

Groundbreaking ceremony held at Wekiwa Springs State Park for one-of-a-kind Serenity Garden

This innovative project will expand access and enhance the park experience for visitors with diverse abilities and special needs

LONGWOOD, FL, UNITED STATES, March 16, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Serenity Garden project at Wekiwa Springs State Park officially got underway today with a groundbreaking ceremony attended by local and state representatives and officials.

“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 Tammy Gustafson, President of the Florida State Parks Foundation which has pledged \$200,000 to the Serenity Garden, the only one of its kind in the U.S.



Serenity Garden groundbreaking

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*Don Philpott, President,
Wekiva Wilderness Trust*

The project is the brainchild of the Wekiwa Wilderness Trust, the nonprofit, volunteer group that supports the work of Wekiwa Springs State Park. The Trust has worked with a team of experts for more than four years to finalize the design of the 1.5-acre site. Although additional funding is still needed, work will now start on grading the site and installing hardscapes such as paths, boardwalks, and retaining walls.

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leader Don Philpott.

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. We hope that the garden, ‘a park within a park’ will become the model for other parks and public spaces both in the U.S. and overseas”, he said.

Attending today’s events were senior officials from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Park Service as well as local and state elected officials and representatives of local organizations.

Major funders of the garden include the Florida State Parks Foundation, Florida Park Service, Felburn Foundation and the For Bronco Wild Fund.

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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