an ALT wall that meets our criteria.

2. Project Description

The Nature Place proposes a public mural in Downtown La Crosse designed and executed by local artist Jon King, featuring 10–15 native insects (both celebrated and overlooked) illustrated as a decorative entomology display. Each insect will include a scannable element linking viewers to online educational resources and community science opportunities offered through The Nature Place.

By connecting public art with our community science and BioBlitz initiatives, the mural invites our community to learn, participate, and protect local biodiversity, all while positioning La Crosse as a leader in environment-driven initiatives and a strong community that values the importance of public art as a tool for inclusivity.

Location and scale are essential to the success of this project. We would ask for guidance and collaboration with the City of La Crosse Arts Board to secure a high-visibility wall that's noticed when entering the city while maintaining strong pedestrian access, allowing for interaction with augmented and scannable elements. The wall we've scouted on 5th Ave allows for accessibility to children and families, as young people are often the first to notice and engage with vibrant public art. The wall is located directly across the street from the Children's Museum.

After scouting multiple options, we prioritized City of La Crosse Parks locations with an eye toward revitalization and long-term community use. The selected wall faces south across from Cameron Park, an area with potential for the return of a farmers' market and increased public programming.

We are seeking a \$3,500 Creative Development Grant from the City of La Crosse Arts Board to directly support artist Jon King's time and materials, ensuring the artistic quality and integrity of this project.

To fully fund the mural and its augmented reality experience, we plan to secure corporate sponsorships and private contributions. This initiative is intentionally community-driven, designed to succeed through shared investment, collaboration, and regional support.

3. Project Execution & Timeline

January–April 2026

- Website content built
- Species selection finalized
- City of La Crosse Arts Board approvals (Jan 1 - Creative Development)
- Wisconsin Arts Board (Feb 1 - Creative Communities Grant)
- Lock in partnerships & sponsors

- Wall location finalized

May 2026

- Wall preparation and priming
- Materials purchased
- Full mural design created and approved by stakeholders

June 2026

- Mural painting (weather dependent)
- Installation and testing of scannable features
- Documentation, photography, video

July 2026

- Public unveiling event with project partners, sponsors, general public, media, panelists

4. Required Materials

Jon King's Estimate reflects both labor and materials needed per square footage:

Labor:

- Design Concepting, Development, and Creation
- Mural Planning + Installation
- Payment + Insurance for additional Muralists to help with the installation (if needed)

Materials (not limited to):

- Paint, brushes, rollers, spray paint, spray gun, air compressor, drop cloths, plastic, cleaning agents, tape, etc

5. Durability & Maintenance Plan

The provided estimates include maintenance for the wall - Jon can speak to this!

6. Plans for Removal

7. Target Audience

Youth - the mural's location and bold, colorful imagery are intentionally designed to capture children's attention, cultivating and inspiring curiosity, questions, and discovery. Kids often notice first, point first, and pull adults into the experience.

Community Members & Adults - For adults, the interactive and augmented reality elements create immediate, accessible education by attending our free programs and community science initiatives. These opportunities already exist; this project simply encourages more people to discover and engage with our resources, who might not venture into Myrick Park naturally.

Media - This mural is designed to make noise in a positive way by showcasing what's possible when art, science, and technology intersect. By partnering with corporate and community sponsors, the project aims to elevate La Crosse on a national stage as a forward-thinking, environmentally minded city worthy of attention and investment.

8. Under-Served Audience (optional)

When people are inspired to learn in new ways, they gain agency. This mural removes traditional barriers to education by existing in a fully public space: free and open to all, at any time of the day. There are no tickets, time limits, or entry requirements.

Because it lives outdoors, the mural is accessible to all community members, including underserved populations who may face financial, transportation, or scheduling barriers to traditional programming. Schools will also be able to use this as a field-trip opportunity, as desired. It is key that people understand the importance of insects everywhere, not just in "wild" or "outdoor" places.

9. Artistic Goals

Realizing this project at its highest level pushes us into new creative territories. For Jon King, it means expanding mural practice with an award-winning creative studio, blending hand-painted design with animation and augmented reality to create a living, interactive artwork.

In drawing from my background in production, I'm personally excited for this project because it merges public art, tech, event production, and environmental education into a single, cohesive experience.

I truly think this project challenges us to think differently about how stories are told in public spaces and how creativity can be used as a tool for lasting community impact!!!!

Attachments