

FLAMINGO GARDENS

MASTER PLAN

2020



Flamingo
Gardens



MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE



Recognition goes to the Master Plan Task Force for their hard work and expertise in developing The Master Plan, adopted by the Flamingo Gardens Board of Trustees in October 2019. Further acknowledgements are extended to those who participated in the 2017 Feasibility Study and to the 2017 Flamingo Gardens Management Staff for their 2027 Plan; both serving as a foundation for the Flamingo Gardens Master Plan – 2019.

A special thank you goes to Stan Wood for his valuable historical knowledge he imparted as well as insight on the Wray Family legacy, representing the Wray Family, Wray Memorial Foundation Board of Trustees and Flamingo Gardens Board of Trustees.

The Master Planning Process was facilitated by John P. "JP" Weesner, PLA, Kittelson and Associates, in association with Smart Growth Partnership.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Joseph Cangialosi
Rosana Cordova
Bob Daniels
Rachel Dickey
Cecilia Ferrer
Josh Freeman
Jessica Joselyn
Nadia Locke
Robert Modys
Ken Reinhardt
Gloria Reinhardt
Alex Rodriguez
Melinda Schwartz
Deborah Strelkow
Peter Strelkow
Fernando Urioste
JP Weesner, PLA, Facilitator

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Patrice Sonnelitter
Laura Wyatt



Help Us "Preserve This Beauty Spot"

Flamingo Gardens has been a leading cultural and natural asset of South Florida and the Everglades since its beginnings in 1927 when founders Floyd L. and Jane Wray planted summer oranges in the rich muck soil of reclaimed Everglades land.

Flamingo Gardens has been experiencing more than a 145% growth in visitors in the past decade, with 2019 attendance exceeding 185,000. As we approach our 2027 Centennial Anniversary, the organization is taking a strategic approach to our continuing growth with the development of a Master Plan.

The Flamingo Gardens Master Plan Task Force was formed in 2019, comprised of Flamingo Gardens and Wray Memorial Foundation board members, members of the community, orchid group volunteers, senior advocacy, local government, staff, and professionals and experts in the areas of

planning, engineering, architecture, construction management, landscaping, arts, marketing, finance, education, real estate, nonprofit development. The Task Force studied the gardens in detail, including its vision, mission, history, existing physical properties, both architectural and land use, and existing programming and marketing.

These planning efforts were undertaken to understand what we aspire for the gardens, and to ensure the best possible Master Plan which will serve as a guiding document as we work to build upon our assets into the future.

As our founder, Floyd L. Wray stated in 1939, "You are welcome to Flamingo [Gardens] and are invited to spend as much time as you desire, my only request being... that you help us preserve this beauty spot for others."



Background

More than nine decades ago, after the devastating Hurricane of 1926, Davie pioneers, Floyd L. and Jane Wray, planted summer oranges in the rich muck soil of reclaimed Everglades land. This simple act founded one of the earliest tourist attractions and botanical gardens in Florida. With the help of a U.S. Department of Agriculture program, the gardens received foreign plants and trees from around the world in the 20s, 30s, and 40s, establishing an impressive collection of botanical specimens.

From the beginning, the Wrays welcomed visitors to their gardens, providing daily tours of the groves and gardens, extolling the virtues of the plants and the Everglades. The beauty of the area, the need to preserve that beauty and to educate the public about the Everglades was paramount to the Wrays. Flamingo Gardens' vision and mission carries on founder Floyd L. Wray's wish to "preserve this beauty spot for others."

What started as a modest citrus grove in 1927 is today a respected botanical collection and wildlife sanctuary situated on 60-acres in Davie, Florida,

and was visited by more than 185,000 guests in 2019. Flamingo Gardens is a designated Cultural Landmark and the Wrays' weekend residence is a museum giving a glimpse of South Florida life in the 30s and 40s. The Gardens boast some of the largest trees of their species in the state and the wildlife sanctuary houses Florida's largest collection of native birds and animals, in excess of 450 in total; most of them permanently injured or non-releasable. More than 30,000 students attend ecological field trips each year, and have become a tradition for generations of South Floridians.

As Flamingo Gardens approaches its 100th Anniversary in 2027, the leadership of Flamingo Gardens has adopted this Master Plan so that it may serve as a guiding tool. The Plan identifies and prioritizes capital and program projects as the organization develops a strategic plan to implement those projects to better meet the Gardens' vision and mission as it moves into its second century.



Strengths

The Master Plan Task Force identified the strengths of Flamingo Gardens which serve as a foundation to build upon.

