

BILL NO. S-25-12-15

SPECIAL ORDINANCE NO. S-\_\_\_\_\_

**AN ORDINANCE** approving the awarding of ITB #2025078 - SERVICE AGREEMENT - CONSERVATORY EXPORATION AND TERRACE GARDEN DESIGN - (\$250,000.00) between MERRITT CHASE and the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, for the PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, by and through its Board of Park Commissioners.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE, INDIANA;**

**SECTION 1.** That ITB #2025078 - SERVICE AGREEMENT - CONSERVATORY EXPORATION AND TERRACE GARDEN DESIGN - between MERRITT CHASE and the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, for the PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, by and through its Board of Park Commissioners, respectfully for:

DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE BOTANICAL  
CONSERVATORY EXPLORATION AND TERRACE  
GARDENS;

involving a total cost of TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS - (\$250,000.00) all as more particularly set forth in said ITB #2025078 - SERVICE AGREEMENT - CONSERVATORY EXPORATION AND TERRACE GARDEN DESIGN - which is on file in the Office of the City Clerk, and is by reference incorporated herein, made a part hereof, and is hereby in all things ratified, confirmed and approved.

**SECTION 2.** That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and any and all necessary approval by the Mayor.

Council Member

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

Malak Heiny, City Attorney

## Score Tabulation

### Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Garden Design

Project #2025078 Quest#9873460

10/2/25

#### Proposal Scores

Merritt Chase	92	interview
Hoerr Schaudt	92	interview
Studio Outside	90	interview
MKSK	88	interview
REA	85	
Land Collective	84	
JPR	78	
Kimley Horn	78	
Confluence	76	
RATIO	75	
V3 Companies	75	
Anderson Bohlander	73	
Context Design	68	
SWA	68	
Troyer Group	65	



SERVICE AGREEMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLIER NAME <b>Merritt Chase</b>		CITY DEPARTMENT/CONTACT NAME <b>Parks and Recreation/ Stacy Haviland</b>	
STREET ADDRESS <b>825 Massachusetts Avenue</b>		STREET ADDRESS <b>705 East State Boulevard</b>	
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE <b>Indianapolis, IN 46204</b>		CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE <b>Fort Wayne, IN 46805</b>	
ATTENTION <b>Chris Merritt</b>		INVOICE ADDRESS <b>705 East State Boulevard</b>	
TELEPHONE <b>317-319-2460</b>	<b>chris@merrittchase.com</b>	CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE <b>Fort Wayne, IN 46805</b>	

**Service Description****Rates**

Design services for the Botanical Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Gardens as set forth in the Proposal dated 10-02-2025

\$250,000

Estimated Completion Date: July 2026

The following is made part of this agreement:  
 REBID RFP  
 Proposal dated 10-02-2025  
 Supplemental Scope of Work

This Agreement is entered into between Supplier and the City. The Additional Terms and Conditions below hereof are part of this Agreement. Capitalized terms on this page are used as defined terms when the context so requires. If City seeks to extend the Contract, City must provide prior notice in writing to Supplier and Supplier must agree in writing.

SUPPLIER REPRESENTS THAT ANY PERSON OR ENTITY CONTRACTED OR PERMITTED BY SUPPLIER TO PERFORM AND DELIVER THE SERVICES WHO IS NOT AN EMPLOYEE OF SUPPLIER SHALL BE REQUIRED BY SUPPLIER TO COMPLY WITH THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS ON THE REVERSE SIDE HEREOF.

\*SUPPLIER, OR ANY PERSON OR ENTITY CONTRACTED OR PERMITTED BY SUPPLIER TO PERFORM AND DELIVER THE SERVICES THAT DOES NOT CARRY WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE MUST SUBMIT A VALID CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE APPROVED BY THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BOARD OF INDIANA.

**SUPPLIER:**

By (Signature):

Printed Name:

Chris Merritt, PLA, ASLA, Founding Principal

Date:

12/03/2025

**Board of Park Commissioners**

By (Signature):

Printed Name:

Steve McDawie

Date:

12/4/2025

**ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- SERVICES.** Supplier agrees to perform the Services beginning on the Begin Date and continuing until the Services are completed. Supplier shall perform its services consistent with the professional skill and care ordinarily provided by architects practicing in the same or similar locality under the same or similar circumstances (the "Standard of Care"). Supplier represents that the Services will be completed on or before the End Date subject to delays outside of Supplier's reasonable control. **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.** Supplier represents that all Services shall conform to the Service Description, be of professional quality in accordance with the Standard of Care. The City shall provide Supplier with such

information and services as are required for Supplier to reasonably perform its Services and Supplier shall be entitled to rely on the accuracy and completeness of such information and services.

