STRATEGIC PLAN FY2020-2025
Updated 02-02-2022

Our VISION – Healthy and accessible national parks in South Florida that enrich and inspire all people forever.

Our MISSION – Founded in 2002, The Alliance for Florida’s National Parks is the official philanthropic partner for Florida’s four national parks: Everglades, Biscayne, and Dry Tortugas National Parks, as well as Big Cypress National Preserve. Our organization strives to instill in all people an appreciation of Florida’s public lands and natural resources for what they are – the key to the sustainability and prosperity of the state. Through five focused pillars of support – education, exploration, preservation & protection, restoration, and community engagement – The Alliance’s work enriches the park experience and creates deeper connections between diverse communities and the nature that abounds in their “backyards.”

Our VALUES – We are collaborative, inclusive, passionate, joyful, adventurous, innovative, and engaged:

  Collaborative – We believe in working together to achieve our goals
  Inclusive – We invite all people to discover and enjoy South Florida’s national parks
  Passionate – We share a deep connection to our national parks
  Joyful – We bring a sense of joy to our work and the time we spend together
  Adventurous – We seek out new experiences in our national parks
  Innovative – We look for creative ways to share and support national parks
  Engaged – We strive to be better stewards of our shared heritage

INTRODUCTION

South Florida’s four national parks encompass some of the most extraordinary subtropical wilderness in the world. The Everglades, Biscayne, and Dry Tortugas National Parks, and Big Cypress National Preserve together protect more than 2.4 million acres of lush wetlands, dense forests, aquamarine waters, and vibrant coral reefs stretched across the southern tip of Florida. With such a rich mosaic of habitats, South Florida’s national parks also shelter an amazing diversity of plant and animal life including the Florida panther, American crocodile, and West Indian manatee. These parks are rich in history as well, with cultural resources that span thousands of years from pre-Columbian civilizations and 18th-century British shipwrecks to the American Civil War and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

South Florida’s national parks are not just important to Americans, but singular in their global significance. Everglades National Park alone among U.S. national parks holds three international designations. The park is a World Heritage Site, an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance.
South Florida’s national parks represent a unique resource for the region, the nation, and the world, and yet population growth, budget constraints, climate change, and invasive species pose significant challenges to each of these parks.

The Alliance for Florida’s National Parks is uniquely positioned to help these parks thrive in a challenging environment.

As the official fundraising partner of the National Park Service in South Florida, the Alliance has the relationships, community partnerships, and volunteer leadership needed to sustain and support South Florida’s four national parks.

The Alliance supports South Florida’s national parks by working closely with park superintendents and their staff to identify and fund priority programs and projects that benefit the parks, their visitors, and surrounding communities, deliver the greatest impact for the least cost, and leverage additional resources.

Guided by this approach since 2002, the Alliance has invested more than $13 million in South Florida’s national parks to support programs and projects in five key areas:

- Education
- Exploration
- Preservation & Protection
- Restoration
- Community Engagement

In the fiscal year 2020, the Alliance adopted a three-year Strategic Plan that seeks to build on this record of success and advance our shared vision of healthy, accessible national parks in South Florida that enrich the lives of all people for generations to come.

Through the implementation of this Strategic Plan, the Alliance seeks to double the level of support it provides annually to its partner parks while building an active and engaged community of friends who know, love, and support South Florida’s four national parks.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING PREPARATION**

The Alliance’s 2020 Strategic Plan was developed with the assistance of the Alliance’s professional staff, a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of five Directors, the Alliance’s Board of Directors, and an external advisor and facilitator.

A strategic planning workshop open to all board members and the staff was held on May 18, 2019. With the adoption of the plan in July 2019, the Board of Directors appointed a Strategic Plan Committee to oversee the implementation of the plan. In July of 2020, the board of Directors voted to have the Executive Committee, in collaboration with the Executive Director oversee the Strategic plan.
2022 members of the Executive Committee:

- Gavin McKenzie - Chairman of the Board
- Fran Mainella - Vice-Chair of West Coast
- Marcos Garcia - Vice-Chair of East Coast
- Corinne Guerra - Secretary

AFNP Staff Members

- Juan Cueto – Executive Director
- Katie Murphy – Development and Communications Director
- Sarah Knopes – Office Manager

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

During a series of board interviews conducted by consultant Curt Miner and the strategic planning workshop in May 2019, Alliance board members and staff developed a shared organizational Vision and set of Core Values aligned with the Alliance’s existing Mission Statement.

Participants also engaged in a SWOT analysis of the internal and external factors that favor and challenge the organization at this time. After completing this review, board members and staff identified a set of guiding strategic initiatives for the next three years. Those strategic initiatives are:

1. Development
2. Programs and Projects
3. Board Governance
4. Marketing / Communications
5. Alliance Operations

The five initiatives are detailed below:

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: DEVELOPMENT

Background/Rationale: Philanthropy is about building relationships and sharing the Alliance’s vision, mission, and values in support of South Florida’s four national parks.

