

Wonder
GARDENS



RENEW
the WONDER



Introducing a *new vision* for the Wonder Gardens!



In the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Ian, the Wonder Gardens needed to imagine an entirely new future and purpose for itself.

The Wonder Gardens' staff and board leadership as well as the City of Bonita Springs committed to articulating a bold yet sustainable vision to guide the organization over the next three years.

With a clear direction for the future, the facility master plan was developed to bring the new vision to life and to outline a "roadmap" of new exhibits, continued improvements and timelines over the next several years.



An Oasis of Old Florida

Emblematic of the rich natural, architectural, and cultural history of Old Florida, the Wonder Gardens celebrates the unique story of a simpler time. Our lush botanical garden, home to hundreds of rescued, rehabilitated, and non-releasable birds and reptiles, draws visitors in to appreciate nature and wildlife through a nostalgic experience that honors the distinct essence of Old Florida. The Wonder Gardens inspires a deep appreciation for our environment through a beautiful landscape of tropical flowers and mighty banyan trees and promotes a better understanding of the natural world through our engaging animal collection. At the same time, our historically significant architecture exemplifies the distinctive character of Bonita Springs.

Cornerstone of the Community

In the almost 9 decades since our founding, the Wonder Gardens has delighted visitors with an inspiring, educational, and truly engaging experience of tropical flora and fauna. Originally established in 1936 by the Piper family, the Reptile Gardens, as we were then known, served as a welcome diversion for travelers journeying along old Route 41, the famed Tamiami Trail.

Now owned by the City of Bonita Springs, the Wonder Gardens is managed by a nonprofit organization, Bonita Wonder Gardens, that is responsible for the care of our animals and the maintenance of our 2.5-acre botanical garden. As a much beloved community treasure, the Wonder Gardens represents a link to the rich, cultural legacy of Bonita Springs.

Never has the community's commitment to the Wonder Gardens been more clearly demonstrated than in the weeks following Hurricane Ian in the fall of 2022. The landscape and buildings suffered devastating damage from the ferocious wind, rain, and storm surge, but the Wonder Gardens rebounded and reopened thanks to the outpouring of community support – both financial and through a massive hands-on volunteer clean-up initiative.

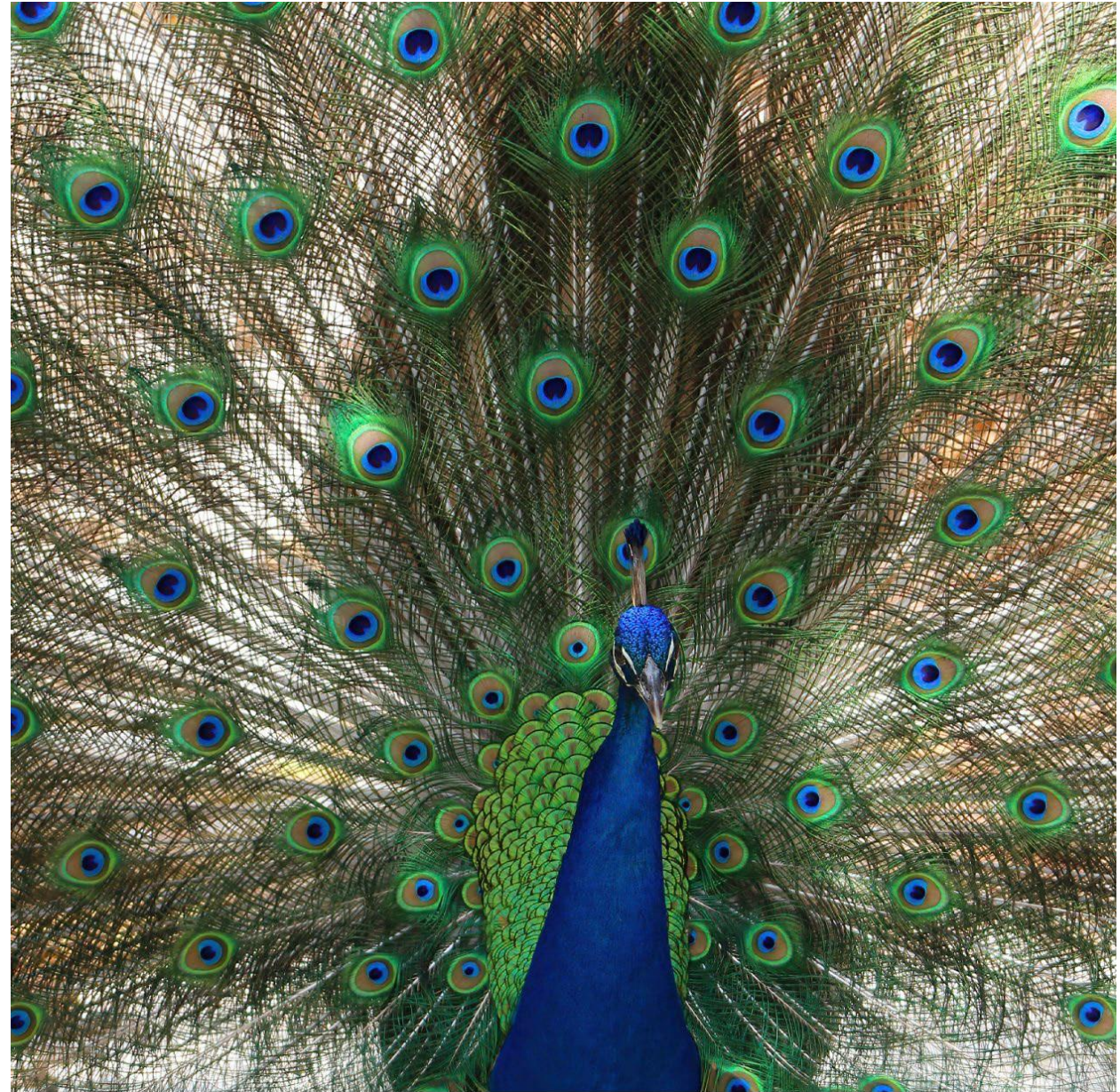
The Wonder Gardens truly reflects the community's strength and resilience. It is our pledge to honor the commitment they have demonstrated to us by fulfilling our mission and exemplifying the heart of Bonta Springs as the anchor of a burgeoning historic downtown.


Honoring the Past and Shaping the Future

Ever mindful of our role in the community and our place in the story of Southwest Florida, the Wonder Gardens seeks to honor that legacy while building a thriving and impactful future. Working with the City of Bonita Springs, we are committed to advancing our mission of inspiring conservation and resiliency by providing transformative experiences of wonder in the natural world, via meaningful educational programs for people of all ages and by meeting the highest standards of care for our resident animals.

As we look to the future, we seek to embrace all that makes the Wonder Gardens so special:

- a legacy experience that parents and grandparents share with new generations;
- a reflection and celebration of the welcoming, small-town feel of Bonita Springs; and
- the opportunity for intimate, up-close and personal engagements with emblematic native and exotic animals.





As we look to the future, we seek to invest in our facilities, programs, and experiences, including:

- The development of a strong institutional **animal collection plan** centered around animal wellness and local conservation efforts
- The creation and implementation of a **horticultural plan**
- The development of an **improvement and modification plan** for our buildings that respects their historical significance and Old Florida legacy
- The development of unique and engaging **day and night experiences** that raise our profile and generate revenue
- The enhancement of **educational programming**

Renewing the Wonder

OUR PLANS INCLUDE:

- Creating a welcoming new arrival experience for our visitors
- Building a new animal care center and position the Wonder Gardens for future accreditation
- Ensuring that our animal collection preserves native Florida species featuring:
 - Flamingos/spoon bills
 - Alligators
 - Parrots/macaws
 - Iguana
 - Otters
 - Tortoise
 - Program-related animals such as sloths