- INVOICES.** Supplier shall invoice the City for Services performed according to the Rates, Billing Interval, and Invoice Address. Invoices shall be rendered in triplicate and shall itemize the Services performed, the Service Address, and the corresponding rates and taxes, if any. Payment shall be due within thirty (30) days after the invoice date or the date of completion of the invoiced Services, whichever occurs later, provided that Supplier shall, within thirty (30) days of completion of the Services, provide



a final lien waiver to the City as proof satisfactory to the City of full payment for all labor, materials, supplies, machinery, and equipment furnished for or used in performance of this Agreement. Payment of invoices shall not constitute acceptance of the Services, and invoices shall be subject to adjustment for defects in quality or any other failure of Supplier to meet the requirements of this Agreement. The City may at any time set off any amount owed by the City to supplier against any amount owed by Supplier or any of its affiliated companies to the City.

3. **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP.** The relationship between City and Supplier is and shall at all times remain as independent contractors. Persons provided by Supplier to perform and deliver the Services shall be Supplier's employees under the sole and exclusive direction and control of Supplier and shall not be considered employees of City for any purpose. Supplier shall be responsible for compliance by Supplier's employees and any other person or entity contracted or permitted by Supplier to perform and deliver the Services, with all laws, rules and regulations applicable to the performance and delivery of the Services hereunder, including but not limited to employment, labor, wage and hour, health and safety, and working conditions. Supplier shall be responsible for the payment of all federal, state and local taxes and charges of any type or nature assessed with respect to Supplier's employees and any other persons or entities contracted or permitted by Supplier to provide and deliver the Services, including Social Security, unemployment, Workmen's Compensation, disability insurance and federal and state withholding. Supplier shall be responsible for providing such reasonable accommodations which may be required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. in order that any person with disabilities employed, contracted or permitted by Supplier to provide the Services to be able to perform the essential functions of such person's job-related duties. Supplier agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless City, to the extent permitted by law, from and against any loss, cost, claim, liability, damage or expense (including attorneys' fees) that may be asserted against or incurred by City as a result of Supplier's failure to comply with the covenants and obligations of this paragraph.

4. **INDEMNITY.** Supplier forever releases, discharges, acquits and agrees to, indemnify and hold harmless City, its officers, directors, employees, representatives, agents, departments and divisions, to the extent permitted by law, from and against all damages, liabilities, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees), judgments, and settlements charged to or imposed upon City to the extent arising from or associated with the negligent performance and delivery of the Services by Supplier, the employees of Supplier or any person or entity contracted or permitted by Supplier to provide and deliver the Services, which is caused directly by the negligent or intentional act or omission of Supplier, any employee of Supplier or any person or entity contracted or permitted by Supplier to perform and deliver the Services, including, without limitation, damages for personal injury, death or loss of or damage to property. City may elect to participate in the defense of any lawsuit, claim or demand in which City is a named party or in which City may have an interest by employing attorneys selected by City at City's expense without waiving Supplier's indemnity and hold harmless obligations to City contained herein. Supplier shall not settle or compromise any claim, suit or action or consent to entry or a judgment in an action where the City is named without the prior written consent of City and without the unconditional release of City from liability by each claimant or plaintiff. The indemnification covenants contained herein shall survive the completion of the performance and delivery of the Services.

5. **LIMITATION OF LIABILITY.** Supplier's liability hereunder for any loss, cost, claim liability, damage or expense (including attorneys' fees) arising out of any negligent or intentional act or omission of the performance of the obligations hereunder by Supplier, Supplier's employees or any person or entity contracted or permitted by Supplier to perform any obligation under this Agreement shall be limited to the amount of insurance coverage required by this Agreement. Absent grossly negligent or willful misconduct by Supplier, Supplier's employees or any person or entity contracted or permitted by Supplier to perform the obligations under this Agreement, Supplier shall not be liable for any indirect, incidental, special, consequential or punitive damages of any kind whatsoever. If Supplier performs Construction Administration Services, it shall have no responsibility or liability for the means, methods, sequences or safety procedures of the Contractor, all such liability belonging to the Contractor.