Over the next three years, through properly aligned relationships supported by the project needs of all four parks, the Alliance will seek to increase its fundraising activity in the areas of donor acquisition, annual fund solicitations, major gifts, and planned giving, with a special emphasis placed on securing unrestricted gifts.
Additionally, the Alliance will pursue public and private grants to support specific programs and projects in South Florida’s national parks while at the same time developing a marketing and communications strategy to build the Alliance’s brand and raise awareness of its efforts on behalf of South Florida’s national parks.

As a part of this initiative, the Alliance will offer donors more opportunities to support South Florida’s national parks while seeking to increase revenues in support of Alliance operations and priority projects in all four parks.

The Alliance’s goal over three years, as set forth below, is to increase its annual revenues to $3 million. Looking at a longer time horizon, the Alliance has set an internal goal of reaching $5 million per year in revenue by FY 2024. The final two years of this larger goal will be addressed in a future strategic plan.

**FY 2022 GOAL: Achieve sustainable annual revenue of $2 million**

- **Strategy A: Broaden the Alliance’s donor base by strengthening cultivation and engagement activities.**
  - **Action 1: Engage the Board of Directors to identify new donors**
    - **How:** Create new cultivation opportunities to share the Alliance’s vision and values. Provide giving opportunities that increase donors’ level of engagement.
    - **Who:** Executive Director, Board of Directors, Alliance Staff, and Volunteers.
    - **When Completed:** Ongoing in FY 2022
    - **Performance Criteria:** The number of new donors and events increases by a statistically significant percentage

- **Strategy B: Develop and activate a fundraising “pipeline” inclusive of events, annual funds, individual and major gifts, campaigns, and planned giving, with an understanding of the importance of unrestricted gifts.**
  - **Action 1: Develop best-practice strategies for all pipeline activities**
    - **How:** Staff the pipeline as needed with skilled professionals and do the work of each specific fundraising focus area
    - **Who:** Executive Director, Board of Directors, Alliance Staff and Volunteers
    - **When Completed:** Ongoing in FY 2022
    - **Performance Criteria:** Increased giving across all areas of focus, meeting or exceeding FY 2022 budgeted expectations

- **Strategy C: Increase the number of major gifts made to the Alliance in support of specific park programs and projects**
  - **Action 1:** Develop and implement a strategy for securing major gifts ($5,000 and above) through the cultivation, engagement, solicitation, and stewardship of high-level individual donors
• How: Establish activity goals for each component of the Alliance’s major gifts strategy and an overall revenue goal for major gifts in FY 2022.
  ▪ Who: Executive Director, Board of Directors, Alliance Staff
  ▪ When Completed: September 30, 2022
  ▪ Performance Criteria: Revenue goal is met or exceeded

  o Action 2: Set activity goals for the Executive Director, board members, and staff for external contacts with high-level donors
    ▪ How: Identify and assign existing major gift donors and prospective donors to Alliance board members and staff
    ▪ Who: Executive Director, Board of Directors
    ▪ When Completed: September 30, 2022
    ▪ Performance Criteria: Activity goals are met or exceeded

  o Action 3: Close the Flamingo Forever Capital Campaign to fund Flamingo needs at Everglades National Park as established by the Campaign plan and outline.
    ▪ How: Working with the Board of Directors, Parks, and Staff, identify, cultivate and solicit new donors, steward exciting donors to help complete the campaign.
    ▪ Who: Executive Director, Board of Directors, Park Leadership, and Staff
    ▪ When Completed: September 30, 2022
    ▪ Performance Criteria: Complete the $1.5 million in support of the campaign

• Strategy D: Secure additional foundation grants to support park programs and projects as well as Alliance capacity-building efforts
  o Action 1: Ensure staffing is adequate to meet foundation goals
    ▪ How: Assign staff, or hire or contract with a seasoned grant writer and foundation relations specialist
    ▪ Who: Executive Director and Board of Directors
    ▪ When Completed: September 30, 2022
    ▪ Performance Criteria: Hire grant writer to expand grant opportunities for The Alliance and the National Parks.

  o Action 2: Establish activity and revenue goals for the foundation relations specialist for 1) the acquisition of new grants and 2) the maintenance of current foundation relationships
    ▪ How: Set a budget goal for foundation grants in support of the overall FY 2022 revenue goal
    ▪ Who: Executive Director, Board of Directors
    ▪ When Completed: September 30, 2022
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: PARK PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Background/Rationale: The Alliance achieves its mission by investing resources in key national park programs and projects. These investments represent the heart of what the Alliance does as an organization. Since 2004 the Alliance has focused its resources in five key areas:

- Environmental Education
- Resource Protection / Wildlife Conservation
- Visitor Services
- Volunteer Activities
- Community Engagement

By focusing resources to support national park programs and projects in these five areas, the Alliance seeks to 1) improve the experience of park visitors, 2) create new opportunities for more people, especially children, to discover, explore and support South Florida's national parks, and foster a lasting legacy of national park stewardship in South Florida.