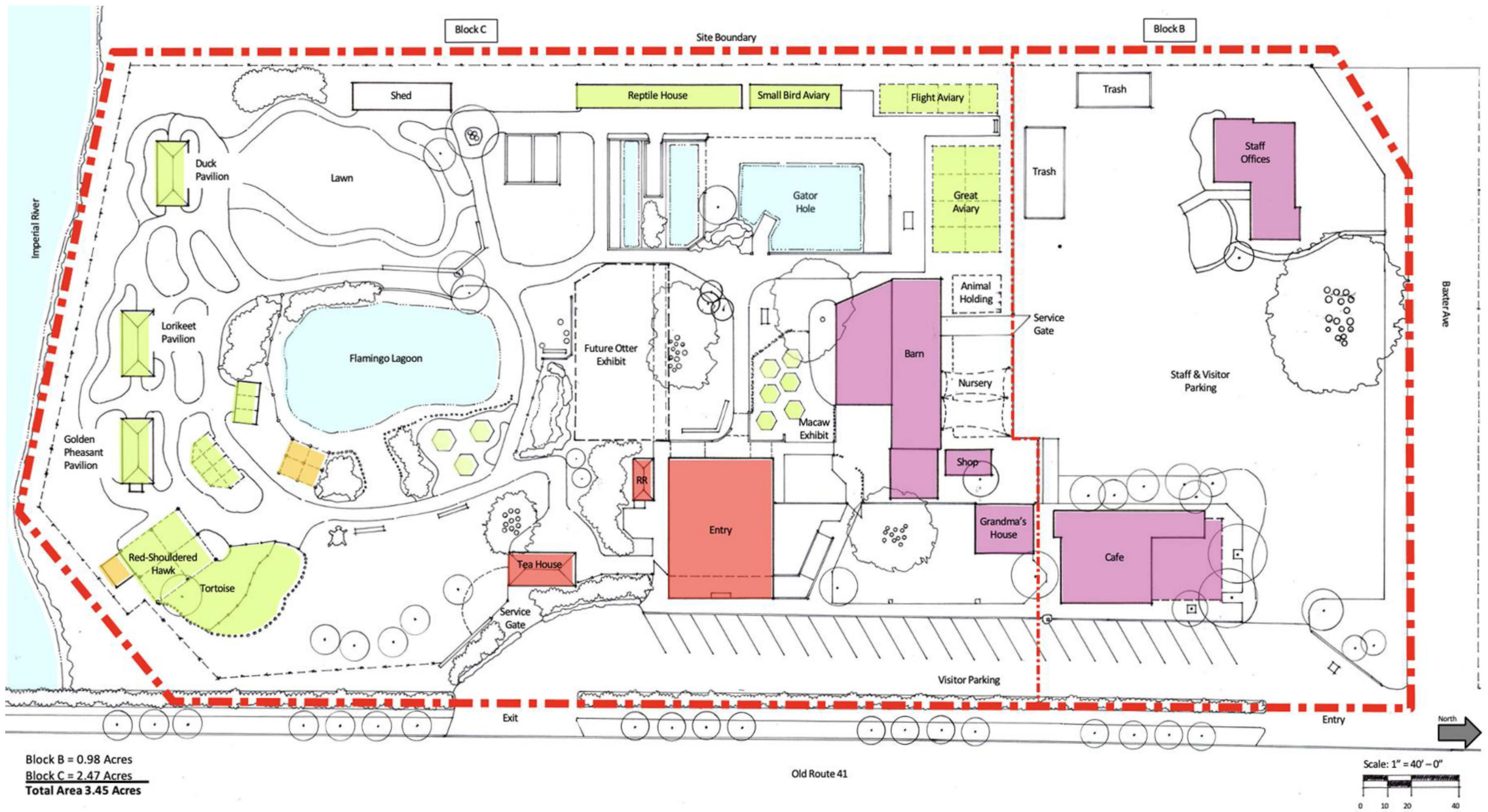
TOGETHER

We Can Inspire Generations



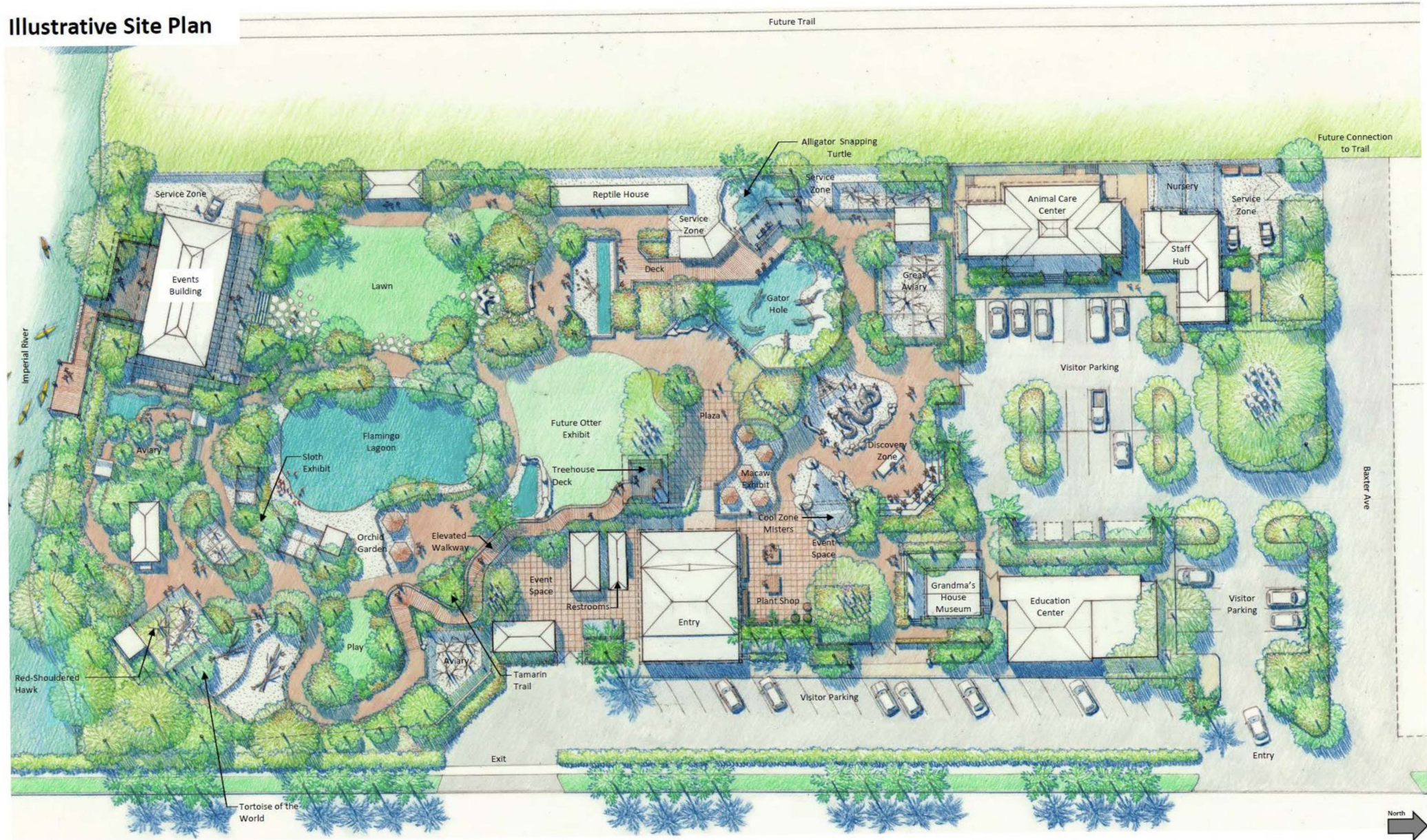
Developing active, immersive, fun-filled experiences and activities to engage and inspire our visitors of all ages including:

- A tree-to-tree canopy experience or elevated walkway with a tree house
- A nature-based play place with slides and climbing equipment for active play
- Access to and activities on the Imperial River
- Behind-the-scenes tours featuring animal care, botany, or special conservation initiatives
- Light shows/displays and other unique night-time special events and experiences
- Relocating our natural history museum to “Grandma’s House”

