

Florida State Parks Foundation announces major grant for one-of-a-kind Serenity Garden

It could be the first of many to be created around the country and overseas,

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Florida State Parks Foundation has announced a \$200,000 grant for the Serenity Garden at Wekiwa Springs State Park. The garden, 'a park within a park', will be the only one of its kind in the U.S.



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"We are delighted to support this innovative project that will expand access and enhance the park experience for visitors with diverse abilities and special needs, said Foundation President Gil Ziffer.

The grant has been awarded to the Wekiva Wilderness Trust, the nonprofit, volunteer group that supports the work of Wekiwa Springs State Park. The Trust has worked

with a team of international experts for more than two years to finalize the design of the 1.5-acre site. Although additional funding is still needed, work is expected to start on the garden by early summer.

The Serenity Garden will create accessible experiences and enrichment activities for vulnerable populations and groups such as fragile seniors, the visually impaired, people in wheelchairs, veterans with PTSD, people with autism, those with chronic conditions, and their families and caregivers. Visitors will be able to see, touch, smell and hear nature and interact with it in a safe environment. It is hoped that it will become the model for other parks and public spaces both in the U.S. and overseas.

"The Serenity Garden is a unique project that aims to serve as a sanctuary for a largely underserved population throughout Central Florida," said project leader Don Philpott.

"Hopefully, it will be the first of many to be created around the country and overseas," he added.

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and

more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy.

The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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