6. **INSURANCE.** Supplier shall maintain in full force and effect during the performance and delivery of the Services, and shall require any person or entity contracted or permitted by Supplier to perform and deliver the Services, the following insurance coverage:

(a) General Liability	\$1,000,000 minimum per occurrence/ \$2,000,000 aggregate
Personal & Advertising Liability	\$1,000,000 any one person or organization
Products/Completed Operations Liability	\$2,000,000 aggregate
(b) Automobile Liability, including Hired and Non-Owned Auto	\$1,000,000 minimum per occurrence
(c) Worker's Compensation*	
Bodily Injury by Accident	\$500,000 each accident
Bodily Injury by Disease	\$500,000 policy limit
Bodily Injury by Disease	\$500,000 each employee

\*SUPPLIER, AND ANY PERSON OR ENTITY CONTRACTED OR PERMITTED BY SUPPLIER TO PERFORM AND DELIVER THE SERVICES WHO DOES NOT CARRY WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE MUST SUBMIT A VALID CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE APPROVED BY THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BOARD OF INDIANA.

The Certificate of Insurance must show the City of Fort Wayne, its Departments and Divisions, as an Additional Insured and a Certificate Holder, and provide 30 days' notification of cancellation, modification or non-renewal.

All Certificates of Insurance should be sent to the following address:

City of Fort Wayne Purchasing Department  
200 East Berry Street, Suite 490  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

7. **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.** Supplier will provide to the City before performing any Services, a statement describing any Hazardous Materials intended and necessary for use in performing the Services. "Hazardous Materials" means any item which may be classified under federal, state, or local law, as hazardous or toxic. Supplier must comply with all federal, state, or local law in the use, transportation, and disposal of such Hazardous Materials. Supplier shall not be responsible or liable for any hazardous materials not used by Supplier in performing the Services.

8. **PROGRESS REPORTS.** The Supplier shall submit progress reports to the City upon request. The report shall serve the purpose of assuring the City that work is progressing in line with the schedule, and that completion can be reasonably assured on the scheduled date. This contract shall be deemed to be substantially performed only when fully performed according to its terms and conditions and any modification thereof.

9. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** Supplier certifies and warrants that neither it nor any of its directors, officers, agents, representatives, board members, or employees which will participate in any way in the performance of the Supplier's obligations hereunder has or will have any conflict of interest, direct or indirect, with the City of Fort Wayne or any of its departments, divisions, agencies, officers, directors, board members, or agents.

10. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA, PROPERTY RIGHTS IN PRODUCTS, AND COPYRIGHT PROHIBITION.** Supplier further agrees that all information, data findings, recommendations, proposals, etc. by whatever name described and by whatever form therein secured, developed, written or produced by the Supplier in furtherance of this contract ("Supplier Documents")—shall be the property of the Supplier and Supplier shall retain all rights thereto, including the copyright. The Supplier shall grant to the City a royalty-free license to use the Supplier Documents solely for purposes of constructing, using, maintaining, altering and adding to the Project provided that the City complies with its obligations hereunder, including timely payment. If the City uses or modifies the Supplier Documents without the participation of the Supplier, the City agrees to release and hold harmless the Supplier and its consultants from all claims, liabilities and damages arising out of such use or modification.

11. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF CITY INFORMATION.** Supplier understands and agrees that data, materials, and information disclosed to Supplier may contain confidential and protected data. Therefore, the Supplier promises and assures that data, material, and information gathered, based upon or disclosed to the Supplier for the purpose of this contract, will not be disclosed to others or discussed with other parties without the prior written consent of the City unless required by law or a governmental order.

12. **EMPLOYER CERTIFICATION.** In accordance with I.C. §22-5-1-7, Supplier understands and agrees to enroll and verify work eligibility status of all newly hired employees of the contractor through E-Verify program or any other system of legal residence verification as approved by the United States Department of Homeland Security or the department of homeland security. Supplier further understands that they are not required to verify work eligibility status of newly hired employees of the Supplier through the E-Verify program if the E-Verify program no longer exists. Supplier certifies that they do not knowingly employ any unauthorized aliens.