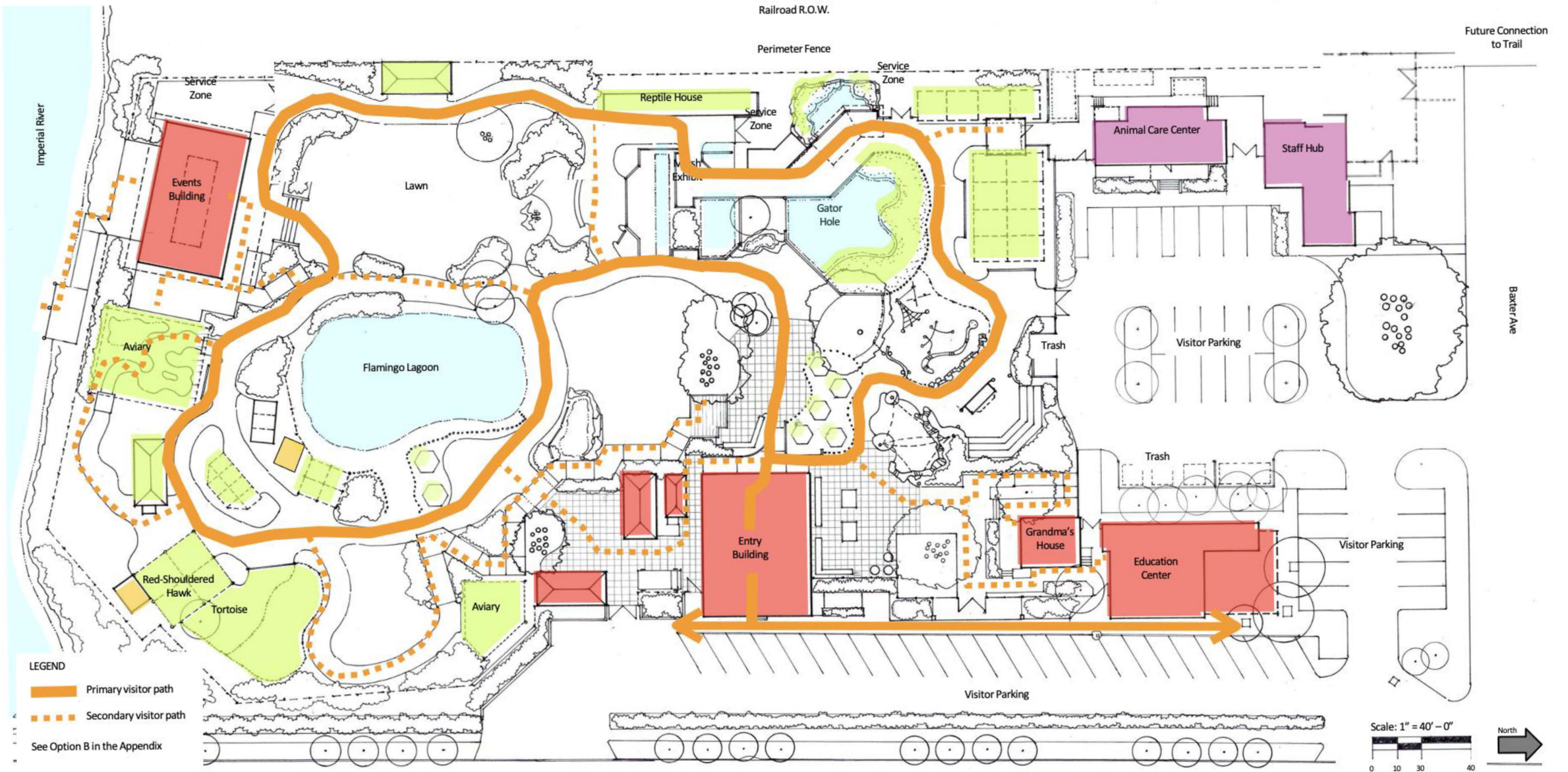


EXISTING SITE DIAGRAM: This diagram illustrates the current facilities and layout of the full Wonder Gardens site.

Illustrative Site Plan

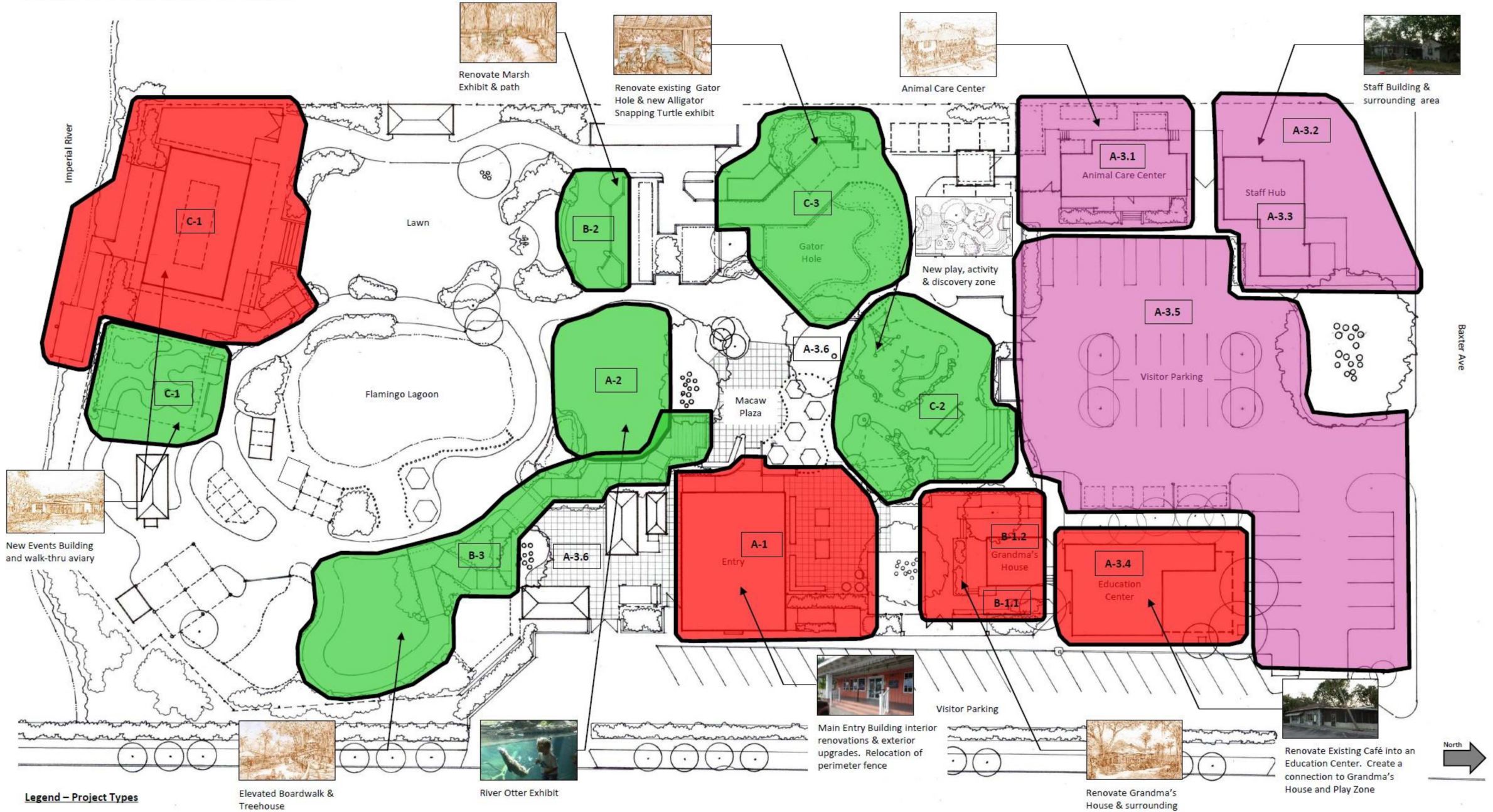


The illustrative site plan shows the layout with all proposed projects and enhancements




CIRCULATION & LAND USE PLAN: With the proposed projects detailed on the following slide, the circulation and land use plan illustrates how guests could navigate through the site.

Project Locations & Types



Master Plan Projects – Sequencing: Below are 15 projects that will transform the Wonder Gardens, creating opportunities for enhanced animal welfare and new guest amenities and experiences.