Those strengths include:

LOCATION

- Easy to find and access

COMMITTED HUMAN RESOURCES

- Staff and volunteer teams, including Orchidteers, are knowledgeable and provide genuine and engaging customer service
- Intern programs
- Approachable and inspirational leadership

HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS

- Group Tours
- Complimentary Tram Tours
- Environmental Education Program, Title I Program, and Adult Education

- Historical Site – Docent Tours
- Diversity of attractions
- Traveling exhibits
- Associated clubs such as Flamingo Gardens Orchid Society, Camera Club, Bonsai Club

APPEAL TO WIDE RANGE OF DEMOGRAPHICS

- Good reputation within the community
- Historical value with intent to preserve the history
- Combination of wildlife and botanical offerings, making Flamingo Gardens unique
- Strong Membership support
- Good media relations

FINANCIALS

- Newly created Development Team

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Mature canopy, champion trees, shade
- Plant collection
- Ecological environment



Guiding Principles

The Master Plan Guiding Principles are based on the Vision, Mission, Core Objectives and Core Values of Flamingo Gardens and will guide the organization to improve upon its land, facilities, and programs, while managing visitor growth. The Plan is sensitive to a controlled growth, to protect the sense of serenity that our visitors have enjoyed for decades, and to accommodate modern needs such as accessibility while maintaining the historic nature of the property.

CORE MISSION OBJECTIVES

- **Provide a repository** for endangered plant and wildlife species and a living library of specific taxa available for research and education
- **Inspire appreciation** for the beauty and diversity of tropical and subtropical plants from around the world that can be grown in our area
- **Guide the public** in environmentally responsible and aesthetic horticultural practices
- **Encourage environmental awareness** and Everglades preservation to visiting tourists, residents, and school children

VISION

To be the Premier Everglades Learning Center and South Florida Wildlife and Botanical Sanctuary.

MISSION

Flamingo Gardens' mission is to depict, preserve, and provide education about the natural and cultural heritage of South Florida and the Everglades in our botanical gardens and wildlife sanctuary.

CORE VALUES

- **Advocacy** - We encourage environmental responsibility, conservation, and sustainable practices through education, personal discovery, and transformative experiences
- **Stewardship** - We will maintain, nurture, and protect the legacy of Floyd & Jane Wray and the history of this land for future generations
- **Compassion** - We believe in the inherent worth, diversity, and dignity of all living things. We value the lives of all people, plants, and animals that enter our care and vow to treat them humanely and with respect
- **Excellence** - We demand greatness, relevance, and merit in all we do and hold ourselves and others accountable to the highest standards of personal and professional standards
- **Teamwork** - We will work together to embrace opportunities and challenges, and encourage creativity, innovation, and action, while respecting individual points of view

Major Focus Areas

LAND USE

- Design land use plan with a focus on accessibility, ease of movement, future visitors, and safety: Age-friendly guest comfort and safety focused parking, organized pedestrian paths with wayfinding signs, tram paths, roadways, animal exhibit placement to disburse visitors, emergency and utility access
- Design to better utilize all of the acreage to better accommodate visitor growth, and of Wildlife Sanctuary and Educational Programs expansions
- Design land use plan to accommodate long term as well as short term needs
- Design of botanical gardens and wildlife sanctuary that includes expansion in under-utilized areas, using industry best practices
- Locate architectural facilities based on functionality and efficiencies
- Drainage system, stormwater gardens
- Safety and security

ARCHITECTURE

- Accessibility/ADA compliant – age-friendly guest comfort focused
- Facilities with multipurpose rooms and amphitheaters to support educational programs, historical, natural and cultural storytelling
- Facilities to support concessions, including private rental space, gift shop, food and beverage services
- Facilities to support staff and volunteer functionality
- Accommodations for waste disposal (trash dumpsters and recycling)
- Adherence to adopted Architectural Guidelines
- Design elements to embody the “Old Florida” feel
- Design elements to be LEED Certified or Ecologically Friendly

PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING

- Programming, marketing, and branding strategies that distinguishes Flamingo Gardens as the Premier Everglades Learning Center and South Florida plant and animal sanctuary
- Programming that educates and encourages environmental awareness
- Programming and marketing that promotes inclusiveness and diversity
- Programming to encourage visitor growth during non-peak times, days, seasons
- Design monuments that will serve as the iconic visual of the Flamingo Gardens brand
- Staff Professional Development
- Fundraising Strategies: Stewardship and moves management of current and prospective visitors, members, donors





CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECTS

STAGE 1 To be completed by 2027 Centennial

The Master Plan Task Force conducted a “Walk Audit” to determine priorities through the “eyes of guests” as well as compile a “Needs Assessment” based on finances and potential liabilities; including determining what facilities show the highest level of urgency based on building or infrastructure condition and revenue generating potential.