13. **COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS.** Supplier represents that the Services shall be in conformity with all applicable local, state and federal laws including, but not limited to, the standards promulgated by the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Executive Order 11246, as amended, relative to Equal Employment Opportunity and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 pertaining to equal opportunity, Section 503 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American with Disabilities Act, Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 and all applicable immigration laws and regulations including the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act et. seq. Supplier agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City from and against any loss, cost, claim, liability, damage, or expense (including attorney's fees) that may be sustained because of Supplier's breach of such representation.

14. **DEFAULT.** In the event that (a) Supplier breaches any representation contained herein; (b) Supplier fails to provide the insurance certificate required herein; (c) Supplier or Supplier's insurance carrier fails to indemnify, or hold harmless the City as required herein; (d) Supplier's performance of the Services materially violates applicable law; (e) Supplier admits insolvency, makes an assignment for the benefit of creditors, or has a trustee appointed to take over all or a substantial part of its assets; or (f) Supplier fails to perform or comply with any other provision of this Agreement, such failure, breach, or violation shall constitute a default under this Agreement.

15. **TERMINATION.** In the event of default by Supplier under this Agreement, the City reserves the right without liability, in addition to its other rights and remedies, to terminate this Agreement by notice to Supplier as to the portion of the Services not yet rendered and to purchase substitute services at Supplier's expense. Supplier may terminate this Agreement upon fourteen days written notice to the City in the event that the City is in default of its payment obligations under this Agreement.

16. **WAIVER.** No action or inaction by the City shall constitute a waiver of any right or remedy.

17. **CANCELLATION.** City may at any time cancel this Agreement in whole or in part for its sole convenience upon written notice to Supplier, and Supplier shall stop performing the Services on the date specified in such notice. The City shall have no liability as a result of such cancellation, except that the City will pay Supplier the Rates for Services completed in accordance with this Agreement as of the date of notification of termination, and the actual incurred cost to Supplier for Services in progress. These payments shall not exceed the Aggregate Price.

18. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable to the other or responsible for nonperformance of any of the terms of this Agreement due to unforeseeable causes beyond the reasonable control and without the fault or negligence of such party, including, but not restricted to acts of God or the public enemy, acts of government, fire, floods, epidemics, quarantine restrictions, strikes, freight embargoes, or unusually severe weather.

19. **NOTICES.** All notices required or permitted to be made or given hereunder by one party to the other party shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been given when hand delivered, or on the date stated on the receipt if deposited in the United States mail in certified form, postage prepaid with return receipt requested, and addressed to such other party at its Notice Address or at such other address as may be specified by such other party by written notice sent or delivered in accordance herewith.

20. **ASSIGNMENT.** Any assignment, in whole or in part, of Supplier's rights or obligation under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the City shall be void. Supplier shall not use subcontractors to perform any part of the Services without the prior written consent of the City.

21. **GOVERNING LAW, PREFERRED VENUE.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana. The parties hereto agree that any action, proceeding, claim or dispute arising hereunder or relating hereto shall be brought and enforced in a court of applicable jurisdiction located in Allen County, Indiana and irrevocably submit to such jurisdiction and venue, which jurisdiction and venue shall be exclusive and waive any objection to such exclusive jurisdiction and venue or that such courts represent an inconvenient forum.

22. **ACCESS TO RECORDS.** The Supplier shall maintain all books, documents, papers, accounting records, and other evidence pertaining to the reimbursable costs incurred and Services performed on an hourly basis. They shall make such materials available at their respective offices at all reasonable times during the contract period and for three (3) years from the date of final payment under the contract for inspection by the City or by any other authorized representative of city government. Copies thereof shall be furnished at no cost to the City if requested.

23. **NONDISCRIMINATION.** Pursuant to IC 22-9-1-10, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title VI, Supplier and its subcontractors shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment in the performance of this contract. The Supplier shall not discriminate with respect to hire, tenure, terms, conditions or privileges of employment or any matter directly or indirectly related to employment, because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry. Breach of this covenant may be regarded as a material breach of contract. Acceptance of this contract also signifies compliance with applicable Federal laws, regulations, and executive orders prohibiting discrimination in the provision of services based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability or status as a veteran.

