

Summary

This proposal sets out our aspirations for a complete renovation and modernisation of the bi-institutional visitor complex of the Charles Darwin Foundation's Charles Darwin Research Station and the Galapagos National Park Service, located on Santa Cruz Island in Galapagos. The Charles Darwin Foundation will take the lead role in transforming the present day tourist site into a multi-purpose educational and tourist complex for visitors and local residents alike. Our ambition is to present the Galapagos National Park, Charles Darwin Foundation and Research Station, the work of Charles Darwin and importance of Galapagos to a wide range of local, national and international individuals.

Themes, concepts and messages will be presented in a logical and inter-related way that tell a story of successful conservation and inspire visitors to help protect the natural world.

A new reception area and a multi-purpose facility will be constructed and two existing buildings renovated to incorporate environmentally sound building practices, including renewable energy sources and architectural features that will complement the surrounding environment and be appropriate for the Galapagos climate. Exhibitions will incorporate state-of-the-art technology, best practices in science interpretation, use touch and hearing as well as sight, and incorporate a variety of media, from photographs and computer-generated imagery to live specimens. Exterior improvements will include upgraded visitor trails, standardised and improved directional and interpretive signage, and natural landscaping. The full project is expected to be completed by the end of 2010 and our aim is for several key components to be completed by 2009, a hugely significant year for several reasons as it marks the 200th birthday of Charles Darwin, 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life (Origin of Species)*, and 50th anniversary of both the Charles Darwin Foundation and the Galapagos National Park.

The overall project goals are:

- To develop world-class experience that satisfies national and international visitor expectations for a World Heritage site.
- Ensure long-term conservation of Galapagos in partnership with local people and institutions, as well as national and international tourists.
- Improve communication and understanding of the importance of research, protected area management and conservation in Galapagos and within a global context.
- Strengthen local community engagement in the conservation and stewardship of Galapagos.

However, we recognise that this ambitious project requires a professional and structured approach. This proposal requests £59,000 in seed funding to accomplish the planning phase of the project by 30 June 2008. This will be a major step towards achieving our goal and enable the start of the development and implementation phases by 1 July 2008. The results will include a project action plan and budget; continued effective management of existing interpretive services; a solid base from which to develop key messages and story lines, a marketing and fund raising strategy and related promotional materials; and a business and funding plan for the overall project.

Introduction

One of the most visited places in Galapagos is on the edge of the town of Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island. Situated in an arid coastal area of the Galapagos National Park, with native vegetation, small beaches and breathtaking views, lies a complex of research laboratories, administrative offices, interpretive exhibits, gardens, a marina, meeting facilities, a library, a gift shop, permanent and temporary housing, and dining facilities. It is a bi-institutional complex shared by the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) and the Galapagos National Park Service (GNPS). The most notable facilities here – and the reason for it being a major tourist attraction – are the CDF's Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) and the GNPS's Fausto Llerena Tortoise Rearing Center and Linda Cayot Land Iguana Rearing Center. It is also the home of Lonesome George, one of the World's most famous animals and the symbol of Galapagos. Almost every tourist boat's itinerary includes a visit to the site and for many it is one of few opportunities to learn about conservation and the conservation actions taking place in Galapagos. It is the initial point of contact to people who may potentially choose to support Galapagos projects upon returning to their homeland or in the future. For many of the estimated 80,000+ visitors to this complex, coming here could be the highlight of their trip to Galapagos and inspire them to make a lasting impact on Galapagos, as Galapagos does to them.

History and Background

Following the establishment of the CDF and GNPS, scientists built the Charles Darwin Research Station in the 1960s. As tourism to Galapagos grew, it became clear that visitors wanted contact with the centre of scientific research, and for many Galapagos aficionados a visit to the Research Station became a high priority. During the 1970's a more organised tourism industry, with annual visitor figures of around 16,000 towards the end of the decade, led the CDF and GNPS to create a more formalised visitor experience. By 2006 visitors to Galapagos had risen to over 140,000 (includes tourists and those coming for business, to visit family, etc.) and an estimated 80,000 tourists now come to the visitor site each year.

The visitor experience currently focuses on the tortoise corrals, where people see the famed Galapagos tortoises at many different life stages and a simple exhibition centre where they can read about the work of the two organisations.

