

GRASSY WATERS CONSERVANCY, INC.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

MAY 23, 2019



Grassy Waters Conservancy, Inc.

MISSION STATEMENT

To support, promote, and protect Grassy Waters Preserve while providing for environmental education, research, and nature based experiences.

VISION

Grassy Waters Preserve (“Preserve”) which is a remnant of the Everglades creates a sense of place and is recognized as a unique regional public water supply, while supporting a diverse natural ecosystem. The Preserve’s natural, cultural, and historic resources shall be maintained for future generations, while providing appropriate high quality education and research opportunities, and enhancing residents and visitors connection to and stewardship of the Preserve, water supply, and greater Everglades ecosystem.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

The Grassy Waters Conservancy (“Conservancy”) Strategic Plan 2019-2024 will guide the Conservancy in its mission to provide focus on current and future trends in environmental education, research, and nature based experiences.

The Conservancy’s priorities were originally distilled from ideas and feedback gathered from both internal and external stakeholders in 2015. The result of those discussions and uses of Grassy Waters Preserve was the formulation of four priorities: natural, cultural, and historic resources; environmental education and research; visitors; and volunteers and partners. These priorities remain unchanged.

Progress towards implementing and sustaining the four priorities are continuously assessed and adjusted to meet evolving conditions and challenges. This plan is the cornerstone to guide the Conservancy in its overall mission to the Preserve.

How the Conservancy continues to proceed and implement this Strategic Plan will be detailed in individual activity and program plans in coordination with City staff.

The Conservancy is committed to supporting Preserve programs that enhance the quality of water and conservation of resources, so the Preserve shall continue to function as a unique, visionary public water supply system.

The Conservancy is non-political and will not participate in political activities.

PRESERVE AREA

The Preserve is located in and owned by the City of West Palm Beach, Florida. It includes the protected Water Catchment Area, land north of Northlake Boulevard, conservation lands south of the Water Catchment Area, and Apoxee Park, as shown on the figure below.

