



## **Strategic Plan 2014-2016**

*“In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught.”*

— Baba Dioum, Senegalese Conservationist

### **Introduction**

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is one of the world’s premier specialized botanical gardens. Located in the small resort town of Vail, Colorado which attracts a global audience for its skiing and outdoor recreation, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is the highest elevation botanical garden in the world situated at 8,200’ (2,700 m) in the central Rocky Mountains. The Gardens attracts more than 100,000 visitors annually to see its unique collection of alpine and mountain plants collected from around the world.

Former first lady of the U.S., Betty Ford, is the namesake of the Garden. Mrs. Ford was a key inspiration for the Gardens when she lived in the Vail Valley, and her spirit of generosity and commitment to the natural beauty of the Valley lives on in the Gardens.

### **Mission**

An institution’s mission encapsulates its purpose for existence and why it deserves support in a concise statement.

**The mission of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is:**

**“To deepen understanding and promote conservation of alpine plants and fragile mountain environments.”**

## Vision

Botanical gardens are scientifically-based institutions that exist to expand human appreciation and understanding of plants through excellence in display, living collections, educational programs, and conservation research. Betty Ford Alpine Gardens has become the premier cultural attractions in Vail serving residents and the global audience attracted to the Vail Valley every year.

Because of Vail's global prominence as a mountain resort community with a national and international following, BFAG is uniquely situated among smaller botanical gardens to have a global reach while continuing to deepen its services to the Vail Valley.

**The vision of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is:**

*“To be the premier alpine botanical garden in the world.”*

Over the next ten years, the Gardens will focus its efforts to expand its education programs for both young people and adults, will not only diversify its plant collections and expand its gardens but also increase their importance scientifically and educationally, and will play a large role in the conservation of mountain plants and habitats.

## Scope

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is an exquisite garden of alpine and mountain plants located at 8,200 feet (2,700 m) elevation high in the Rocky Mountains in Vail, Colorado. The plants in the garden include ones that are native to Colorado and the Vail Valley and other plants from similar environments around the world. Ecologically, the plants are all from mountain environments though not exclusively true “alpine plants,” those which grow above timberline.

From its inception, the purpose of the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens went beyond the development and maintenance of a high altitude garden and included education as a central part of its mission. Increasingly the Gardens sees its educational role as having multiple dimensions beginning with an Alpine Garden Education Center with interpretive exhibits to formal programs for young people as well as adults and professionals in the green industry.

BFAG is more than its location in Ford Park in Vail. It reaches beyond the garden in its education programs and especially in its plant conservation programs to study and help protect rare plants. While its focus today is on its location in Vail's Ford Park, it envisions a day when its scope will enlarge to include additional permanent mountain sites given the limitations of Ford Park.

## **Sustainable Competitive Advantage**

The purpose of the statement of Sustainable Competitive Advantage is to describe succinctly the most compelling distinguishing aspects of the Garden that not only separate it today from other organizations, but also are vital characteristics that would be hard for others to duplicate in the future.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens' Sustainable Competitive Advantage is:

*Betty Ford Alpine Gardens set in the world renowned town of Vail, Colorado features alpine plants and other mountain plants grown outdoors in this high elevation garden. Coupled with the garden and its curated plant collections is the Gardens' education and conservation programs. The Education Center, now in the approval and design process, will extend both the educational impact of the Gardens and provide for winter display of alpine plants in a new alpine house when the outdoor gardens are dormant and often buried by snow.*

## **Transformative Goals**

**Goal I. Dramatically expand our educational reach through innovative exhibits, programs, interpretation, and electronic media.**

### *Strategies:*

The single, over-riding goal for Betty Ford Alpine Gardens in the next three years is the creation of an Alpine Garden Education Center that will serve as a welcome center for visitors, an interpretation center, and classroom and will allow the development of important new educational programs for teachers, students, adults, and visitors to Vail.

With the new Alpine Garden Education Center planning, BFAG will develop new long-term directions for the future of its programs and experiment with new programs in the short-term.

### *Priorities:*

- **Create and develop the Alpine Garden Education Center**
- **Provide innovative interpretation for visitors throughout the Gardens**
- **Bring the Fairchild Challenge Program to the Vail Valley**

## **Goal II. Develop and maintain a garden with the most diverse, best curated, and most aesthetic displays of alpine and mountain plants in the world.**

### *Strategies:*

The Gardens' ability to touch the public requires that the gardens be maintained to the highest horticulture and scientific standards. We will accomplish this by continually diversifying the collection, increasing our participation in the North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC), and adding more gardens as space becomes available.

### *Priorities:*

- **Diversify and improve the curation of the plant collection**
- **Expand our participation in the North American Plant Conservation Consortium (NAPCC)**
- **Ensure the high quality of the gardens**

## **Goal III. Expand our conservation program for alpine, subalpine, and similar environments and plants.**

### *Strategies:*

The Gardens is dedicated to the conservation of high elevation mountain plants and has become an important partner with federal agencies charged with their protection. The Gardens has worked with agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, Nature Conservancy and Colorado Department of Transportation to protect rare plants and will continue to look for opportunities to develop similar conservation and conservation education projects. The Gardens also works with international organizations, particularly Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), with its world headquarters at Kew Gardens, London, England.