Significant momentum toward modernising and redeveloping the CDRS/GNPS complex as an integrated tourist site began in 2002/2003, when the CDF and the GNPS recognised that more preparation was needed to carry forward the new bi-institutional Landscape Master Plan.

The project received fresh impetus in 2006 when the CDF restructured itself and launched its 2006-2016 Strategic Plan, and the GNPS also launched its Management Plan. Dialogue with representatives of the tourist sector and the local municipality further cemented what improvements should take place at the CDRS/GNPS complex. A shared, holistic vision was created.

In 2007 the new vision was translated into a strategic interpretive plan under a new CDF director with extensive experience in the communication of scientific concepts for lay audiences. The plan was developed by a professional exhibit designer who donated his services. He integrated the 2002 Landscape Master Plan with the objectives of the new CDF Strategic Plan and GNPS

Management Plan. The bi-institutional interpretive plan was then agreed to by the leadership of the CDF and GNPS.

Also in 2007 physical and programmatic improvements for the visitor site were developed and implemented, including:

- Improved and increased orientation and interpretive signage.
- Environmentally sound building renovations and landscaping.
- Increased and improved interaction with guides and visitors, including greater CDF participation in GNPS guide training.
- Updated and formalised interpretive services managed by volunteers with environmental communications and public relations training and experience.
- A pilot internship program for local university students studying environmental communications, public relations or related disciplines.

The Challenge

Although a number of improvements have already taken place or are in progress, all parties agree that a significant step change is required. The visitor site needs to be renovated, modernised and well-maintained, making it more accessible to varied audiences and effective at conveying the stories of Galapagos and its two oldest institutions responsible for the archipelago's protection. People need to better understand the work of CDRS scientists and the GNPS and how it makes a difference for Galapagos and benefits global environmental conservation efforts. The bi-institutional complex has, up to now, never met its full potential of creating a holistic experience, worthy of its status as the focal point of a World Heritage site and international symbol of a shrinking natural world.

Moreover, as the population of Galapagos, estimated at 28,000 in 2006, has increased at a similar rate to the number of visitors, it is now critical to also provide facilities that engage and educate the residents of Galapagos – those who will inherit the archipelago and are therefore vital to its future conservation.

The CDF must also develop and hire a small, qualified and stable team of staff and volunteers to assist in the development and implementation phases while managing the day-to-day visitor interpretation services. We must continue the momentum achieved since 2006 that currently exists to create a world-class visitor experience and education facility that is consistent with the long-term goals and objectives of the CDF and GNPS.

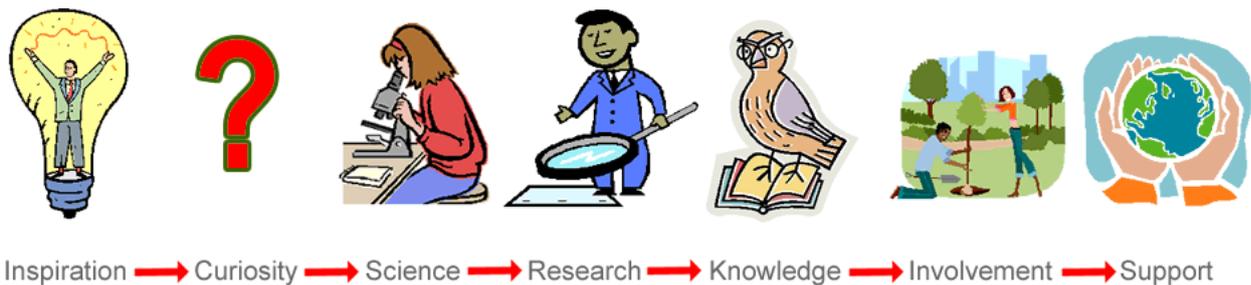
The Solution:

Charles Darwin Center for Galapagos (working title)

CDF and the GNPS's shared ambition is to develop new and updated facilities that include interpretive and educational features that appeal to international and national tourists, as well as involve, engage and educate the local residents of Galapagos. Whatever the reason for their visit, everyone should leave feeling both informed and inspired.

The distinct advantage this project has to motivate people and garner support for conservation of Galapagos – and beyond – is that Galapagos is a conservation icon: one of the best conserved tropical archipelagos in the world. It is also the one place most closely identified with the theory of evolution: where Charles Darwin’s observations and curiosity led him to revolutionise the world’s view on evolution in *Origin of Species*.