A 1 \$100,000 - \$150,000



Main Entry & Guest Services

- Restore interior and exterior of the building after damage caused by Hurricane Ian
- Move museum to Grandma's House and one office to proposed ACC
- Building to remain as the main entry

A 3.4 \$350,000 - \$400,000



Education Center

- Restore interior and exterior of the Cafe Building after damage caused by Hurricane Ian
- Building to become the Center for Conservation and Education (CCE)

B 2 \$50,000 - \$75,000



Marsh Exhibit

- Modify existing barrier to provide better viewing for guests by removing portion of barrier wall and replace with glazing
- Modify path, add a bench and interpretive signs

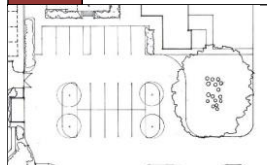
A 2



River Otter Exhibit

- Construction to start up again in the spring of 2023
- Exhibit to open late 2023

A 3.5 \$250,000 - \$350,000



Guest Parking

- Expand guest parking into space south of Baxter Ave.
- Target 25 to 30 new spaces
- Protect existing banyan tree east of existing Staff Building

B 3 \$750,000 - \$1,000,000



Elevated Boardwalk

- Guests will explore and view animals and plants from a new perspective
- The treehouse and overlook will be 14' to 15' above the ground

A 3.1 \$2,500,000 - \$2,800,000



A.C.C. (Animal Care Center)

- New building located south of the existing Staff Building
- Building to have animal care functions on the first floor and staff offices and support spaces on the second floor

A 3.6 \$40,000 - \$50,000



Lighting Plan

- Create an overall plan to light trees and buildings
- Installation can be phased as funding becomes available


C 1 \$1,100,000 - \$1,300,000



Events Building & River Overlook

- A new building located in the southwest corner of the site. Building to have numerous functions.
- Test program to include open multi-function room, two restrooms, storage space, and a food prep area


A 3.2 \$50,000 - \$75,000



Service Zone

- Provide space for service and operation functions
- Space needed for animal holding, plant nursery, maintenance area and trash collection

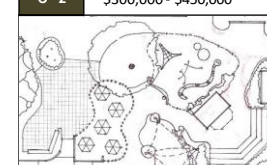
B 1.1 \$75,000 - \$125,000



Perimeter Fence & Guest Entry

- Relocate perimeter fence south of Grandma's House to the edge of existing sidewalk
- Fence to match ornamental fence on the south side of Entry Building
- New paving and space for food trucks


C 2 \$300,000 - \$450,000



Play & Discovery Zone

- Demolish existing shelter and shop to create space for play zone
- New program can include amphitheater, dino dig area, gold mining, and play equipment
- Modify shape of the Macaw area

A 3.3 \$75,000 - \$100,000



Staff Building

- Restore interior and exterior of the building after damage caused by Hurricane Ian
- After ACC is completed, volunteers, horticulture, and other staff to occupy the building

B 1.2 \$150,000 - \$250,000



Grandma's House

- Restore interior and exterior of the building after damage caused by Hurricane Ian and add a porch around two sides of the building
- The Museum to be relocated to Grandma's House

C 3 \$750,000 - \$1,000,000



Gator Hole & Alligator Snapping Turtle

- Renovate existing exhibit and add a second pool with underwater viewing.
- Barriers to be modified to create a more open look
- Guest circulation simplified to provide more space for animal exhibits

Entry Zone and Grandma's House

The entry zone is going to be anchored by three existing buildings. On the south end, the guest services building will continue to be the gateway into the Wonder Gardens. The interior of the building will be completely upgraded after suffering significant damage caused by Hurricane Ian in the fall of 2022. Ticketing, gift shop, grab and go refreshments, and staff offices will stay in the building, while the museum is slated to be relocated to Grandma's House as one of the key attractions.

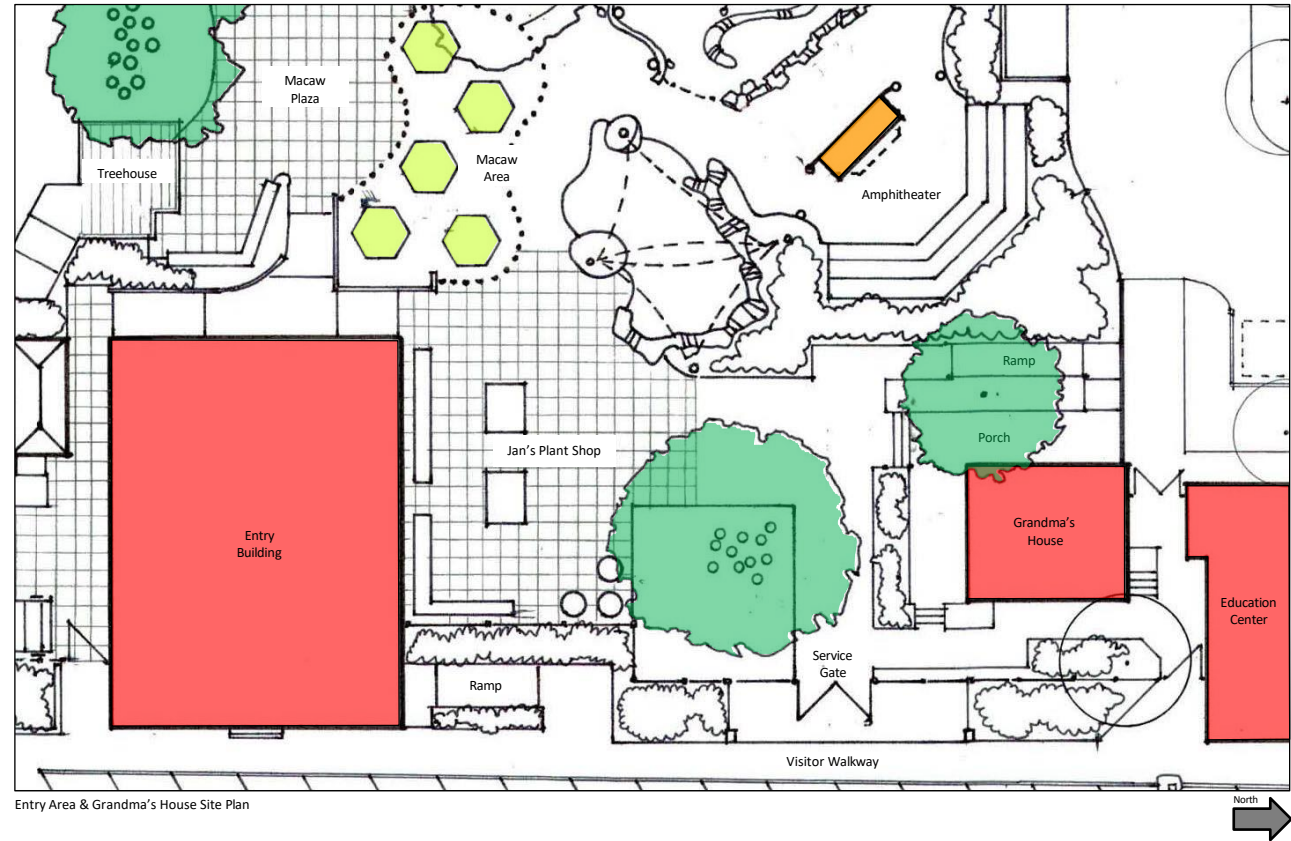
The Old Café at the north end of the zone is proposed to be renovated as the Education Center for the Wonder Gardens. The intent is to expand and grow the education programs. Renovating the Old Café is critical to create the space needed for staff and the children participating in the programs offered by the Wonder Gardens. The plan is to use the Education Center as the home base but also take full advantage of new and existing exhibits and interior and exterior spaces.

Grandma's House is located near the Old Café building and is currently used as a storage building. We propose to completely restore the building to



View of Grandma's House Restored

house the museum. The intent is to add a porch, a ramp, and upgrade the area around the building. The current boma fence between the Entry Building and Grandma's House will be removed and replaced with an open picket ornamental fence located near the visitor walkway. This fence will match the style and color of the fence on the south side of the Entry Building. This will provide more usable space on the inside and eliminate dead space on the outside. Grandma's House and the area south of the building is designed to be an after hours event area. Stand alone space or part of a larger event cluster near the Entry Building. This area will give the Wonder Gardens new flexibility to host a variety of small and large functions. After the Barn has been demolished, the intent is to develop the area west of Grandma's House as a Play and Discovery zone. This area will further enhance the educational opportunities at the Wonder Gardens.



Entry Area & Grandma's House Site Plan



Wonder Gardens Entry Building



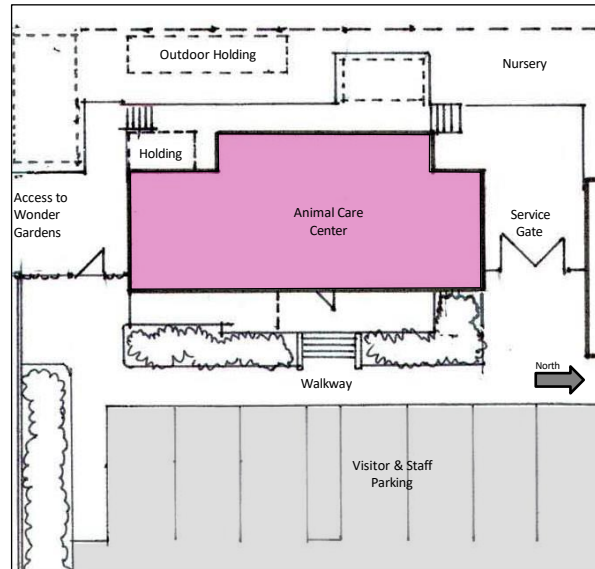
Dr. Jan's Plant Shop



Grandma's House

Animal Care Center

The Animal Care Center (ACC) is located south of the existing Staff Building. The building will be on two levels and is targeted to be around 4,500sf. The lower level will be used for animal support functions such as holding, surgery, and food prep. Visitors will be able to enter the building with Wonder Gardens staff to watch and learn about some of the important work that is done on a daily basis. Visitors can also view from the outside porch into the surgery and food prep rooms and learn about animal diets and health care. The upper level will be used for staff offices, group work spaces, and an open flex room. The flex room can be used as a conference room, for summer camps and rented out for evening events.



