



For immediate release: September 20, 2019

Contact: Sarah Beckman, (619) 742-0686, sarah@balboapark.org

Stephanie Thompson Communications, (619) 840-7353, stephanie@stephaniethompson.com

Balboa Park Conservancy Receives Federal “Save America’s Treasures” Grant for Restoration of the Botanical Building Welcome Gallery

San Diego—The restoration of the welcome gallery of Balboa Park’s iconic Botanical Building will be funded in part by a \$257,668 grant from the Save America’s Treasures program, it was announced today.

The federal Save America’s Treasures grant requires a dollar-for-dollar match in private donations. The [Balboa Park Conservancy](#), the City of San Diego’s nonprofit partner that safeguards and cares for Balboa Park, will use the grant to restore the welcome gallery of the Botanical Building, which was built in 1915 for the Panama-California Exposition. Free to millions of annual visitors and home to more than 2,100 plant varieties, the iconic building will soon undergo a major renovation thanks in part to a state grant and visionary plans developed by the Conservancy.

The Botanical Building is in need of restoration due to termite damage, rust, and deferred maintenance. The total restoration project not only repairs and restores the facility and surrounding gardens, but provides new amenities, such as restrooms, water-efficient irrigation, energy-saving lighting, and enhanced opportunities for education, visitor engagement, and earned revenue. Specifically, the welcome gallery will become an educational resource for visitors—designed to inspire and connect our community to the plants of Balboa Park and beyond. Together, the Botanical Building and Gardens will be revived as the heart of horticulture in San Diego and a global botanical destination.

The Balboa Park Conservancy is one of 41 recipients nationwide selected for a share of \$12.6 million in Save America’s Treasures grants by the National Park Service this year. The Save America’s Treasures federal grant program is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior’s National Park Service in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The program requires applicants to leverage project funds from other sources to “match” the grant money, which is awarded after a competitive review of project proposals. According to the U.S. Department of Interior, this year’s Save America’s Treasures grants will leverage more than \$22 million in private and public investment for preservation and conservation projects.

“This news comes at a pivotal moment for one of San Diego’s most iconic and historic landmarks,” said CEO Tomás Herrera-Mishler. “An investment in this beloved resource helps convey the importance of parks and a sense of place in our community. This matching grant not only recognizes the value of local philanthropy, but it inspires others to become part of this revitalization story.”

Background

The Balboa Park Conservancy selected the Botanical Building in Balboa Park as its first major restoration project and began planning and fundraising, securing all of the funds for Planning and Design by 2015, when Tomás Herrera-Mishler, the Conservancy's first CEO, was hired. Project planning was overseen by a steering committee composed of subject matter experts, City of San Diego staff, and park stakeholders including the Friends of Balboa Park and Committee of 100.

An RFP was released in 2015, and the design team of RNT Architects, Spurlock Landscape Architects, and Tres Fromme, horticultural designer, was selected. In 2018 the Conservancy worked in partnership with Parks and Recreation to form a new steering committee of subject matter experts, city staff members, and park stakeholders to develop a programmatic plan for the Botanical Building, completed in July 2019. In June 2019 it was announced that \$8.26 million in state funding was designated for the renovation project.

For more information about the grants and the Save America's Treasures Program, please visit <http://go.nps.gov/sat>.

About the Balboa Park Conservancy

The Balboa Park Conservancy provides expertise, advocacy and resources to envision, enhance and sustain Balboa Park for all visitors in partnership with the City of San Diego and in collaboration with other organizations in the Park and the community.

www.balboaparkconservancy.org

#