Few places have such tremendous opportunity to propel visitors from a passive awareness of evolutionary change to an active understanding, appreciation and respect of our environment. From that respect will grow a sense of stewardship and responsibility to protect the Galapagos and the planet through environmental action and advocacy.



The planned visitor experience will lead the international tourist and local visitor alike through a carefully designed narrative that should inspire and motivate them to contribute to the protection of Galapagos. This storyline will include information about Darwin’s visit to the archipelago, opportunities to engage in hands-on science, to reflect on the world-changing impact of Darwin’s theories, to understand the global significance of Galapagos, and become motivated to make their own contribution in whatever way they are able.

The entrance to the renovated complex will set the tone for the experience: clear orientation and directional signage and a new welcome point. The first stop will be the renovated Van Straelen Interpretation Center, which will offer a variety of interactive exhibits to convey the scientific and global significance of Galapagos. They will then proceed through a natural cactus forest with complimentary interpretive signage to the new CDRS multi-purpose building that will house exhibitions on Darwin and the work of the CDF. Visitors will then venture on to learn about the tortoise and iguana rearing programs with a visit to a new exhibition and then see the live baby and adult tortoises and iguanas... and of course Lonesome George. From there visitors can wander through the research grounds of the CDRS, stopping to read panels about scientific endeavours, possibly see scientists at work, and visit the demonstration gardens that show how native plants can be used in horticulture. The route will then lead them back to the new CDRS building where they can relax and browse the book store and gift shop.

The time is now...

This has been a hugely significant year for Galapagos, and conservation here is very much in the headlines. The President’s declaration in April that Galapagos is “at risk” and a “national priority for conservation” and UNESCO’s decision to inscribe the archipelago on its List of World Heritage in Danger have focused international attention and put Galapagos firmly in the

spotlight. We need to capitalise on this international attention to secure a sustainable future for the archipelago and demonstrate that Galapagos can be a model for the world.

There are also the four key anniversaries in 2009: the 200th birthday of Charles Darwin, 150th anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species*, and 50th anniversaries of the Charles Darwin Foundation and the Galapagos National Park.

Now is the time to act and benefit from worldwide attention and potential support from local, national and international partners to begin redevelopment of a visitor experience worthy of a World Heritage site.

Objectives and Phasing

Because of the large scale of the project we acknowledge the need to move forward in clearly defined phases. As stated, 2009 is a hugely significant year for Galapagos; however we recognise that time scales are too short to deliver the whole of this project within the next two years. The project will therefore be staged over approximately 4 years, with the first of the major renovations and new exhibitions due for completion by 2009. In order to achieve this target we need to begin the Planning Phase as soon as possible.

Key Objectives for Overall Project

- Create a completely renovated and modern CDRS/GNPS visitor and education complex.
- Help people understand the natural history of Galapagos.
- Establish the CDRS as a globally recognised centre of excellence for conservation research, applied science and information dissemination.
- Promote and present the conservation management role of the GNPS.
- Integrate the facilities into the natural environment while demonstrating best environmental practices in building design and technologies.
- Create interior and exterior interpretive exhibits inspiring visitors and engendering their direct involvement in conservation.
- Provide on-the-job vocational training for students in communications, public relations and environmental interpretation (the last could serve as precursor to the GNPS's formal guide training program).
- Establish revenue streams through earned income and fund raising opportunities to: (1) ensure long-term sustainability for the centre, and (2) provide increased funding for local capacity building and community investment.
- Inspire visitors, so that when they return from their once in a lifetime visit to Galapagos, they want to help protect the archipelago for future generations.

Key Objectives for Planning Phase (January – June 2008)

We are currently seeking seed funding for the CDF to accomplish the following:

1. Recruit an experienced Project Manager on a short term basis to develop a detailed project plan, time line and budget. Our aim is to advertise and recruit the Project Manager to accomplish these objectives by 30 June 2008.
2. Hire a Visitor Services Manager to assist the Project Manager, manage daily services to visitors, and continue improvements and service expansion for the interpretation program.
3. Establish the main interpretive themes and new storyline elements for the project.
4. Develop a marketing and fund raising strategy and produce related promotional materials including a portfolio of design concepts.
5. Identify and begin to cultivate potential sources of funding and in-kind collaborators for development and implementation phases and permanent staffing.