24. **MISCELLANEOUS.** If any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall not be affected. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the state of Indiana and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts therein. This Agreement embodies the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior agreements and understanding, whether written or oral, and all

contemporaneous oral agreements and understandings relating to the subject matter hereof. No agreement hereafter made shall be effective to modify or discharge this Agreement, in whole or in part, unless such agreement is in writing and signed by the party against whom enforcement of the modification or discharge is sought. The paragraph headings are for convenience only and are not intended to affect the interpretation of the provisions hereof. This agreement shall be binding on the parties hereto and their respective personal and legal representatives, successors and assigns.





**Merritt Chase**  
Landscape  
Architecture

City of Fort Wayne  
Parks and Recreation Department

Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory  
**Exploration and Terrace  
Gardens Design**

REBID Request for Proposal Submission  
October 02, 2025

**Merritt Chase**  
**Lake Flato**  
**Engineering Resources**

# Merritt Chase

Landscape  
Architecture

To: City of Fort Wayne  
Parks and Recreation Department  
Stacy Haviland, PLA, ASLA  
Superintendent of Park Planning, Development & Botanical Conservatory  
705 East State Blvd.  
Fort Wayne, IN 46805

October 02, 2025

Re: **Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory: Exploration & Terrace Gardens Design REBID**

Dear Stacy and the Selection Committee,

It is with great enthusiasm that we submit a response for the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Gardens Design. If selected, we will work with the City's team and stakeholders through a thoughtful and engaging design process to develop a transformative project for the Conservatory. The process will result in a collective vision that is sensitive to the existing facility, programs, and plant collection, the urban context and connections to the city, while being visionary for the future. The Conservatory has significant untapped potential and this project represents an extraordinary opportunity to bring new experiences, spaces, programs, and horticulture to the Fort Wayne community. We think it can be a national precedent for excellence.

We have a particular passion for public gardens. We approach many of our public green space projects with a garden design sensibility. These places are remarkable public assets and provide landscapes for community learning, play, and delight, and the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory is right in the heart of downtown Fort Wayne! We are inspired by your vision for new interior spaces for learning and events, and new gardens for horticultural diversity and play – this will breathe new life into the Conservatory and downtown. We would be thrilled to take on this project with you and would commit fully to help to shape the Conservatory's future – our team has the capacity to work on this project over the next 4-6 months.

To meet the unique needs of this project, we have convened a team tailored to your interest of working with world-class national design leaders paired with local experts. Our team is led by Indianapolis-based landscape architect Chris Merritt of Merritt Chase (WBE). We have deep experience both locally and nationally working alongside municipal and institutional clients who manage and maintain parks, public spaces, and gardens. We will work alongside Lake Flato as a design partner, thought leader, and expert in designing buildings for public gardens, nature centers, parks, education facilities and event venues across the country. We could not be more excited at the prospect of working with the architects on the Lake Flato team – we think they are the perfect fit for this project. We will also be working with Engineering Resources for Civil Engineering. Our current work with ERI on the Treeline District park has led to a great working relationship and they will guide our team for local implementation, utility coordination, and permitting and approvals.

Our perspective on designing complex urban public space and garden projects is informed by successful experience leading the planning and design of multiple master plans and built projects. We love these projects and the enduring places they create. As a team, we provide the following proposal as a representation of our design, communication, and technical expertise.

We are excited to be considered for this important legacy project.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Merritt, PLA, ASLA  
Founding Principal



Nina Chase, PLA, ASLA  
Founding Principal



# Merritt Chase

Landscape  
Architecture

Merritt Chase is a landscape architecture firm dedicated to creating public landscapes that connect people, culture, and ecology across Middle America.

Merritt Chase is a full-service landscape architecture firm based in Indianapolis and Pittsburgh.

We design public parks, gardens, plazas, waterfronts, and cultural districts, transforming underutilized spaces into places that people love. We believe that thoughtfully designed public spaces strengthen communities and improve our lives.

Our design process is deeply rooted in research and community engagement. Through our projects, we seek to redefine contemporary Middle American urbanism by designing spaces that uncover histories, restore habitats, and reflect the social identity of communities.