Through the implementation of its 2019 Strategic Plan, the Alliance seeks to increase its capacity to support its partner parks in all five priority areas, as set forth below. Chief among these priority areas is environmental education.

FY 2022 GOAL: Provide $2 million in programmatic support to South Florida's national parks ($2 million = 80% of FY 2022 revenue goal)

- Strategy A: Ensure that the curriculum-based education programs led by park rangers in all four South Florida parks are fully staffed and funded.
  - Action 1: Secure new and diverse sources of support for the national park education programs in all four parks.
    - How: Identify new sources of funding including foundation grants, corporate gifts, and major donors
    - Who: Executive Director, Board of Directors, Foundation Relations Specialist
    - When: September 30, 2022
    - Performance Criteria: Park education programs serve 40,000+ children annually in South Florida
- Strategy B: Identify and fund other priority programs and projects in all four South Florida national parks.
  - Action 1: Develop a board-approved Annual Work Plan for each park that identifies shared priorities and sets fundraising goals
- How: Work with park staff and Alliance board members to identify shared priorities and set fundraising goals
- Who: Executive Director, Board Members, Park Leadership
- When: March 31, 2022
- Performance Criteria: Board-approved Annual Work Plans

Action 2: Secure new and diverse sources of support for the top funding priorities identified in the approved Annual Work Plans

- How: Identify new sources of funding including foundation grants, corporate gifts, and major donors
- Who: Executive Director, Board Members, Park Staff, Foundation Relations Specialist, and Alliance Staff
- When: September 30, 2022
- Performance Criteria: Priority projects identified in Annual Work Plans are funded.

Action 3: Develop a close working relationship with the superintendents and staff at South Florida’s national parks

- How: Schedule monthly meetings with park superintendents, Deputy Superintendents and needed park staff to discuss the status of current projects and fundraising efforts
- Who: Executive Director, Board Chair and Directors, National Park Staff, Alliance Staff
- When: September 30, 2022
- Performance Criteria: Monthly meetings with park staff become a routine part of Alliance operations.

- Strategy C: Establish an endowment to support park education now and into the future
  
  o Action 1: Seek out and cultivate donors and/or foundations with a demonstrated commitment to park education programs to seed an education endowment fund for South Florida’s four national parks.
    
    - How: Identify and cultivate committed donors
    - Who: Executive Director, Board of Directors, Foundation Relations Specialist
    - When: September 30, 2022
    - Performance Criteria: Endowment is established
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: GOVERNANCE

**Background/Rationale:** The Alliance strives to ensure that the composition and structure of its Board of Directors and committees reflect the work and values of the organization. With fundraising as a top priority, the Alliance will seek to increase the size of the Board of Directors and the corresponding network of potential friends and donors who are connected to the Alliance through one or more board members. The Alliance intends to be pro-active in its efforts to identify and recruit board members who are passionate about South Florida’s national parks, who share our values and embrace our culture, who reflect the diversity of South Florida, and who are willing to actively engage in the work of the Alliance.

**FY 2022 GOAL: Increase the active board roster to 25 members**

- **Strategy A:** Increase active board roster to 25 members
  - **Action 1:** Identify and recruit appropriate board members to increase the board roster to 25 active members
    - **How:** Working through the Nominations Committee, identify and recruit new members
    - **Who:** Executive Director, Nominations, Board of Directors
    - **When:** September 30, 2022
    - **Performance Criteria:** 25 active board members

- **Strategy B:** Ensure that all board members are fully briefed on policies and operations of the Alliance and its partner parks, with annual updates
  - **Action 1:** Develop a Board Orientation Program with briefings by the ED and park staff and a Board Handbook updated annually
    - **How:** Work with park staff to develop a curriculum for board orientation and an updated board handbook.
    - **Who:** Executive Director, Park Leadership
    - **When:** September 30, 2022
    - **Performance Criteria:** 100% Board Participation
  - **Action 2:** Organize an Annual Board Retreat
    - **How:** Work with park staff to plan a board retreat
    - **Who:** Executive Director, Park Leadership
    - **When:** September 30, 2022
    - **Performance Criteria:** 100% Board Participation

- **Strategy C:** Promote a shared culture of park philanthropy by providing opportunities for Directors to spend time together and with park staff
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4: MARKETING/COMMUNICATION

**Background/Rationale:** As the official fundraising partner of the National Park Service in South Florida, the Alliance is often called upon to speak on behalf of its partner parks and the national park programs and projects it supports. A marketing and communications plan is needed to ensure the Alliance projects a consistent brand identity across multiple platforms while leveraging its voice to promote partner parks and the opportunity for philanthropic support. The Alliance should be widely recognized and respected as an essential partner to South Florida’s national parks. A comprehensive marketing and communications plan will help the Alliance earn that respect and gain wider recognition for its mission and vision.

