

A photograph of a forest path with trees and flowering bushes. The path is a dirt trail winding through a lush green forest. On either side of the path are several tall, slender trees with green foliage. In the foreground, there are out-of-focus bushes with bright orange and red flowers. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

2023–2025 Strategic Plan

COASTAL MAINE
BOTANICAL
GARDENS 



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ASPIRATIONS

We aspire:

- To have botanical gardens that are renowned for their inspiration, uniqueness, expert design, and maintenance.
- To be a financially sustainable organization, open year-round, with an endowment that supports our operations as well as our aspirations.
- To provide joyful, welcoming, and accessible experiences that deepen all people's connection to both the natural world and CMBG as well as inspire action on climate change and biodiversity loss.
- To demonstrate and teach excellence in sustainable horticulture and conserve plant biodiversity, while featuring and promoting plant materials of high ecological function.
- To identify and eliminate barriers that, historically, have prevented the full participation of communities most impacted by inequity.
- To be a diverse and inclusive workplace where all people are valued, celebrated for their authenticity, fairly compensated, and enjoy coming to work.
- To be a collaborative partner in community initiatives, modeling inclusion and equity in our relationships and organizational systems.
- To have campus operations that give back more to the environment than we consume.



WHO WE SERVE

Gardens, Plants, and Planet

Our objectives:

- Cultivate inspirational gardens using sustainable practices and exemplary collections stewardship.
- Demonstrate and promote thriving, biodiverse gardens and natural landscapes.
- Protect and advocate for plant biodiversity.
- Inspire guests to take action on climate change.

Guests, Participants, and Supporters

Our objectives:

- Create equitable and accessible ways for people to engage with us where they feel welcome, safe, and able to connect with nature.
- Provide inspiring and educational experiences for all of our audiences.
- Foster long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with our members and supporters.



WHO WE SERVE

Community and Collaborators

Our objectives:

- Engage with our institutional and community partners and vendors to advance our collective impact, paying particular attention to how we can include communities affected by inequity.
- Foster a positive relationship with our local community and make decisions with shared goals in mind.

Staff, Board, and Volunteers

Our objective:

- Attract, engage, develop, and retain a diverse and skilled staff, board, and volunteer teams utilizing each person's passion and expertise.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 1

IMPACT: Cultivate and Promote Inspiring Gardens

Our strategies:

- Engage a landscape architect and garden designer to work with us on implementing the campus plan and refreshing existing gardens.
- Develop a purpose statement and related design/interpretive objectives for each garden.
- Design an advanced, reliable, and efficient irrigation system.
- Replace, repair, and maintain animal exclusion systems.
- Design and develop the Horticulture and Plant Science Center. Assess an off-site location for propagation.
- Ensure design principles and maintenance standards; establish ongoing design refresh initiatives for maturing gardens.
- Value-score and develop collections to fulfill research and conservation objectives, focusing on natives of Maine and its three broader ecoregions.
- Expand and enrich interpretive technology to make it easier for guests to learn about gardens and plants.
- Establish expanded propagation function and grow more of our own plants.
- Align on ecological horticulture priorities across the three mission areas for consistency throughout education content, collections composition, and on-site garden practices.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 2

IMPACT: Advance Plant Science and Conservation

Our strategies:

- Identify species for research from climate-imperiled habitats or with poor dispersal ability, engage institutional partners.
- Select focus taxa and refine rating system for selecting and trialing cultivars.
- Increase communications about our plant science and conservation work.
- Research climate change impacts to plants, focusing on migration, threat assessment, and response.
- Protect at-risk species of the Acadian Plains and Hills, Northeastern Highlands, and Northeastern Coastal Zone ecoregions in situ; strengthen alliances with nonprofit and government partners and develop plant conservation plans with land stewards.
- Protect and raise awareness about at-risk or ecologically critical plants *ex situ* (away from their habitat) by sheltering and interpreting them in our gardens and seed bank.
- Expand representation of Maine's flora in the herbarium and design gap analysis and multi-year collection plan.
- Develop institutional partnerships and programs to facilitate student research at CMBG.
- Select and trial ecologically responsible, resilient plants adapted to a warming climate that support a diversity of wildlife.