## **We are committed to Middle America.**

We founded our practice with a mission to create excellent public spaces and landscapes for Middle America — a region that deserves great, forward-thinking design.

We may be biased, but we think Middle America is one of the most dynamic regions in the country for place-based design — its expansiveness provides space for innovation and experimentation, where strong ideas are met with the energy and drive to bring them to life.

We work across Middle America, applying our national experience as landscape architects with a deep understanding of our communities' values and vernacular landscapes — the ecology of rivers, forests, and prairies, and the materials of soil, limestone, steel, and brick.

## **We are a community-focused, relationship-driven practice.**

We believe that successful projects require more than great design; they demand authentic relationships founded on trust and collaboration. By being deeply embedded in the cities and communities we serve, we maintain lasting connections to the places we design. Our work spans long-term relationships from planning and engagement, construction, and programming and management. This holistic approach ensures that the public spaces we create are shaped by research, history, meaningful community input and stewardship.

Merritt Chase is a woman-owned business and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) certified.

Point of Contact:  
Chris Merritt, PLA, ASLA  
Merritt Chase LLC  
825 Massachusetts Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
chris@merrittchase.com  
317-319-2460

## Recent Recognition

2025 Architect's Newspaper Best of Practice Award | Midwest Landscape Architect

2025 Ohio ASLA Award of Excellence | Canal Basin Park

2025 Emerson Collective Local Impact Fellows | Monument Circle

2024 ULI Americas Awards for Excellence | Cleveland Foundation Headquarters

2024 Indianapolis Monumental Awards | Eskenazi Health, Monument Circle, The Stutz

**Merritt Chase is a team of eight landscape architects who believe that thoughtfully designed public spaces strengthen communities and improve our lives.**