Animal Care Center Site Plan



Animal Care Center Concept

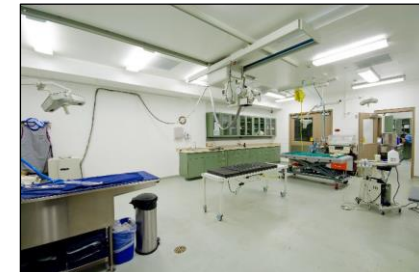
With additional office space now available for staff at the ACC, the intent is to move horticulture, maintenance staff and volunteers to the existing Staff Building. The exterior space on the west and north sides of the building will be used for outreach animal holding, nursery and general storage. The overall planning intent is to cluster support functions in the north west section of the 3.45 acre property and create more space for visitor amenities and attractions near some of the existing core attractions. This will improve the overall visitor experience by having less fragmented exhibit sequences and will also help staff to be able to do their work without interfering with the visitors.



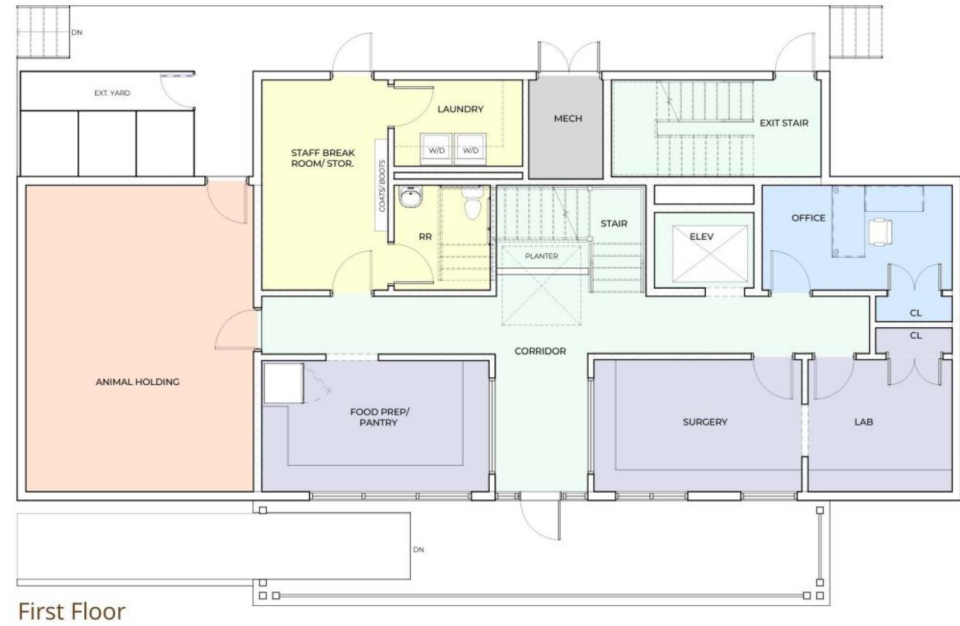
Conference room from Hogle Zoo



Open work space for Wonder Gardens staff



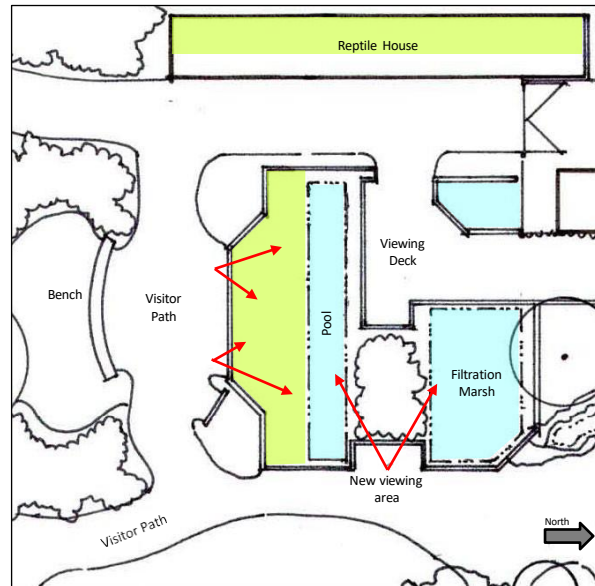
Animal surgery room



Marsh Exhibit Improvements

The Marsh Filtration exhibit is a project where the Wonder Gardens staff has started to take an outdated older exhibit and to modify it and make it more meaningful to the visitors. The diagram below and the image on the right show how this can be taken several steps further on a modest budget but will most likely need some design drawings and a general contractor to do the work.

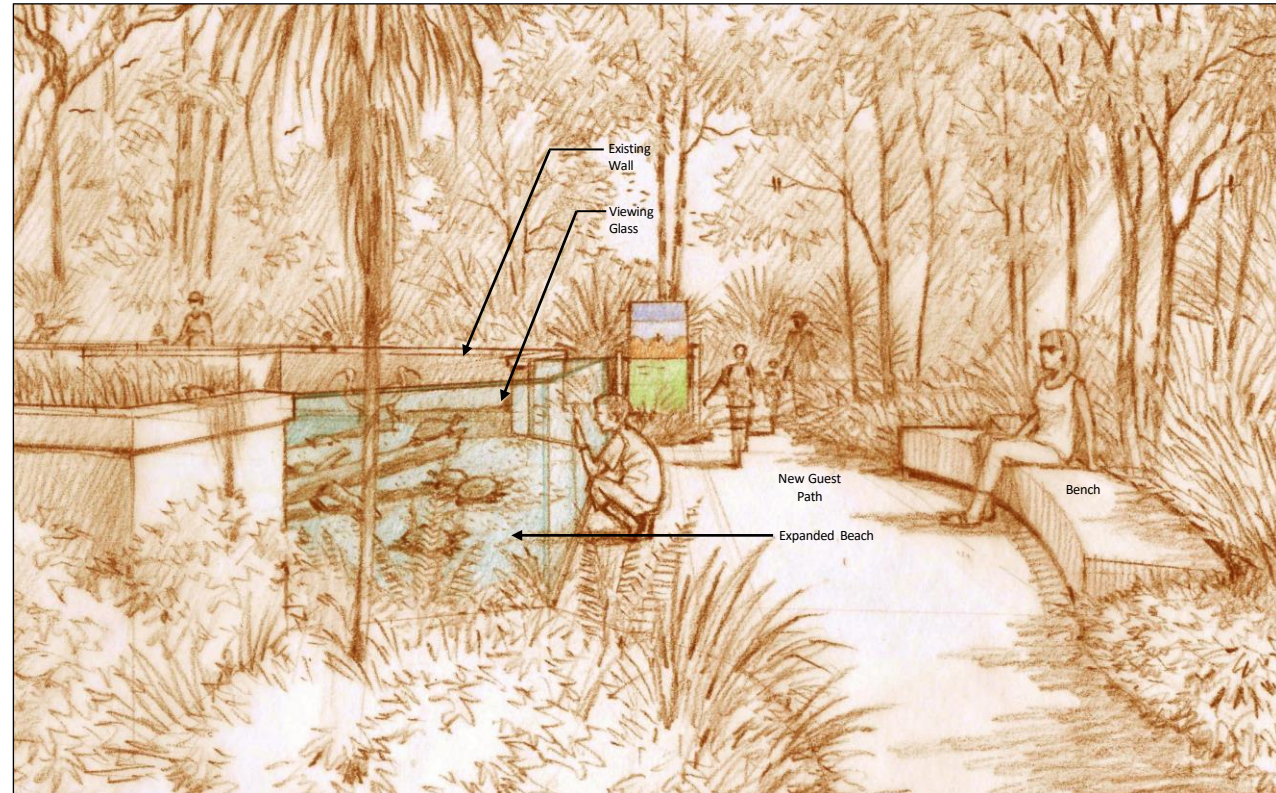
Visitor viewing should be improved by removing sections of the block barrier and replaced with sections of viewing glass. The beach area used by the animals has been increased in size and the visitor path has been shifted to



Filtration Marsh Exhibit Plan

provide better visitor viewing area.