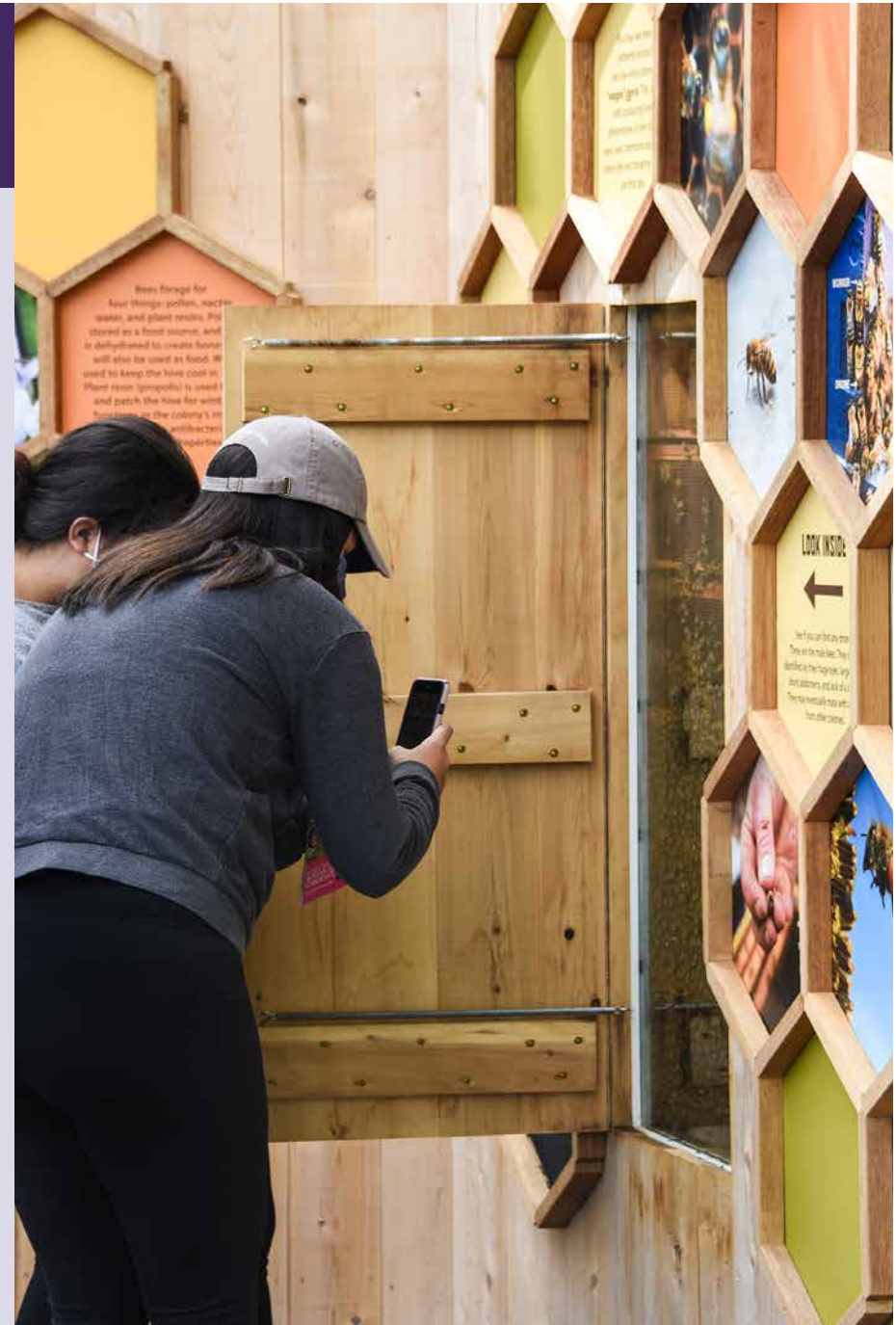


STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 3

IMPACT: Inspire Learning and Action

Our strategies:

- Build a staged, multi-year curriculum for adult education and advanced studies that balances innovation and tiers of learning that will attract new participants and engage existing ones.
- Diversify the voices, perspectives, and representation in formal and informal programming.
- Ensure that interpretive materials and guest interactions inspire action on climate change and conservation.
- Implement a variety of opportunities relevant to and meaningful for all learners, and develop and incorporate new dialogue-based approaches to engaging with guests in our live interpretation programs.
- Address access and transportation issues that limit participation in our programming.
- Design the educational program for the conservatory and expand year-round opportunities.

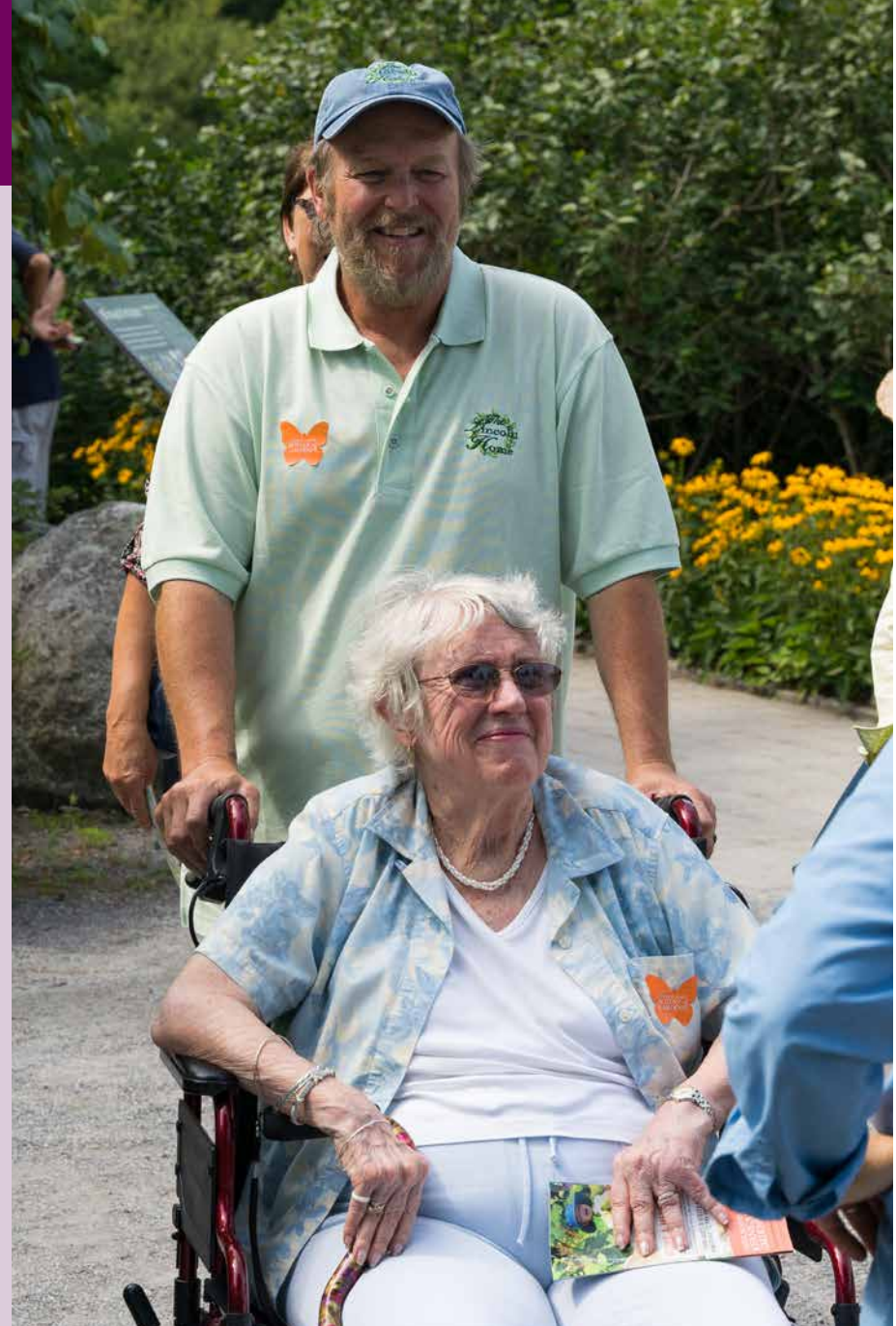


STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 4

BELONGING: Provide an Excellent Guest Experience

Our strategies:

- Provide training and tools to integrate our inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) values and create spaces of inclusion for all guests.
- Conduct a physical accessibility audit and develop plan to address priority issues.
- Continue to diversify and expand the representation of BIPOC authors, artists, and makers in Gardenshop.
- Complete and launch Culinary Center and integrate the Gardens experience, our values and purpose, into culinary and retail settings.
- Create cohesive internal and external marketing plan and brand.
- Bring all the marketing channels (social, website, advertising, email, print) up to the same standards and caliber.
- Implement a communication plan that integrates educational and conservation messages and establishes our expertise as a resource for all mission-related topics.
- Invest in technology ensuring an excellent and easy guest experience.
- Develop systems for staff to update their knowledge and understanding of CMBG in service to our guests and constituents.
- Investigate biennial event(s) or experiential exhibits that attract new and returning guests.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 5