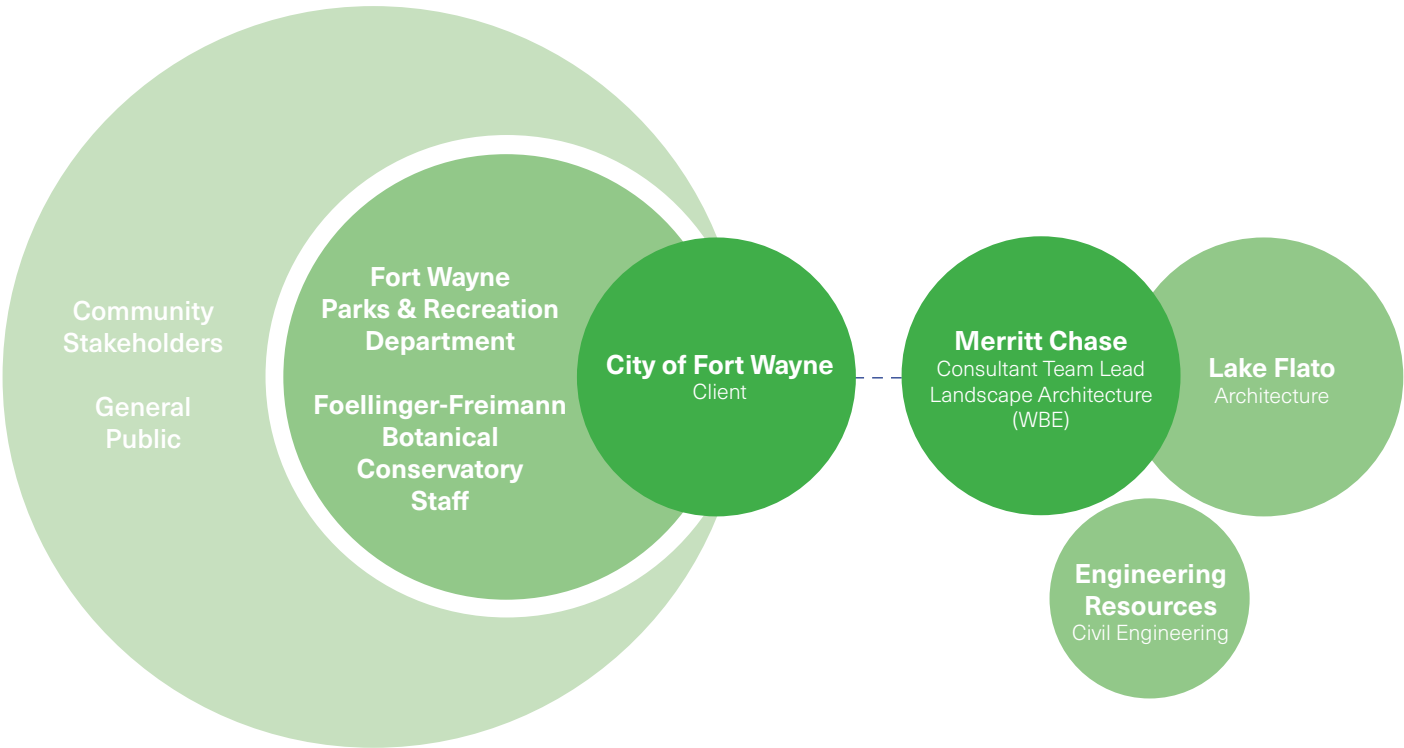


# Team Introduction

## Project Team

Led by Merritt Chase, we are an energetic design team with experience planning and designing award-winning public spaces both locally and nationally. Our team is led by landscape architects Chris Merritt (primary contact) and Nina Chase of Merritt Chase, a women-owned landscape architecture practice based in Indianapolis and Pittsburgh. Our portfolio includes diverse public realm projects with complex stakeholder groups transforming culturally significant landscapes. We are passionate about public gardens and bring a garden-making sensibility to many of our public space projects. We are currently working in Fort Wayne and continue to be impressed by the City’s investment in public green spaces. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to bring together a world-class design team with significant technical expertise to see this project through implementation.

We are excited to collaborate with Lake Flato who will lead the project architecture. They will be a key design collaborator for not only the building program but how the building interacts with the garden. Lake Flato has a national reputation and significant national experience working at this scale on public gardens. Their team is the perfect fit for this project. In addition, we are partnering with Lake Flato to bring in a skilled technical team to help realize the project. From our local experience, we will also be working with Engineering Resources based in Fort Wayne for Civil Engineering. ERI will oversee and help coordinate all project scope related to Civil items including stormwater management, utilities, and any traffic considerations. We will work with ERI to complete any necessary permitting and approvals process. ERI’s local knowledge of recent downtown, riverfront, and parks improvements will ensure the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory project is well thought out in its local context.





## Team Introduction



# LAKE FLATO

Since its founding in 1984, Lake Flato has designed buildings that respond to the culture and climate of each unique place. We believe in creating environments that enrich communities and nurture life. In collaboration with our clients, Lake Flato creates buildings that are tactile and modern, environmentally responsible, artful and crafted.

Lake|Flato employs an honest and artful approach to design that places the human experience and natural environment at the center of our process. Our portfolio of culturally significant and regionally appropriate botanical gardens, parks, learning centers and high performance community spaces demonstrates our commitment to creating engaging, enriching and vibrant destinations that reflect the unique culture and mission of each institution.

The firm's design evolves from an appreciation for pragmatic solutions to vernacular architecture, the honesty of modernism, and the context of our rich and varied landscape. By employing sustainable strategies in a wide variety of building types and scales, Lake Flato designs architecture that conserves energy and natural resources while creating high performance buildings.

Lake Flato has been honored with over 300 design awards, including the American Institute of Architects Firm of the Year Award in 2004 and 16 Top Ten Green Project Awards from the AIA Committee on the Environment. Twenty years after receiving the Firm of the Year Award, David Lake and

Ted Flato were honored with the 2024 Gold Medal Award, the AIA's highest honor, recognizing individuals whose work has had a lasting influence on the theory and practice of architecture. Lake Flato has also received the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture and was named one of the Ten Most Innovative Architecture Firms in the World by Fast Company. Lake Flato placed 1st in Architect Magazine's 2019 Top 50 — an annual ranking of the best U.S. firms. As architects, teachers, environmental stewards and community advocates, we strive to elevate the public's appreciation of architecture and foster the education of the next generation of architects.