**FY 2022 GOAL:** Build awareness of the Alliance and its philanthropic mission through the implementation of a coordinated communications strategy

- **Strategy A:** Update the comprehensive marketing and communications plan that highlights the vision and values of the Alliance and that emphasizes the Alliance’s philanthropic mission.
  
  - **Action 1:** Review the Marketing & Communications Plan
    
    - **How:** Review the plan with input from committee board members, key staff and external volunteers, and/or an external marketing firm
    
    - **Who:** Communications Committee
    
    - **When:** September 30, 2022
    
    - **Performance Criteria:** The plan is developed and approved by the board with a budget for initial implementation

- **Strategy B:** Marketing & Communications Plan
  
  - **Action 1:** Establish the scope of implementation in FY 2022
    
    - **How:** Assess the necessary scope of implementation needed to support FY 2022 fundraising goals
    
    - **Who:** Communications Committee
    
    - **When:** September 30, 2022
    
    - **Performance Criteria:** The budget is approved for the initial implementation of the plan, the scope is appropriate for supporting FY 2022 fundraising and campaign goals

- **Action 1:** Organize Park outings, group activities, and social gatherings for board members and park leadership

  - **How:** Schedule Park outings/briefings immediately following Alliance board meetings; expand appropriately
  
  - **Who:** Executive Director, Park Leadership
  
  - **When:** September 30, 2022
  
  - **Performance Criteria:** 100% Board Participation
o Action 2: Implement Marketing & Communications Plan
   • How: Implement plan as approved to support FY 2022 fundraising and campaign goals
   • Who: Communications Committee, Board of Directors, External Vendors, Executive Director, and Staff
   • When: September 30, 2022
   • Performance Criteria: Budget is approved for the initial implementation of the plan, external vendors are engaged (if needed), the initial phase of implementation is completed

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5: OPERATIONS

Background/Rationale: The Alliance seeks to build a collaborative, inclusive, and resilient organization accountable to the Board of Directors, the NPS, Alliance donors, and the public. Alliance operations should be adequately staffed to accomplish the Alliance’s strategic goals and the culture of the organization should reflect the values of the Alliance. In addition to the values identified above in this strategic plan, the Alliance values integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect for others.

FY 2022 GOAL: Alliance Operations are adequately staffed, housed, and equipped to accomplish the mission and strategic goals of the organization
   • Strategy A: Develop a staffing plan and budget that adequately and efficiently supports the strategic goals of the Alliance
     o Action1: Recruit and hire additional staff as needed to support Alliance operations and strategic goals
       • How: Recruit, screen, and interview qualified candidates for open staff positions
       • Who: Executive Director
       • When: September 30, 2022
       • Performance Criteria: The Alliance is adequately staffed and all staff positions identified in Staffing Plan are filled
     o Action2: Propose to the Board a full-time fundraiser for the West Coast of Florida.
       • How: Find the funding necessary to hire and retain an FT Fundraiser for Florida’s West Coast.
       • Who: Executive Director
       • When: September 30, 2022
       • Performance Criteria: Engage and increase donor/prospects in the West Coast of Florida
• Strategy B: Ensure that Alliance staff has the office space, equipment, and software needed to be successful
  o Action 1: Determine the office space and equipment needed to support Alliance Operations, and budget accordingly
    ▪ How: Review Alliance operations to identify needs
    ▪ Who: Executive Director
    ▪ When: September 30, 2022
    ▪ Performance Criteria: Alliance Operations are adequately housed and staff has the equipment needed to do their jobs
  o Action 2: Secure additional office space, computers, software and communications equipment as needed.
    ▪ How: Investigate available options
    ▪ Who: Executive Director
    ▪ When: September 30, 2022
    ▪ Performance Criteria: Alliance Operations are adequately housed and staff has the equipment needed to do their jobs

SUMMARY
These are exciting times for The Alliance for Florida’s National Parks. With annual revenues of $1.5 million or more in each of the last two years, the organization is poised to become a stronger partner to South Florida’s national parks with a greater focus on fundraising, board development and external communications.

With the full commitment and active engagement of its Board of Directors and the support of park leadership, the Alliance is committed to achieving the goals set forth in its 2022 Strategic Plan.