BELONGING: Deepen Community Impact and Collaboration

Our strategies:

- Promote Gardens for All to increase participation.
- Build and seek year-round local collaborations that support the community.
- Support Wabanaki organizations and causes; explore opportunities for partnership, allyship, and solidarity.
- Establish diverse partnerships to help bring underrepresented communities to the Gardens.
- Actively work to engage new voices and perspectives; explore new ways to shape our initiatives and programs to be relevant and inclusive for these audiences.
- Strengthen and develop collaborative partnerships with nonprofits, government agencies, and educational institutions.
- Advise and engage in climate action and conservation task forces and councils.
- Create opportunities for local youth to explore career pathways through opportunities at the Gardens.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 6

SUSTAINABILITY: Organizational Sustainability

Our strategies:

- Fully integrate Community Agreements into day-to-day work.
- Establish and implement an asset management plan (including collections).
- Finish the current capital campaign and implement campus plan (Culinary Center renovation, Horticulture and Plant Science Center, Conservatory, Education Campus).
- Work toward sustainable year-round visitation that supports our operating expenses.
- Develop revenue streams, budgets, and financial practices that ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- Ensure right size staff to achieve our goals; provide the resources they need to work effectively.
- Increase diversity of staff, board, and volunteers.
- Develop contingency plans for potential natural disasters and crises.
- Develop recognition programs for staff, board, and volunteers.
- Ensure policies, practices, and benefits are inclusive, equitable, and support workplace culture; create structures for ongoing professional development; work toward being employer of choice for staff; and implement new software that supports staff and organizational efficiency.