Milestones for 2009

- Construction of the primary visitor and education facilities of the new CDRS building including the exhibit that will celebrate and elucidate the life and work of Charles Darwin. Given the global awareness and interest in the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and 150th anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species* and related potential for collaboration and fund raising, this is the most feasible of the objectives over the next 18 months.
- Renovate and modernise the "Casona", an existing building with historical significance, for it formerly housed the tortoise rearing programme. The exhibition will be expanded from a few panels to a comprehensive demonstration centre for the tortoise and iguana rearing programmes. We believe that the collaboration and fund raising required for this facility is also realistic over the next 18 months.
- Continue the expansion and improvement of landscaping.
- Undertake vital trail upgrades and basic visitor facilities to ensure maximum visitor comfort, enjoyment and safety.

The Budget

	USD \$					
FUNDS REQUESTED	Salaries and Fees	Materials Labour Equipment	Travel	Direct Costs	Indirect Costs	Total USD
Project Director	5,400	-	5,000	1,248	625	12,273
Project Manager	40,000	10,000	5,000	6,600	2,160	63,760
Visitor Services Manager	12,500	2,000	-	1,740	374	16,614
Information Manager	6,000	-	-	720	72	6,792
Survey of intended land use	5,000	-	-	600	60	5,660
Print materials	3,000	1,000	-	480	148	4,628
Project Development	10,637	-	-	1,276	128	12,041
Total Requested	82,537	13,000	10,000	12,664	3,566	121,768
Counterpart funding (other donors & CDF)						26,637
Total Phase 1 funding required						148,405

Conversion - Given the unusual weakness of the \$ US, two examples of conversions to £ sterling are shown below using the current rate and a more likely rate for the first half of 2008, when most costs will be incurred:

Conversion with a rate of £1 = \$2.07, as at 29/11/07 \$121,768 = £58,921

Conversion with a rate of £1 = \$1.80 \$121,768 = £67,649

Budget description

1. The Project Director will spend approximately 4 hours per week (10% full time equivalent) on this project.
2. The Project Manager will be contracted for 6 months to develop an action plan and budget for the project. CDF is currently considering a pro bono arrangement with a qualified individual, which would reduce this budget line.
3. The Visitor Services Manager will be hired to assist the Project Director and Project Manager and continue to develop interim improvements. (Additional funding will be sought to make this a permanent position.)

4. The Information Manager will spend approximately 8 hours per week (20% fte) to establish main interpretive themes & new storyline elements, and supervise materials development.
5. Survey of intended land use and need for Environmental Impact Assessment(s).
6. Print materials: Graphic designer/s and artist/s will be contracted for the production of fund raising brochures and project plan, including portfolio of design concepts
7. Project development: Identify and cultivate potential sources of funding and in-kind collaborators for development and implementation phases and visitor services staff - 10% salary contribution for key fund raising staff.

Appendix 1

Project Description – our Vision for the *Charles Darwin Center for Galapagos*

Main Interpretive Themes and New Storyline Elements

Determining interpretive themes requires thought, imagination, creativity and logic. One of the key principles of interpretation is that it involves provocation, and is not simply information. One must spark the mind with thought-provoking images and text, allowing people to ponder and reflect on the messages presented. Inspiration is essential before presenting a litany of resource management concerns. Good interpretation is a combination of art, science and psychology. The right mix will make a life long impression on the visitor.

New Storyline Elements

- Darwin in the Galapagos – Key excerpts and first impressions as a naturalist.
- Observation and analysis of nature – Studying the form and function of living things and making connections.
- Evolutionary ideas / revolutionary thought – The great scientific debate; evidence of support for Darwin theories.
- Protection and preservation of Galapagos – From national park to World Heritage site; natural history of Galapagos; why it is unique and globally significant.
- Environmental stewardship and public support – Primary messages of CDF; science in decision-making; donor recognition; “think globally, act locally”.
- Beyond evolutionary biology, nature’s holism – Philosophical view of inter-relationships of all living and non-living things; we are still evolving.

Idealised Visitor Flow at an Interpretive Visitor Site

The visitor trail must be practical, logical and well managed.