### *Priorities:*

- **Complete and publish the North American Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) Strategy for Alpine Plant Conservation**
- **Develop a research program on the effects of climate change on alpine plants**
- **Integrate conservation messages with the garden interpretive plan**

## **Goal IV. Create strong support within the Vail Valley community so people value and support BFAG.**

### *Strategies:*

The Gardens has become an ever-increasingly visible and important part of the Vail Valley community. Still there remain many in the Valley who would support the Gardens if they had more introduction and understanding of the work of BFAG. The strategy is to reach a much larger audience with messages and build the membership base.

### *Priorities:*

- **Expand individual and business memberships**
- **Develop key strategic partnerships that raise the visibility of BFAG**
- **Develop the marketing and positioning of BFAG**

## **Goal V. Create a strong and sustainable organization.**

The Gardens can only be effective in focusing on its mission, vision, and priorities if its own governance and management are strong and it has the financial resources to sustain itself and its programs and initiatives.

### *Strategies:*

For BFAG to succeed and be sustained, the board and the financial resources of the Gardens must be developed, including completing the capital fund drive for the Education Center and an endowment, and developing a strong volunteer program.

### *Priorities:*

- **Develop an ever-stronger, more philanthropic board**
- **Raise \$3 million for the education center and the endowment**
- **Strengthen the annual giving program**
- **Develop a strong volunteer program**

## Three-Year Objectives<sup>1</sup>

### **Goal I. Dramatically expand our educational reach through innovative exhibits, programs, interpretation, and electronic media.**

#### *Strategies:*

The single, over-riding goal for Betty Ford Alpine Gardens in the next three years is the creation of an Alpine Garden Education Center that will serve as a welcome center for visitors, an interpretation center, and classroom and will allow the development of important new educational programs for teachers, students, adults, and visitors to Vail.

With the new Alpine Garden Education Center planning, BFAG will develop new long-term direction for the future of its programs and experiment with new programs in the short-term.

#### *Priorities:*

- **Create and develop the Alpine Garden Education Center**
- **Provide innovative interpretation for visitors throughout the Gardens**
- **Bring the Fairchild Challenge Program to the Vail Valley**

### **Three-Year Objectives (2014-2016)**

I-1. We will consult with the Town of Vail on a certificate program for landscapers by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2014.

I-2. We will complete an operating plan for the Education Center by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

I-3. We will secure all necessary approvals for the Education Center by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2014; break ground by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2015; open the Center with exhibits and Alpine House by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

I-4. We will work with Art in Public Places to secure option on use of AIPP Cottage by end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

I-5. We will develop an initial education programming plan for the Education Center by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2014.

I-6. We will complete an interpretive plan for the grounds and the exhibit plan for the Education Center by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2015. \*

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<sup>1</sup>All dates are by calendar quarter

\*Asterisk indicates the objective has financial implications

I-7. We will develop a plan for an interpretive nature trail along Vail Creek by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2015.\*

I-8. We will add at least 20 pages of in-depth information on the website on alpine plants and conservation by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2015; we will have the most in-depth website in the world on alpine plants for plant enthusiasts by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2016.

I-9. We will have the Fairchild Challenge program operating in at least two Vail Valley high schools by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2015; we will make the program available to all Eagle County high schools by 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

I-10. We will implement phase I of the grounds interpretive plan by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

I-11. We will begin implementation of the Vail Creek nature trail by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

I-12. We will develop a 5 year comprehensive education plan for BFAG by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2016.

## **Goal II. Develop and maintain a garden with the most diverse, best curated, and most aesthetic displays of alpine and mountain plants in the world.**

### *Strategies:*

The Gardens' ability to touch the public requires that the gardens be maintained to the highest horticulture and scientific standards. We will accomplish this by continually diversifying the collection, increasing our participation in the North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC), and adding more gardens as space becomes available.

### *Priorities:*

- **Diversify and improve the curation of the plant collection**
- **Expand our participation in the North American Plant Conservation Consortium (NAPCC)**
- **Ensure the high quality of the gardens**

### **Three-Year Objectives (2014-2016)**

II-1. Develop a plan to continue the growth of the NAPCC collection by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2014.

II-2. Develop an on-site plant propagation area with cold frames by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

II-3. We will ensure all existing NAPCC plants are up-to-date with BG Base by end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014.

II-4. We will digitally map one section of the garden by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2014; two more sections by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2015; and three more sections by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2016.

II-5. Add new accessions and new taxa to the collection by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter each year:

- 2014: 120 new accessions including 60 new taxa
- 2015: 100 new accessions including 50 new taxa
- 2016: 100 new accessions including 50 new taxa

I-6. We will install 200 new plant labels by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter each year in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

II-7. We will have all our plant records up-to-date in our database by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2015.

