

LaBelle Nature Park Support Center Purchase Proposal

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The 501c3 non-profit organizations Intelligentsia International, Inc. (III) and Alpha Epsilon Lambda, Inc. (AEL) seek a donation/grant of \$220,000 for the acquisition of the property at 412 Fraser Avenue, LaBelle FL 33935 (see Figure 1). The property is commonly referred to as the Park House.

Ownership of the property would be through a new 501c2 non-profit title-holding organization or a new 501c3 private non-profit foundation established for purposes of holding the deed (see Table 1).

The foundation name could be drawn from the family name of the primary donor or the name of the corporate donor. If a separate foundation is established, the expected initial directors of the "Family/Corporate/Memorial Name" Park Foundation include: (1) donor representative; (2) III representative, John Capece; (3) Rotary Club park project representative, Mel Karau; plus perhaps three additional directors: (4) AEL Representative; (5) Riverwatch project representative; and (6) Kiwanis Club representative.

Purpose

The purpose of the property purchase is to allow its continued use as a III support center for the adjacent LaBelle Nature Park as well as for other community and regional service/educational programs performed by III and AEL. The goals for the property include: restoration of the Caloosahatchee oxbow, establishment of a recreational canoe/kayak outpost, and construction of a natural resources education center.

Of the ten counties south of Lake Okeechobee, all but Hendry and Glades have a dedicated environmental (natural resources) education center.

Park House is an important acquisition because it is the only residential property contiguous with the 10-acre LaBelle Nature Park. It also borders the 2-acre Caloosahatchee oxbow/riverbed and is near LaBelle's most historic structure, the Captain Francis A. Hendry House (see map in Figure 2). This is a high prestige location, ideally suited for a family memorial or name-sake community facility. If acquired the Park House would continue to serve as a community activities support center, making possible a variety of regional technical and educational activities.

The adjacent LaBelle Nature Park land is owned by SFWMD and leased to the City of LaBelle. The lease precludes and community sentiment does not favor structures encroaching on the actual Nature Park lands. Therefore the Park House property is a logical location for any facilities serving the Nature Park, particularly those associated with restrooms, park security, educational classrooms, science laboratories, and recreational amenities for the Caloosahatchee River oxbow located on the northern property line.

Property Description

The Park House property is owned by CHL Holdings, Inc. The Hendry County Property Appraiser's web site at www.hendryprop.com (see Figure 3) shows it as consisting of two residential lots:

Lot A. Parcel ID = 2 29 43 02-500-0000-014.0 (vacant lot, approximately 75'x150')

Lot B. Parcel ID = 2 29 43 02-500-0000-015.0 (lot w/2000 ft² home, approx. 150'x100')

The lots are separated by an old river access easement. A similar easement separates the lots from the Nature Park. Photos of the property are provided in Appendix 1.

The property value was appraised in June 2007 with a value of \$175,000. The appraisal report is provided as Appendix 2. The appraisal did not evaluate the property from the perspective of selling the two separate lots independently, thus is considered a low estimate of the market value. An initial grant of \$200,000 is sought to support purchase and a supplemental grant to cover closing costs of the purchase plus minor repairs to the building. An additional \$20,000 is sought for purchase-related expenses (see Table 2).

CHL Holdings bought the property in 2003 at a price of \$120,000 in response to an open community request issued by Intelligentsia International to many local business leaders. The request sought a company willing to purchase and hold the land until acquisition by the non-profit organization or school system could be arranged. Given the current market realities of the home building industry, CHL can no longer hold the property for charitable purposes and seeks to sell the property in the immediate future.

CHL not only spent \$120,000 to purchase the property, but they have also invested tens of thousands of dollars in various improvements as well as having paid ongoing expenses of the facility for over 4 years. Thus, \$200,000 represents a break-even proposition for CHL. Intelligentsia has also invested funds in the house, implementing various improvements and alterations, including converting the porch into a science laboratory.

Acquisition of the Park House is a unique opportunity to set aside a prestigious and historic site for the purposes of supporting continued community service projects for LaBelle, Hendry County and the Caloosahatchee River region.