- Area orientation – Clear orientation and directional signage with consistent, lettering style, graphics, and institutional logos.
- Site identification – Facility signage to direct visitors once within **the** visitor site.
- Regional orientation – Facility identification in relation to **surrounding** protected area.
- Reception – Personalised welcome by staff/volunteers at the **entrance** to the complex.
- Presentation of main themes – Introduction to essential thematic stories in short, bold statements that capture the imagination.
- Presentation of story lines – Creative writing style to describe the interpretive themes in short, well constructed text with an overall strong introduction, compelling main body and conclusion.

Intended Visitor Flow and Facilities

This is how the average visitor will experience the new complex. (Names of facilities are simply working titles.) The appendices include a complex map with the intended visitor trail, as well as detailed descriptions of each of the major elements of the renovated complex.

1. Entrance

The bi-institutional complex currently has three distinct and somewhat confusing entry points. These will be consolidated and relocated into one clearly defined welcome point at the entrance.

2. Access Route / Start of Visitor Trail

The access route will begin with a site map and introduction to the complex. Currently this is both a public access road as well as a visitor trail. Although unauthorised vehicles will no longer be permitted, it is still not wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and necessary authorised vehicles and so it will be widened.

3. The World of Galapagos

An existing facility, the Van Straelen Interpretation Center, will be renovated, upgraded and modernised to present the natural history of Galapagos. Interactive exhibits will demonstrate why Galapagos is important, both in its own right as a protected area and World Heritage site, and within a global context because changes to the ecosystem – both positive and negative – are witnessed and researched far more rapidly and easily than on larger landmasses and in already degraded ecosystems.

4. Charles Darwin Research Station Welcome Center

This new multi-purpose building will be constructed adjacent to the current roundabout at the entrance to CDRS facilities. It will function as the complexes' central visitor and education facility. The building will include exhibits on the work of CDF/CDRS, the Darwin exhibit, space for temporary exhibitions; and the library and gift shop will be relocated here. There will also be a book store, video theatre, conference / training facilities, donor recognition display, toilet facilities and office space. An entrance fee for exhibits will make the visitor complex financially self-sustaining. Outdoor verandas and patios will provide rest areas and help integrate the structure into the natural landscape.

5. Visitor Trail

The trails will include new shade areas and improved design to mitigate the effects of foot traffic and improve visitor flow. Part of the trail will be rerouted to incorporate the CRDS Welcome Center. It may be possible to create this new section with a raised walkway to minimise environmental impact and allow for good views of the finest groves of opuntia and candelabra cacti in the complex. Interpretive signage on the trails through the existing tortoise and iguana corrals will be replaced, updated and standardised to fit within the overall complex sign standards.

6. Tortoise & Iguana Rearing Programs Demonstration Center

This existing facility ("Casona") is the former tortoise breeding facility and still retains architectural elements used in the captive breeding program including indoor/outdoor hatchling platforms. The renovated building and exhibition will focus on giant tortoises and land iguanas and showcase the two most notable efforts undertaken to conserve Galapagos: the giant tortoise

and land iguana breeding programs. Two existing public toilets next to the building will be renovated.

7. Research Station Buildings

Outside the research buildings on the visitor trail there will be interpretive panels to highlight the work of dedicated scientists. There will be visitor access to selected work stations.

8. Gardens and Native Plant Nursery

In 2007 the existing native gardens on the visitor trail were completely renovated and expanded. The *Casa de Sombra* (plant nursery) has also been upgraded and is open to the public for presentations and sales of native plants to local residents at minimal cost. The current native garden gazebo has also been restored and informational panels about plants of Galapagos have been installed. Formerly overlooked by most visitors, this is now a frequent stopping point on the visitor trail. Further expansion in the immediate area and elsewhere along the visitor trail is already funded and planned for 2008. All signage and plant identification tags will be upgraded and redesigned to complement overall complex sign standards.

And back to...