As a separate project, adjacent to the viewing area, the Wonder Gardens can install on a small scale a hands-on filtration demonstration area where the visitors can pump water through a filter area and actually see how the system works. Not many of the youngest visitors will read the signs provided, but if they can participate and have fun pumping water, they will gain an understanding how plants can act as a natural filter. There are numerous opportunities around the Wonder Gardens to make small adjustments to existing exhibits, improve graphics, create hands on play opportunities as "low hanging fruit" projects.



Marsh Exhibit New Visitor Viewing Area



Filtration Marsh exhibit – South edge of exhibit



Filtration Marsh exhibit – Interior view



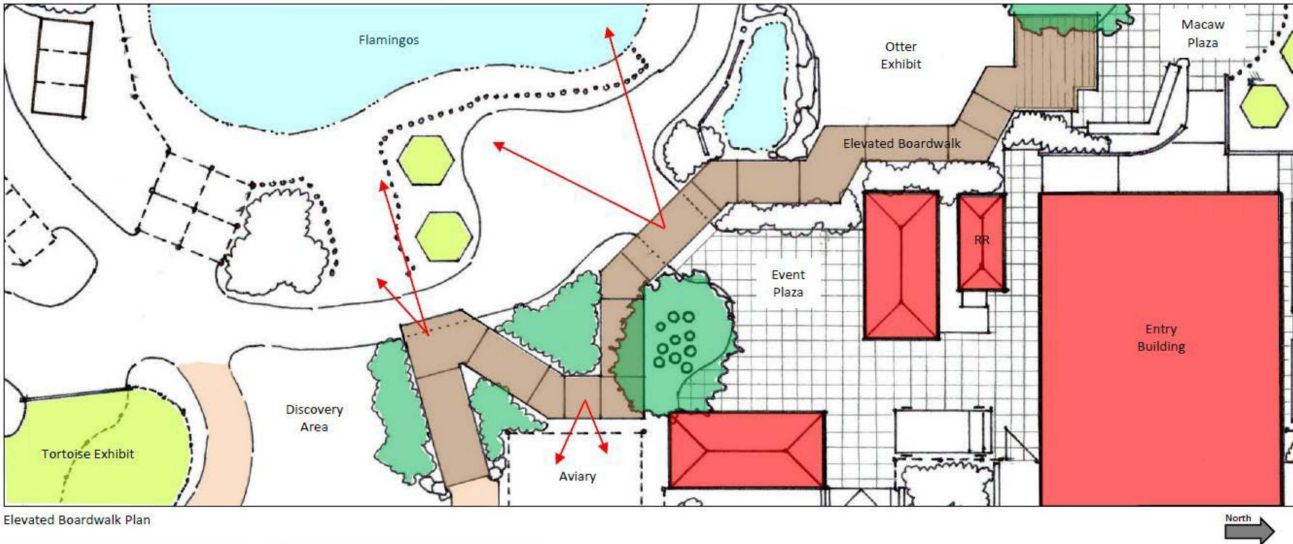
Filtration Marsh exhibit – Interpretive Sign

Elevated Boardwalk & Treehouse

The Elevated Boardwalk is a unique exhibit feature that brings the visitors into the tree canopy by gently sloping the walkway and reaching a high point at the Macaw Plaza west of the existing Entry Building. The visitors will be immersed in the tree canopy and will enjoy new views not experienced from the ground level. The walkway will be designed to have observation points with scopes, small animal bronze statues, animal nests, and numerous other interesting artifacts to engage the visitors in exploring and observing.

Visitors will begin by walking past the existing Tortoise exhibit on a path that is on grade but slightly elevated. They will circle around the new Discovery Zone and approach the new aviary. Viewing into the aviary will be along the south and the west edge. After leaving the aviary, guests will approach one of the amazing banyan trees on the site. Passing by or through the banyan tree will be one of the key observation points for the visitors. The boardwalk turns now to the northwest and visitors can get a good view of the Flamingo Pool or the new Event Plaza that will have two Tea Houses that frame a small court yard space. The visitors are now reaching the main elevated platform where the tree house is nestled into the edge of another amazing banyan tree. The tree house can be seen from the Entry Building and the Macaw Plaza.

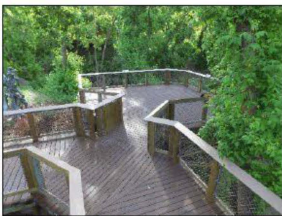
The banyan tree and the Tree House will be included in the night lighting scheme that will be developed for the Wonder Gardens. Lighting some of key man-made and natural features of the Wonder Gardens will make an evening visit or night function a very memorable event.



Elevated Boardwalk & Treehouse



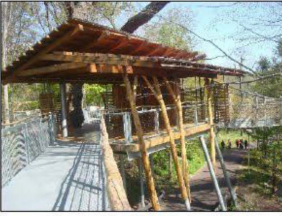
Elevated boardwalk over Emigration Creek



Overlook deck and artwork



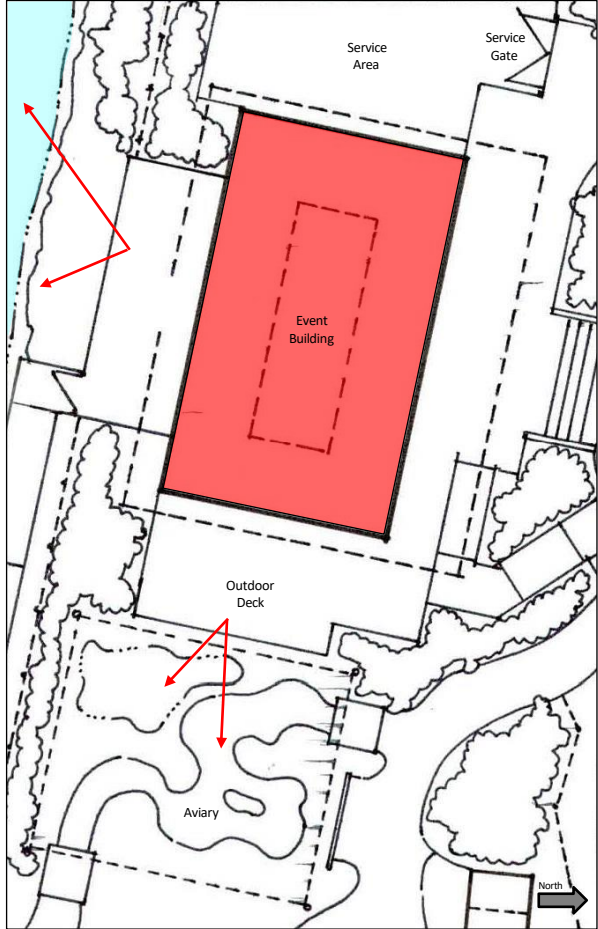
Entry design at Morris Arboretum



Treehouse at Morris Arboretum

Event Building & Walk-Thru Aviary

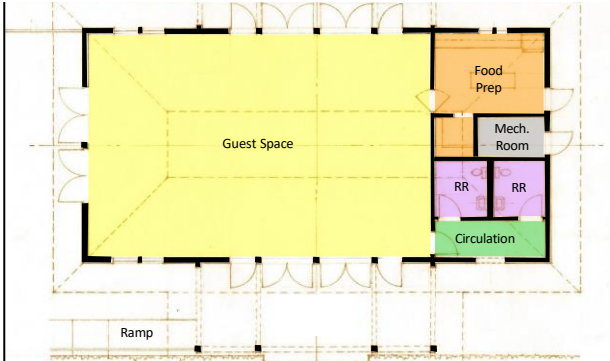
The Events Building is proposed to be 2,000sf to 2,300sf located on the edge of the Imperial River. Large outdoor decks surround the building on three sides. On the south side, visitors can enjoy views across the Imperial River; on the east side they can look into the walk-thru aviary, and on the north side they get a view across the Main Lawn. The main gathering space is intended to accommodate around 100 guests for a sit down dinner. The number will increase significantly for a cocktail function if the outside decks and the Main Lawn are being used for the function. A connection to the Imperial River is shown if Wonder Gardens want to explore water taxi or boating for visitors on the river.