The 2000-ft² home was until very recently leased by CHL to Intelligentsia International Inc. for housing university student volunteer trainees engaged in projects associated with III, AEL, Rotary Club of LaBelle, Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association, and other organizations. The home was modified by CHL to accommodate 5 bedrooms. III further modified the home, including building a soils laboratory and a water quality laboratory that are used to support Caloosahatchee River oxbow restoration projects and other regional water quality projects.

Programs and Activities

Future activities that are envisioned for the Park House property include:

- K-12 educational programs at the Nature Park for Hendry & Glades County school districts,
- Restoration of the old Caloosahatchee River oxbow - a partial restoration that retains the wetlands that currently covers the riverbed (see Figures 2, 4 and 5),
- Establishment of a public access canoe outpost (refer to Figure 4 and 5), and
- Construction of an environmental education center (refer to Figure 6).

Current activities made possible by the Park House that will continue after purchase include:

- Park security system communications and monitoring base (see Figures 7-9),
- Laboratory to support restoration of the Nature Park and other river oxbows,
- Instructional space and restrooms for K-12 student visitors to the Nature Park, &
- Housing university student trainees who provide volunteer services for:
 - o Design and maintenance of www.LaBelleNaturePark.org
 - o Design and maintenance of www.CRCA.caloosahatchee.org
 - o Design and maintenance of www.CarbonCapture.us
 - o Design and maintenance of www.RotaryWater.org
 - o Design and maintenance of www.CaloosaFest.org
 - o Development of designs for Nature Park improvements and river shoreline
 - o Village water systems designs for Rotary projects in developing nations
 - o Regional water quality research projects for Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee and Caloosahatchee River.



Figure 1. Location of LaBelle, Florida.

Table 1. Deed-holding non-profit organization structure.

Section of Tax Code	Description of Organization	General Nature of Activities	Contributions Allowable
501(c)(2)	Title Holding Corporation For Exempt Organization	Holding title to property of an exempt organization	No
501(c)(3)	Religious, Educational, Charitable, Scientific, Literary Organizations	Activities of nature implied by description of class of organization	Yes
Private Foundations	All 501(c)(3) organizations that don't qualify as public charities. Some private foundations are additionally subclassified as private operating foundations or private non-operating foundations, which receive some of the advantages of public charities.		



Figure 2. Location of Park House, Nature Park, original riverbed (oxbow), and Hendry House.



Figure 3. Lot and easement lines of the Park House property.

Table 2. Park House property purchase budget.

Cost Category	Amount
Purchase Price	\$199,000
Title Co. Closing Costs	\$3,100
Property Taxes	\$4,100
Homeowners Insurance	\$1,200
Survey	\$800
Appraisal Fee	\$300
Purchase Subtotal	\$208,500
Improvements & Maintenance	\$5,000
Foundation Administration	\$6,500
Project Total	\$220,000



Figure 4. Conceptual drawing of a restored oxbow canoe trail with wetlands and a Caloosahatchee River shoreline boardwalk providing both a protected canoe path and wildlife habitat.

