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**Marie Selby Botanical Gardens adopts Historic Spanish Point
as a companion campus to Selby Gardens' Downtown location**

*Now operating two companion campuses, Selby Gardens will provide waterfront sanctuaries
connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and regional history*

SARASOTA, Fla., April 17, 2020 – The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens Board of Trustees today is pleased to announce that Historic Spanish Point will be joining its organization as a companion campus as of May 1, 2020. Combining two nonprofits with similar missions, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens will showcase air plants of the world, native nature, and regional history through both its Downtown campus and its new Historic Spanish Point campus.

Historic Spanish Point (“HSP”), a hidden 30-acre gem on Little Sarasota Bay in the Osprey area of Sarasota County, is one of the largest waterfront preserves showcasing native Florida plants in the state. With an archaeological record that encompasses approximately 5,000 years of Florida history, HSP is one of the largest intact and actively preserved archaeological sites on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Similar to Selby Gardens Downtown campus, HSP was owned by a forward-thinking woman of her time, Bertha Palmer (1849-1918), a Chicago native who became a Florida real estate pioneer.

Despite concerted efforts, Historic Spanish Point has not been able to grow sustainable revenue streams enough to cover its operating budget.

In seeking a way forward that would keep HSP as a natural site that honors Florida’s history, HSP, through Gulf Coast Community Foundation’s Invest in Incredible program, approached leaders at Selby Gardens to explore possibilities. While conversations began in February, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting financial challenges at HSP made the situation more urgent.

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens will now be an umbrella organization with two distinct campuses – Selby Gardens’ Downtown Sarasota location and Historic Spanish Point. The Gulf Coast Heritage Association, which has run HSP, has now been adopted as a supporting organization to Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.

“It is always our hope to find win-win solutions for organizations,” said Mark Pritchett, President|CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. “The mission and vision of Selby Gardens and Historic Spanish Point are extremely compatible. And we are confident this merger will allow Historic Spanish Point to reach its full potential, in turn allowing Sarasota residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy two significant cultural resources for generations to come.”

Selby Gardens, located less than 10 miles to the north of HSP with a membership base of 14,000 households, is uniquely positioned to grow HSP’s visitor engagement and turn the financial situation around at HSP, which has 750 member households. Over the past five fiscal years, there has been a dramatic financial turnaround at Selby Gardens’ Downtown campus resulting in the elimination of Selby Gardens’ debt for the first time in its history. During the same time period, admissions have grown by 55%, memberships by 67%, and earned revenue by 70%.

Similar to HSP, Selby Gardens is a bayfront oasis gifted to the community by a founding pioneer, Marie Selby (1885-1971). While Selby Gardens has always been internationally-renowned for the study and display of the

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Page 2 of 3

world's best scientifically-documented collections of orchids and bromeliads, in recent years, visitors have also been attracted by The Living Museum® operating model with rotating exhibitions featuring horticultural and garden displays tied to works by well-known artists.

While the potential to similarly tell the story of Florida's native plants and peoples at the HSP campus is endless, some ideas the team plans to implement as soon as possible include:

- Creating joint summer camps and children's education programs;
- Creating joint adult education programs;
- Expanding the butterfly garden to include an interactive butterfly house;
- Creating connectivity between both campuses by boat.

"The Board of Directors at the Gulf Coast Heritage Association carefully explored alternative ways to sustain Historic Spanish Point, and unanimously agreed that having Selby Gardens adopt HSP was the best path forward," said Pat Ball, Chair of the Gulf Coast Heritage Association, which previously operated Historic Spanish Point. "We are confident that this bold move will allow Historic Spanish Point to realize its full potential and remain an important resource and attraction for the region."

While mergers are a common tool for growth and financial sustainability in the for-profit sector, nonprofit mergers could become more prevalent this year, especially in light of the economic challenges related to COVID-19. Mergers provide economies of scale that can enable organizations to become much more efficient and help them expand their services in new geographic areas, in turn gaining vital donor support and increasing impact.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees at Selby Gardens, we welcome the addition of Historic Spanish Point as a companion campus to Selby Gardens' Downtown location," said Pauline Wamsler, Chair of the Selby Gardens Board of Trustees. "We are fully committed to stewarding Historic Spanish Point's legacy with the utmost integrity."

All staff at Historic Spanish Point will be retained, and current Executive Director John McCarthy will become Vice President of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens' Historic Spanish Point campus. Additionally, two members of the former Gulf Coast Heritage Association Board of Directors will join the Selby Gardens Board of Trustees.

"We are so excited to have Historic Spanish Point join us as our companion campus," said Jennifer Rominiecki, Selby Gardens President and CEO. "We look forward to honoring HSP's history and character, while finding ways to make the location financially sustainable. The real winners in this are the residents of the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County, who will be able to visit two campuses as part of their Selby Gardens memberships."

The adoption of the Historic Spanish Point campus will not impact the Master Plan at Selby Gardens' Downtown location. At this time, \$35 million in contributions are currently committed and specifically restricted for the purposes of the Selby Gardens' Downtown Master Plan. With the current economic downturn, Selby Gardens' hope is that the project will be approved so that it can benefit Sarasota's local economy as soon as it is safe for work to begin.

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Page **3** of **3**

About Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens provides 45 acres of bayfront sanctuaries connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and our regional history. Established by forward thinking women of their time, Selby Gardens is composed of the Downtown Sarasota campus and Historic Spanish Point campus in the Osprey area of Sarasota County, Fla., The 15-acre Downtown campus is the only botanical garden in the world dedicated to the display and study of epiphytic orchids, bromeliads, gesneriads and ferns, and other tropical plants. There is a significant focus on botany, horticulture, historical preservation, and the environment. The Historic Spanish Point (HSP) campus is located less than 10 miles south and consists of 30-acres along Little Sarasota Bay. The HSP campus is one of the largest bayfront preserves showcasing native Florida plants in the state and celebrates an archaeological record that encompasses approximately 5,000 years of Florida history. Both campuses have been accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. For more information visit www.selby.org.