Events Building & Aviary Plan



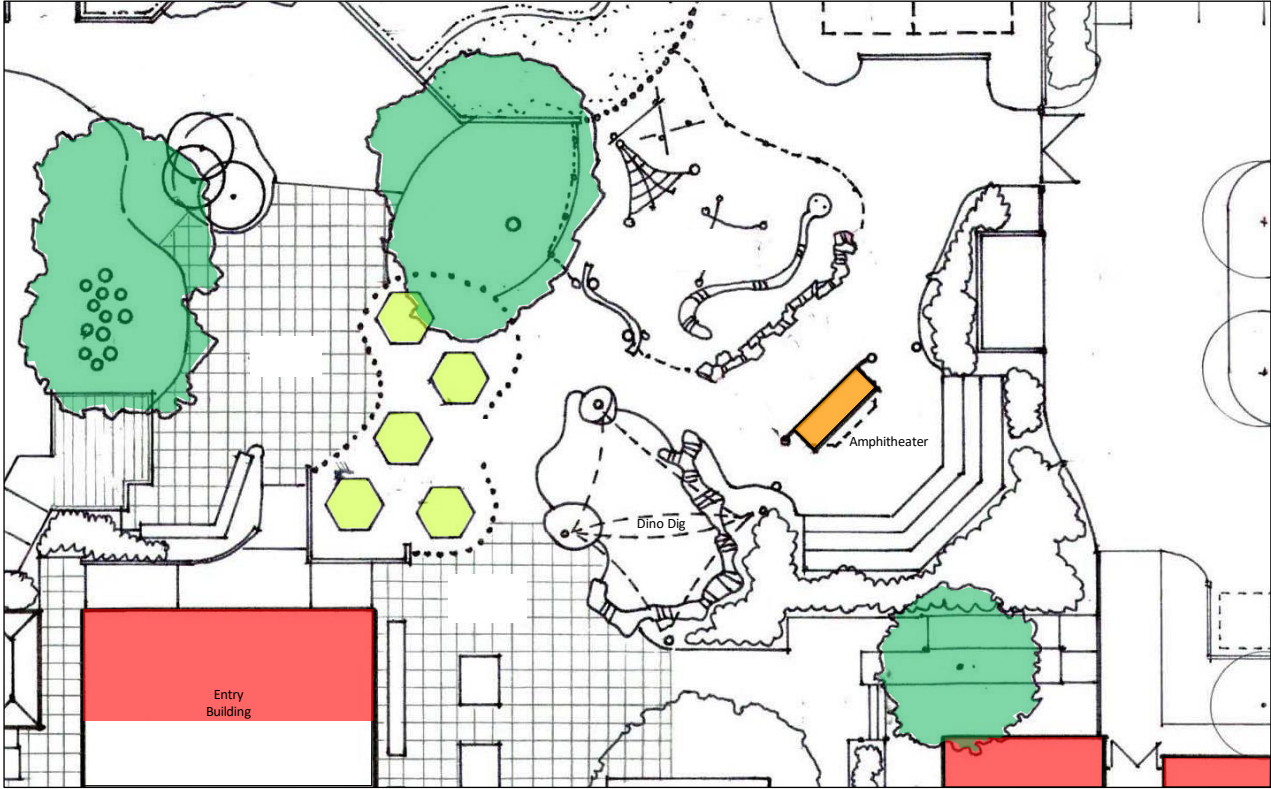
Events Building and Aviary Concept



Event Building Floor Plan

Amphitheater & Discovery Zone

The Amphitheater and Discovery Zone provides an area for visitors that has been identified by the Wonder Gardens team as “missing”. The area is intended to supplement the existing animal and botanical exhibits. The Discovery Zone is located between the Gator Hole and Grandma’s House or where the existing Barn structure is currently located. To construct the Discovery Zone, the Barn will need to be demolished. From the Discovery Zone, while playing, visitors can see and hear the Macaws and the Alligators. The area is divided into three activity nodes: Active Play Area, Amphitheater, and a Dino Dig. Combined, they create a very strong zone that likely will be popular especially with younger visitors. The Amphitheater is intended to hold twenty-five to thirty visitors, be shaded, and have a small animal holding as part of the stage. Staff will develop several different programs that might last fifteen to twenty-five minutes. The space is also intended to be used by school groups and children participating in summer camps. The Dino Dig is a small area where families can borrow “equipment” from Wonder Gardens and search for artifacts hidden in the sand. The Active Play Area should have a strong connection to the animal collection at the Wonder Gardens and encourage children to mimic animal play activities. The message or the activity can then be reinforced by observing the animal behavior. Many other activities can be added to the zone such as musical instruments, gold searching stations and water play as shown in the images below.