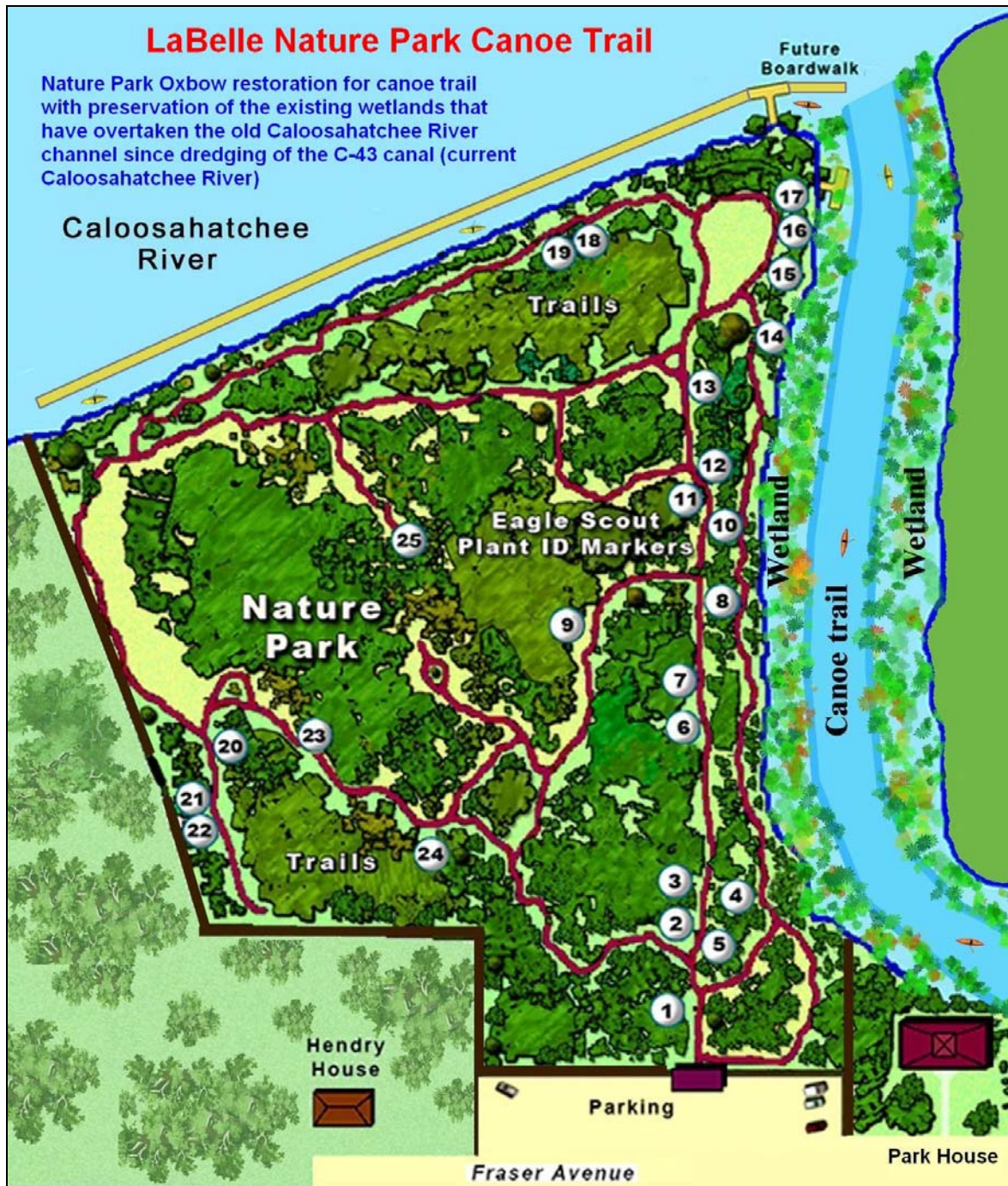
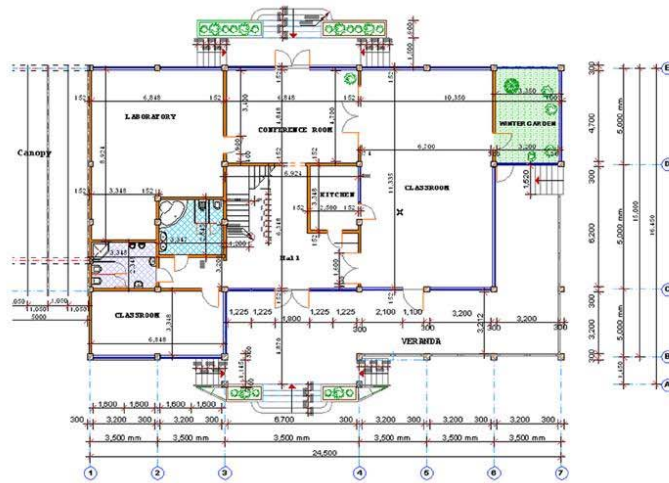


Figure 5. Canoe outpost at Park House with canoe trail created by restoration of the original riverbed with a shoreline boardwalk to create tranquil waters for canoes and wildlife habitat.