II-8. We will open a new rock and trough garden adjacent to the Education Center by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

II-9. We will have a visiting committee review our gardens and collections by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

II-10. We will have a plan to extend the Children's Garden by end of 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

## **Goal III. Expand our conservation program on alpine, subalpine, and similar environments and plants.**

### *Strategies:*

The Gardens is dedicated to the conservation of high elevation mountain plants and has become an important partner with federal agencies charged with their protection. The Gardens has worked with agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, Nature Conservancy, and Colorado Department of Transportation to protect rare plants and will continue to look for opportunities to develop similar conservation and conservation education projects. The Gardens also works with international organizations, particularly Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), with its world headquarters at Kew Gardens, London, England.

### *Priorities:*

- **Complete and publish the Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) Strategy on Alpine Plant Conservation**
- **Develop a research program on the effects of climate change on alpine plants**
- **Integrate conservation messages with the garden interpretive plan**

### **Three-Year Objectives (2014-2016)**

III-1. We will create a new research plan with the Bureau of Land Management for an alpine plant community by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2014.

III-2. We will join the Mosquito Range Initiative (with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service) by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

III-3. We will finish and publish the North American Strategy for Conservation of Alpine Plants by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2014.\*

III-4. We will present the Strategy at the 2015 American Public Garden annual conference by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2015.

III-5. We will create a U.S. Alpine Plant Conservation Committee to evaluate the state of the alpine flora and develop recommendations by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2015.\*

## **Goal IV. Create strong support within the Vail Valley community so people value and support BFAG.**

### *Strategies:*

The Gardens has become an ever-increasingly visible and important part of the Vail Valley community. Still there remain many in the Valley who would support the Gardens if they had more introduction and understanding of the work of the work of BFAG. The strategy is to reach a much larger audience with messages and build the membership base.

### *Priorities:*

- **Expand individual and business memberships**
- **Develop key strategic partnerships that raise the visibility of BFAG**
- **Develop the marketing and positioning of BFAG**

### **Three-Year Objectives (2014-2016)**

IV-1. We will develop a marketing plan that includes our brand statement and goals for marketing by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

IV-2. We will create at least three strategic partnerships by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2014; five by the end of 2015 and 10 by the end of 2016.

IV-3. We will increase the number of members and membership income by the end of each year:\*

2014: from 145 to 165 members; from \$42,500 to \$53,000

2015: from 165 to 200 members; from \$53,000 to \$65,000

2016: from 200 to 220 members; from \$65,000 to \$85,000

IV-4. We will increase the number of business members by the end of each year:

2014: from 3 to 25 business members; from \$26,000 to \$35,000

2015: to 40 business members and to \$50,000

2016: to 45 business members and to \$65,000

## **Goal V. Create a strong and sustainable organization.**

The Gardens can only be effective in focusing on its mission, vision, and priorities if its own governance and management are strong and it has the financial resources to sustain itself and its programs and initiatives.

### ***Strategies:***

For BFAG to succeed and be sustained, the board and the financial resources of the Gardens must be developed, including completing the capital fund drive for the Education Center and an endowment, and developing a strong volunteer program.

### ***Priorities:***

- **Develop an ever-stronger, more philanthropic board**
- **Raise \$3 million for education center**
- **Build the endowments to \$1 million**
- **Create and implement a comprehensive development plan**
- **Significantly increase the number of higher level annual donors (individuals)**
- **Develop a strong volunteer program**

## **Three-Year Objectives (2014-2016)**

V-1. We will plan and launch a capital campaign by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

V-2. We will conduct a board evaluation and board training by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2014.

V-3. We will develop a comprehensive development plan (for non-capital gifts) by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2014.

V-4. We will increase the support from major individual donors (\$500 to \$10,000+) each year:\*

2014: from 33 to 40 members; from \$58,500 to \$63,000

2015: to 45 members; to \$67,000

2016: to 60 members; to \$75,000

V-5. We will have fundraising event(s) each year to raise net income as follows:\*

2014: \$ 7,000

2015: \$14,000

2016: \$75,000

V-6. We will increase the support from foundations for general operating expenses, for education and for conservation each year:\*

2014: 2 foundation grants; \$2,500  
2015: 2; \$3,000  
2016: 2; \$5,000

V-7. We will obtain government grants and contracts to support our education and conservation programs:\*

2014: 1 grant; \$2,500  
2015: 1 grant; \$5,000  
2016: 1 grant; \$10,000

V-8. We will achieve the following sales goals in the two gift shops (combined):\*

2014: Gross Sales \$425,000; Net Income \$ 79,000  
2015: Gross Sales \$467,000; Net Income \$84,000  
2016: Gross Sales \$514,000; Net Income \$92,000

V-9. We will achieve gifts and pledges to the capital campaign:\*

2014: 6 contributions; \$2 million  
2015: 200 contributions; \$1 million

V-10. We will develop a strategic recruitment plan for new board members (to reach a total of 15 board members) and add three new board positions and members by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2014; two new board positions and members by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2015.

V-11. We will have \$750,000 in cash or pledges to add to the endowment (including board designated endowment) by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2016.\*

V-12. We will develop a planned giving program and have at least three individuals make commitments by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2015; three more by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2016.

V-13. Develop a volunteer recruitment, retention, recognition plan by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2014 and achieve the following goals:\*

2014: 60 volunteers  
2015: 70 volunteers  
2016: 80 volunteers