Amphitheater & Discovery Zone Plan



Water Play



Outdoor Instruments at the Riverbanks Zoo



Searching for “Gold” at the Cape May Zoo



Water Play



Amphitheater at The Toledo Zoo



Amphitheater at The Toledo Zoo

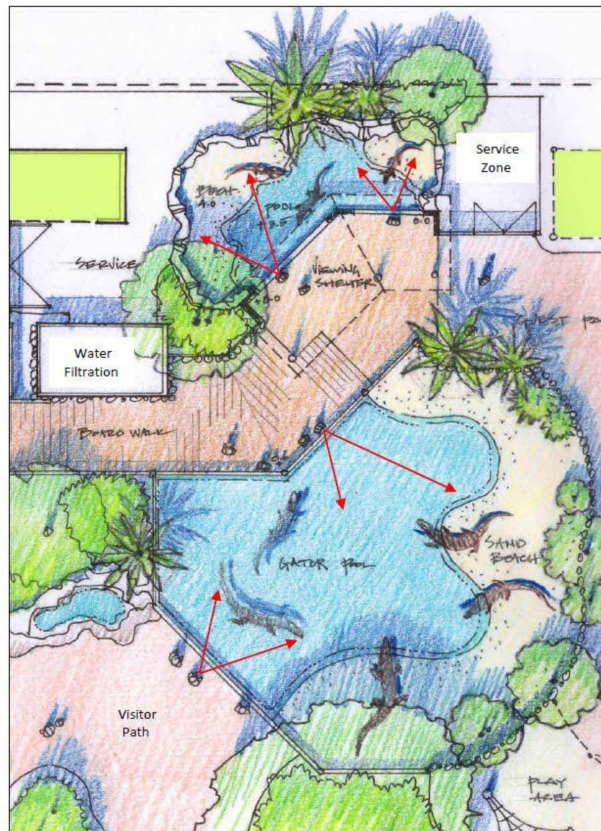


Dino Dig

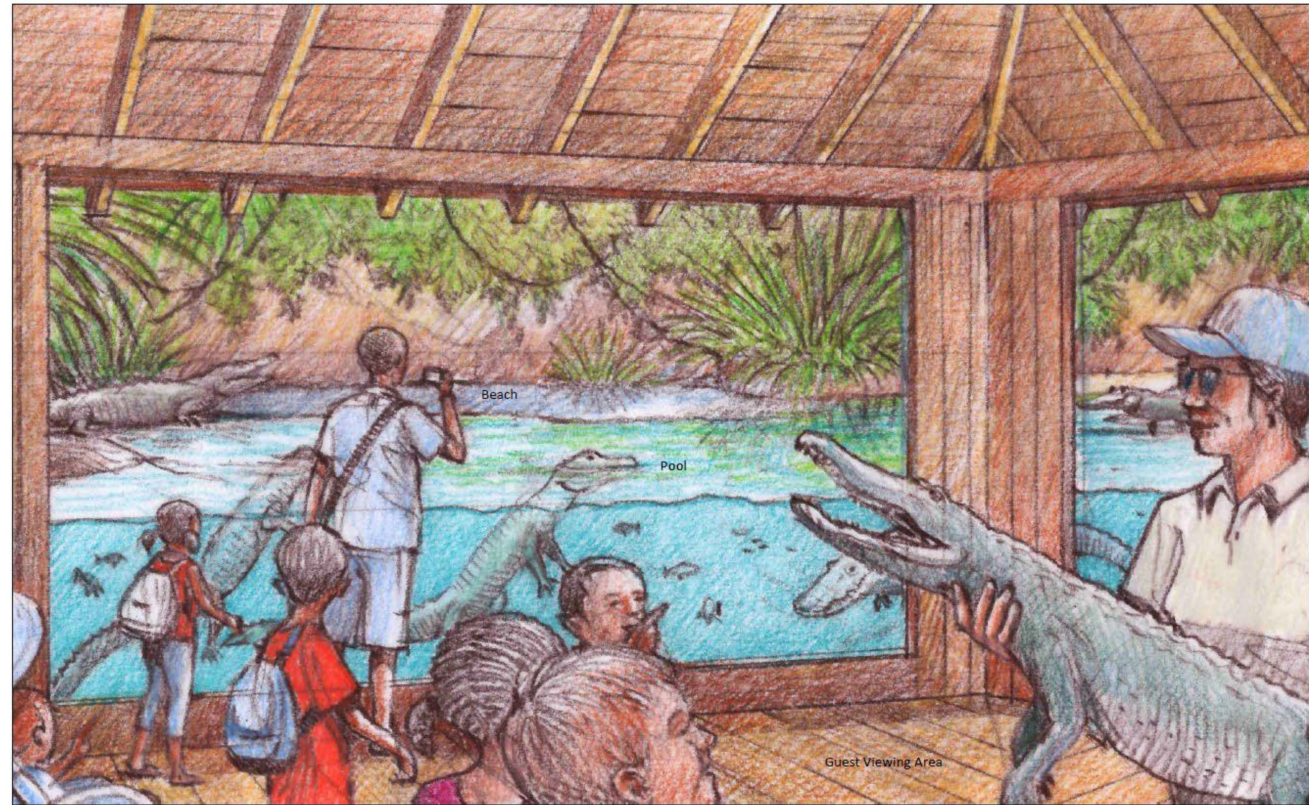
Alligator Hole Exhibit

The Gator Hole Exhibit is one of the most popular attractions at the Wonder Gardens but needs to be upgraded to provide a better visitor experience and opportunities for staff to work with the animals. We are recommending testing a two-step approach. Step one is to make upgrades to the existing Gator Hole Exhibit, and step two is to construct a new exhibit zone that will include a viewing shelter with underwater viewing area, an interpretive area, and a new boardwalk.

For the existing Gator Hole exhibit, the minimum scope of work of step one would include modifying the exhibit barriers to provide better guest viewing and changing the shape of the pool. The scope in the preferred step two would expand the exhibit to the west and include a boardwalk, viewing shelter, underwater viewing pool with a full life support system, and eliminating some of the old visitor walkways. The Gator Hole Exhibit envisioned in the expanded scope would be a true anchor exhibit, would likely increase visitor stay time, and would be a "must see" attraction in Wonder Gardens and Bonita Springs.



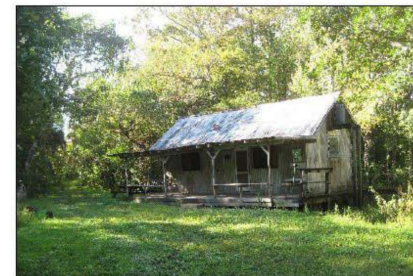
Gator Hole Plan



Underwater viewing at renovated Gator Hole Exhibit



Photo opportunity at the Alligator Farm in Florida



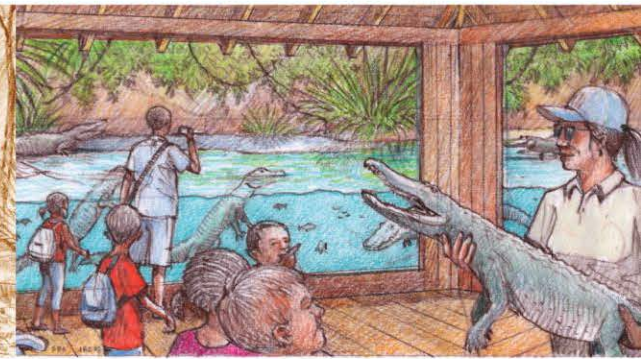
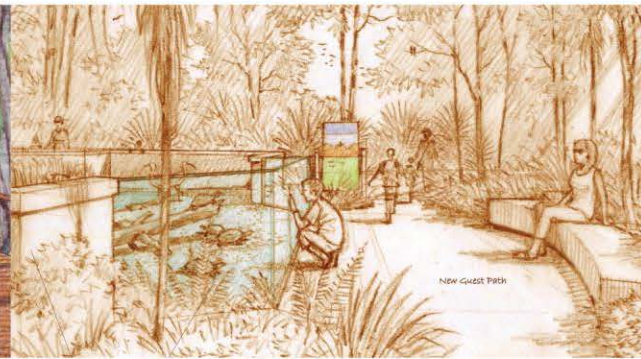
"Look & Feel" image for new viewing shelter



Alligator Snapping Turtle



Discover how you can be part of **PRESERVING** and **IMPROVING** wonder for **FUTURE GENERATIONS** by supporting these **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN** projects:



ANIMAL CARE CENTER FUNDING: **\$2.5M – \$2.8M**

Building a new center to safeguard the well-being of animals and to earn accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums

ELEVATED CANOPY WALK FUNDING: **\$750K – \$1.0M**

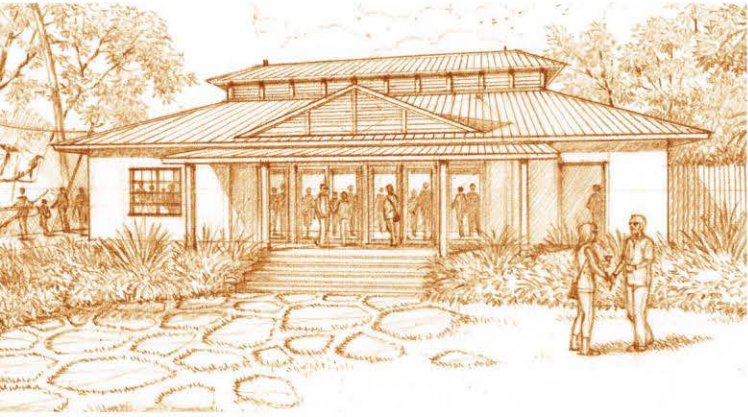
A tree-to-tree canopy experience with an elevated walkway and treehouse giving visitors a bird's eye view to wonder

MARSH FILTRATION **EXHIBIT** FUNDING: **\$50K – \$75K**

Improvements to the exhibit will make it more interactive, with enhanced viewing and hands-on demonstrations

ALLIGATOR HOLE EXHIBIT FUNDING: **\$750K – \$1.0M**

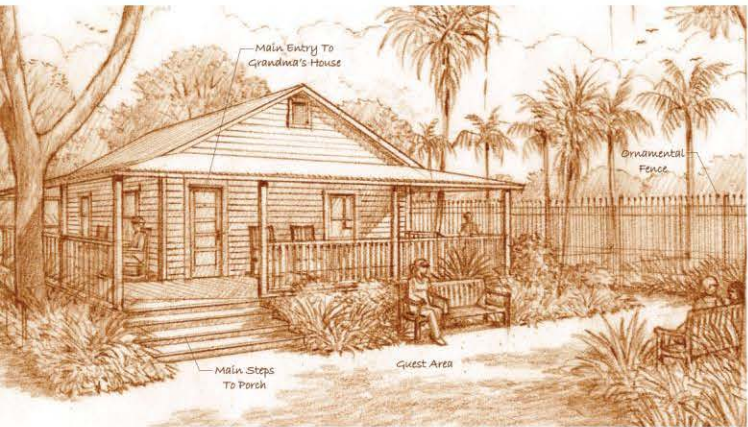
Upgrading our guest experience with a new observation shelter with an underwater viewing area



EVENTS BUILDING & AVIARY

FUNDING: \$1.1M – \$1.3M

Overlooking the Imperial River, an event building and aviary walkthrough to accommodate approximately 100 guests



ENTRY ZONE & GRANDMA'S HOUSE

FUNDING: \$150K – \$250K

A reimagining of the NE corner of the Wonder Gardens, with a natural museum in Grandma's House to engage visitors

AMPHITHEATER & DISCOVERY ZONE

FUNDING: \$300K – \$450K

The amphitheater and discovery zone active play area will include an authentic mining experience, where kids can find precious items

AVIARIES & ENCLOSURES

FUNDING: \$12.5K – \$30K

Replacing aging aviaries and expanding animal enclosures to better care for the Wonder Gardens' animal inhabitants



Explore additional ways you can support
the *Wonder* GARDENS!



27180 Old 41 Road, Bonita Springs, Florida
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