Creation and adoption of Master Plan and Strategic Plan; assemble a Strategic Plan Committee

- Strategic Plan to include: Parking Lot Drainage Redesign and Everglades Storm Water Projects
- Strategic Plan to include: Pedestrian Circulation Plan based on an intentional, intuitive flow
- Strategic Plan to include: Animal exhibit placement to better disburse growing numbers of visitors
- Strategic Plan to identify: How the “Old Florida” feel will be maintained

- 1 New Education Building – “The Learning Center”
- 2 New Aviary Entry. Repair Birds of Prey and Golden Eagle Aviary.
- 3 New Welcome Center + Parking + Plaza
- 4 Implement Parking Lot Drainage and Everglades Storm Water projects
- 5 New Stormwater Gardens with native plants for parking lot runoff and retention
- 6 Entry streetscape and gateway architecture (monuments) with palms lining the drive for visibility, welcoming first impression at Flamingo Road. Steer pedestrian traffic to main entrance via mid-street (36th Court) pedestrian crossing with attention to safety
- 7 New, safe intentional pedestrian pathways and trams pathways
- 8 New Flowering Gardens with pathways
- 9 Restoration of existing botanical collections
- 10 New Children’s Learning Garden



STAGE 2

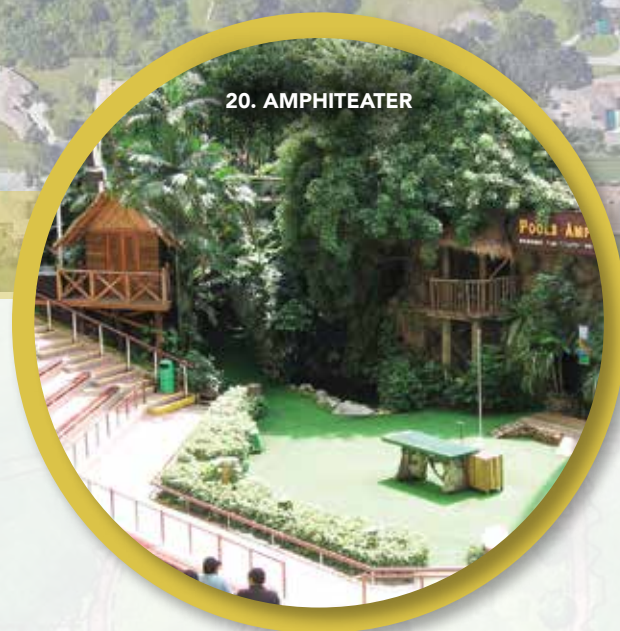
- 11 Gated driveway for new Administration area
- 12 Utility infrastructure improvements for Stage 2 and plans for future phases as required
- 13 New Administration Buildings + Employee Parking + Golf Cart Parking
- 14 Landscape buffer
- 15 New Animal Care Facility/Drop-off
- 16 Large retention pond / water vista with Everglades focus and eco system-based design which incorporates walkways to back
- 17 New Gardens including but not limited to Palmetum and Fruit & Spice Forest
- 18 New animal exhibits and pathways placed to better distribute visitors throughout the gardens
- 19 New Iconic Building with concession and restrooms at edge of retention water





STAGE 3

- 20** New Amphitheater; upgrade smaller amphitheater in existing area; build new, bigger theater, used for entertainment such as concerts and movies, as well as education, wildlife encounters
- 21** Accommodations for amphitheaters, including wildlife holding areas including parking, lighting, and circulation; possible Tram path for future tour and Fire truck access
- 22** New Gardens
- 23** New Aviary Center
- 24** New Animal Exhibits completing path around Aviary
- 25** New Shop Building





STAGE 4

Stage 4 Plans contingent upon availability of adjacent Wray Memorial Foundation property and other potentially adjacent properties.

In concurrence with the Capital Projects Phases, the Strategic Plan will address the following needs and incorporate into the appropriate phases:

- A comprehensive surface water management plan
- Utilities, technology, and security needs
- Bathroom facilities
- ADA compliance needs
- Circulation Plan that addresses fire/emergency and tram roadway access
- Financial, and marketing and programming plans

Smaller projects will also be addressed in the Strategic Plan, including but not limited to aesthetic improvements such as repair and replacement of benches, railings, sign frames, buildings, vehicles (including horticulture and maintenance equipment, vans, trams, golf carts), and sod that are in disrepair.

- 26 New Gallery
- 27 Retention Pond
- 28 New Roadway connection on south side
- 29 Additional Animal Exhibits and Gardens
- 30 Animal Clinic and Parking



3750 S. Flamingo Road • Davie, FL 33330
954.473.2955 • flamingogardens.org