Natural Resources Education Center



First floor



Second floor

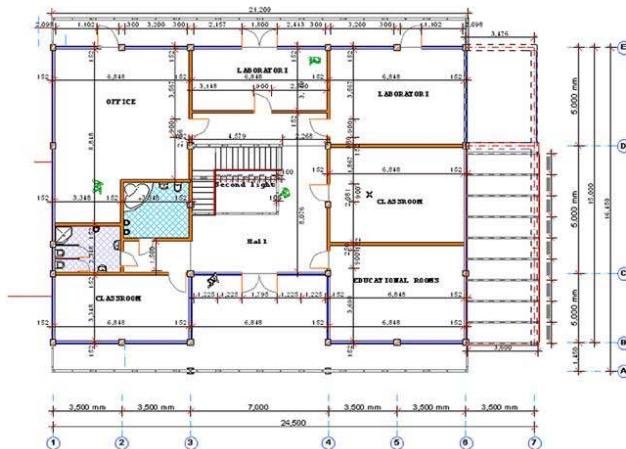


Figure 6. Conceptual designs for a natural resources education center envisioned for the Park House property to support K-12 and community education programs.



Figure 7. The Nature Park security system design with control station at Park House.



Figure 8. Remote monitoring of security system activated by disturbance-sensors.

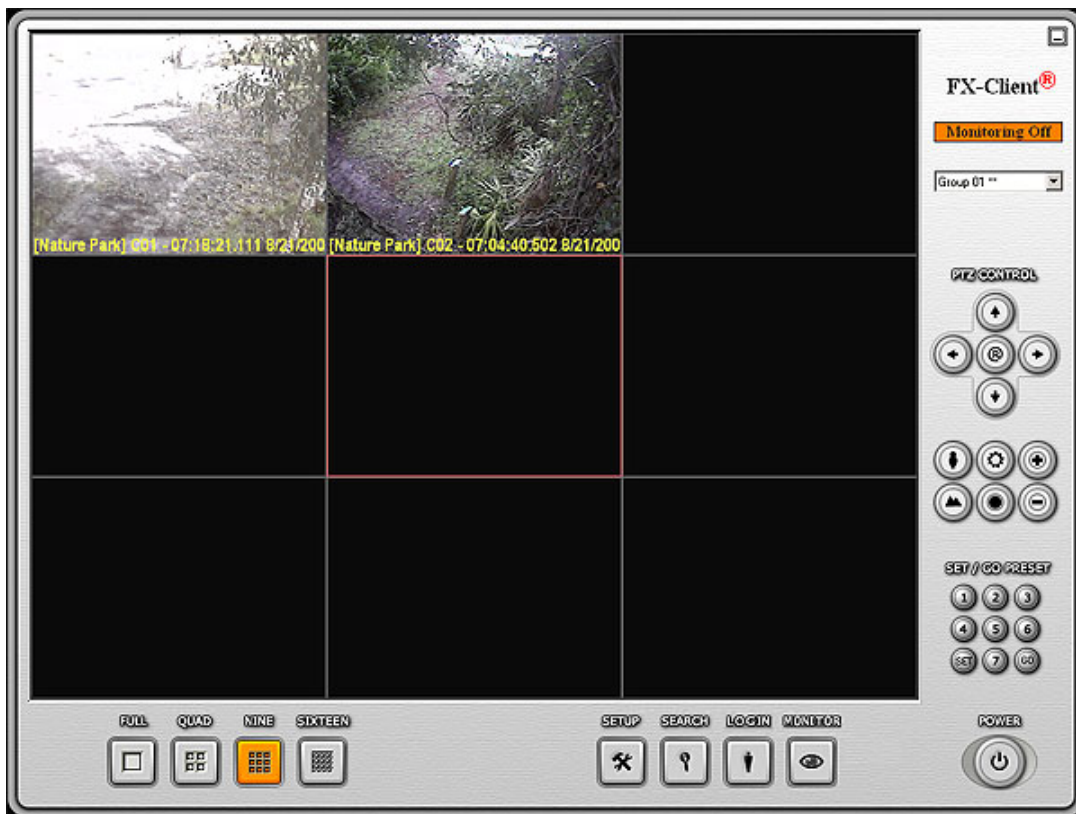


Figure 9. Example display of disturbance sensor-activated security camera system.