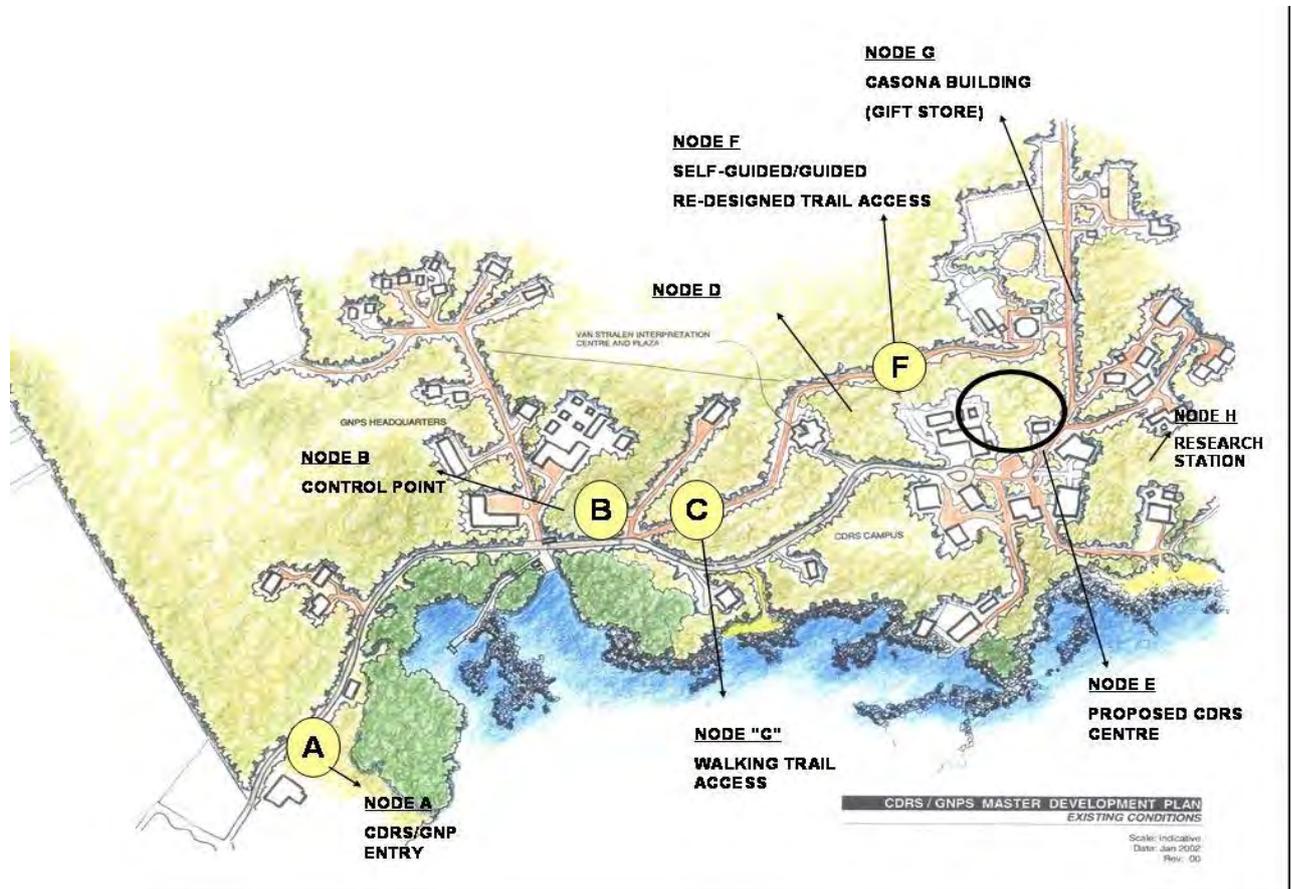
9. Charles Darwin Research Station Welcome Center

The conclusion of the visitor trail ends at the existing vehicle roundabout adjacent to this new building. This offers access to comfort facilities, the gift shop and book store. The gift shop currently supports local community programs and income should grow significantly with the shop here rather than where currently located at the mid-point of the visitor trail. Book store income will also be used for community programs.

Positive visitor experience will be reinforced through direct feedback from visitors, evaluations, surveys, and it is expected that there will be opportunities to make on-site donations to support CDF's mission. With the intended ban on unauthorized / public vehicular traffic here, this entire area will become more pedestrian-friendly with rest areas and new landscaping.

Appendix 2

Draft Site Map of Complex and Key Facilities



NOTES

Node D is Van Straelen / "The World of Galapagos"

Node G indicates the Casona as the gift shop. This is now the Tortoise and Iguana Rearing Demonstration Center will now be

Node I, Native Gardens / Nursery, is not yet represented.