

January 24, 2004

Parks & Recreation Dept.

Steve Gilbertson has asked that I write a letter of support for his plans for a bluebird trail within your park. I have worked with Steve for many years as a cooperator in nest box research. I have been actively studying nest box designs for 15 years.

I have extensive experience with Peterson style nest boxes and found that they consistently outperformed more traditional nesting boxes in attracting bluebirds. Following that research I also tested the oval hole of a Peterson box on the traditional style box and found that bluebirds in my area actually preferred that design modification. In recent years I have tested large numbers of Steve's Gilwood boxes and to date this design appears to be even more attractive to bluebirds than any other nest box design that I have tested. I have also found Steve's PVC nest boxes will readily attract bluebirds. I have found that the PVC boxes are the most effective box for deterring nesting by introduced house sparrows. My research has been carried out under controlled conditions to determine which box styles both native and introduced species prefer and has been published many times in the North American Bluebird Society's journal.

While I believe that Peterson boxes are a very high quality nest box, I would encourage you to allow Steve to place Gilwood or PVC boxes in your park as well. Both designs have been found by myself and many other bluebird researchers to be highly effective in attracting bluebirds.

I applaud you for your placement of bluebird nest boxes within your park. I'm certain that your park visitors will enjoy the opportunity to view bluebirds. You are helping to restore populations of a species that has been negatively been impacted by humans in the past.

Sincerely,

Past Research Chairman, North American Bluebird Society ( )  
Associate Professor, Fisheries and Wildlife Technology, SUNY Cobleskill