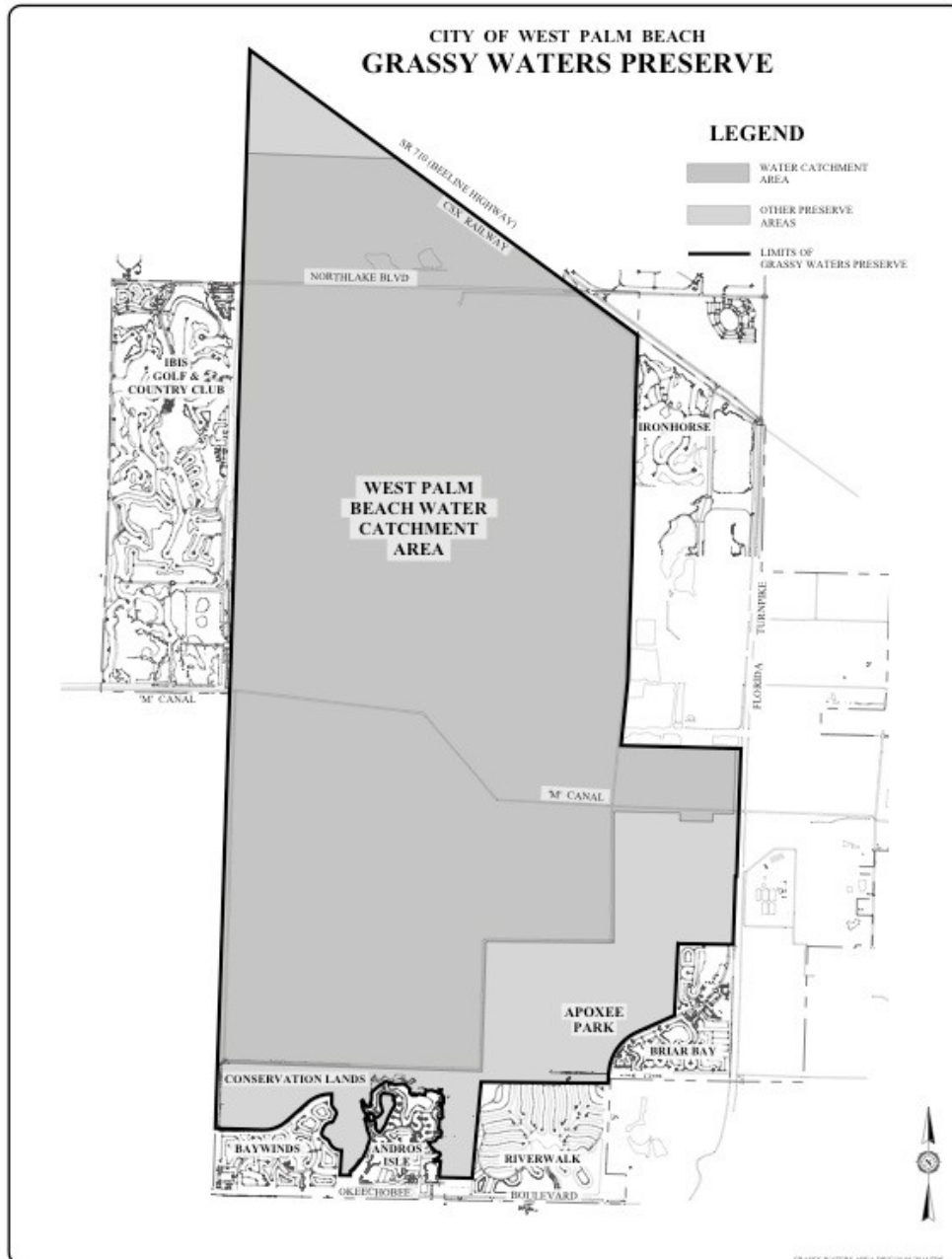


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Priority #1: Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources

The Conservancy is committed to supporting the protection, restoration, and conservation of the unique and diverse natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Preserve. Resource management issues include sustaining and enhancing the quality and quantity of water, plant and animal populations, protected and endangered species habitat, invasive and exotic species management, and preservation and protection of archaeological sites and artifacts.

To implement this priority, the Conservancy utilizes the following strategies:

- Support monitoring, reporting and maintenance of resources, and encourage a resource focused culture and management practices.
- Support natural, cultural, and historic site condition monitoring and reporting.
- Assist in goal setting and identifying additional resources to manage natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Support assessments of activities to maintain an appropriate balance between resource protection and use, and propose actions to balance utilization of and access to overused and underused areas.



Priority #2: Environmental Education and Research

The Conservancy is committed to supporting Preserve, place-based environmental education opportunities for all, including residents, visitors, educators, scientists, researchers, and students. It is also committed to supporting opportunities for peer-reviewed research and internships that will benefit long-term ecosystem integrity and management goals. This priority is directed toward providing quality, safe, nature-based experiences and research access with minimal impacts to resources, while supporting the development of an educated community.

To implement this priority, the Conservancy utilizes the following strategies:

- Evaluate education and research proposals with consistent, fact-based analyses of the potential benefits and risks to the resources and water supply.
- Support improvement of and propose new interactive and interpretive programs to increase the local communities and visitors understanding of and involvement with the Preserve.
- Facilitate and support outreach to the local communities and provide expanded access to public schools for outdoor education opportunities.
- Establish connections with colleges, universities and researchers focusing within the South Florida region to stimulate research and research-based publications and internship opportunities.



Priority #3: Visitors

The Conservancy is committed to supporting public access and quality visitor experiences at the Preserve, which meet the needs of a diverse population, and provide quality, safe, educational and enjoyable experiences for all levels of physical capability.

To implement this priority, the Conservancy utilizes the following strategies:

- Support updating and improving facility equipment, school groups material needs, signage and displays.
- Help establish additional connections with visitors and potential visitors through expanded use of media and interactive technologies.
- Establish new and/or expand existing visitor programs, activities and events.
- Support improvement of visitor facilities and exhibits.



Priority #4: Volunteers and Partners

The Conservancy is committed to supporting the Preserve volunteer program that assists in providing high quality, safe, educational opportunities and visitor experiences; and restoring, preserving, and managing its natural and cultural resources. It is also committed to supporting and expanding partnerships to increase environmental education and research opportunities, improve facilities and programs, and enhance resource restoration and protection efforts.

To implement this priority, the Conservancy utilizes the following strategies:

- Support volunteer appreciation and recognition.
- Encourage partnerships and cooperative efforts with both public and private entities to create educational events and research opportunities.
- Pursue partnerships to enhance facilities and programs for improved resident involvement and visitor experiences.
- Expand the pool of resources and funds through public and private partnerships, fundraising, expanded volunteer programs, grants, activities and events.