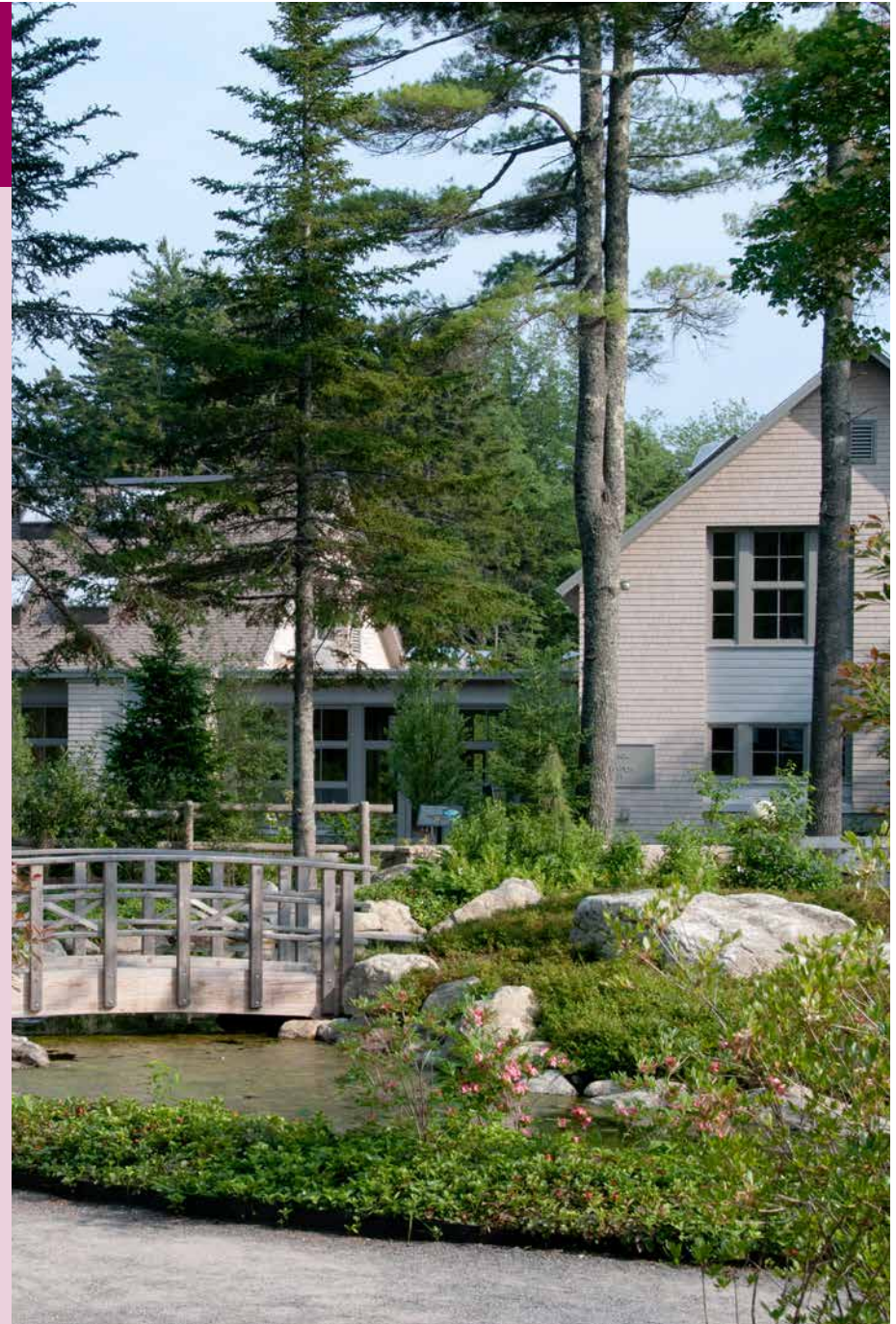


STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 7

SUSTAINABILITY: Environmentally Sustainable Campus and Buildings

Our strategies:

- Implement single-stream recycling.
- By 2025, begin implementing a plan for a net-zero campus (i.e., create as much power as we use) by 2035.
- Implement campus-wide energy monitoring.
- Work with town, water, and sewer district leaders to assess potential for year-round city water/sewer.
- Build full-scale compost system for food and horticultural waste.
- Assess and minimize environmental impacts of exhibits and special events.





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