**YEARS IN BUSINESS** 41

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES** 150

**NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL PROCUREMENT JOBS** 48

**OFFICE LOCATION COMPLETING WORK** San Antonio

**OFFICE ADDRESS** 311 3rd St, San Antonio, TX 78205

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER** Matt Wallace, Partner | 210.679.2346 | [mwallace@lakeflato.com](mailto:mwallace@lakeflato.com)

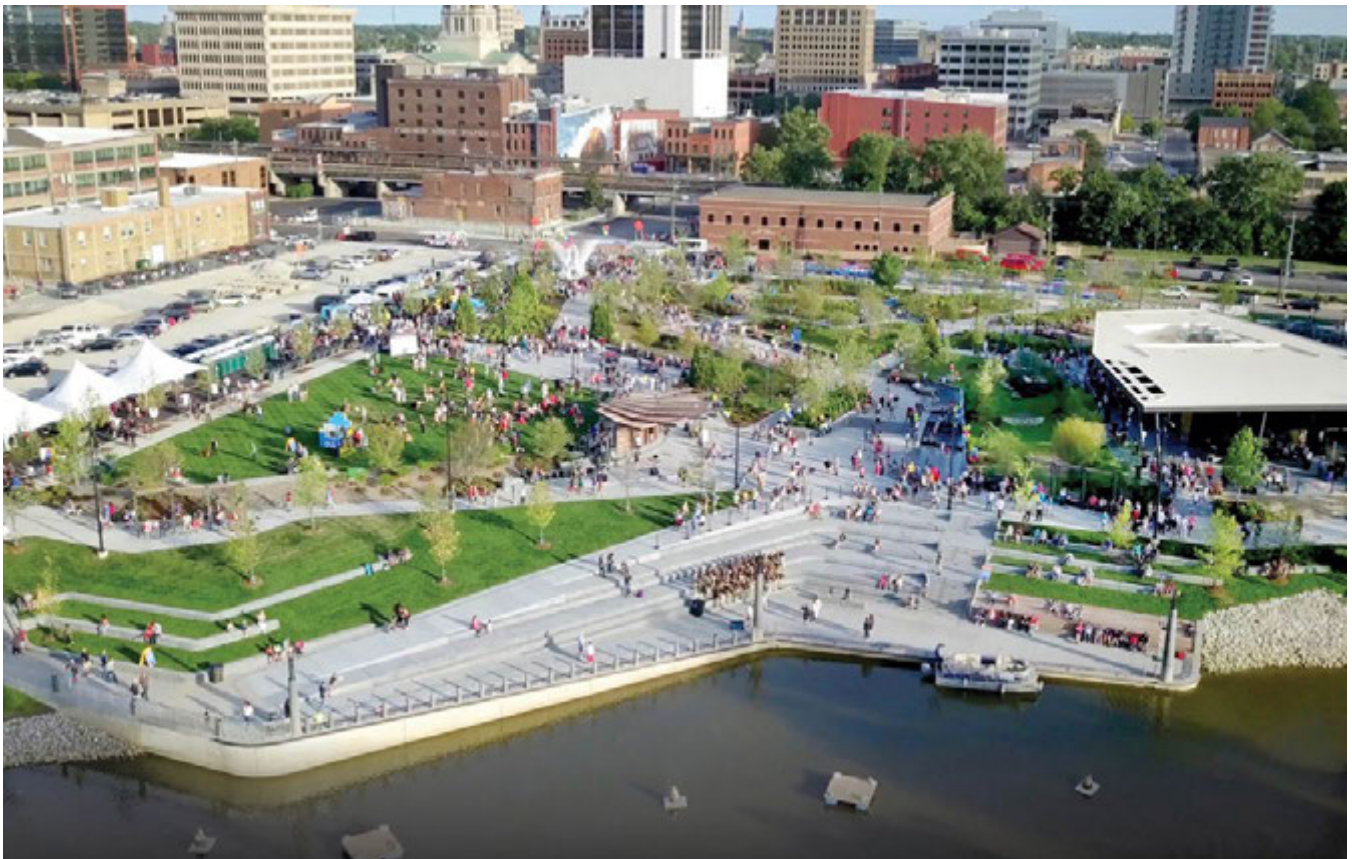


## Team Introduction

### Engineering Resources Inc

Civil Engineering | Fort Wayne, IN

Engineering Resources is a multi-disciplined engineering firm established in 1997. Since its inception, the company has maintained steady and consistent growth to a current staff of 58 employees. Our team of qualified professionals offers our clients many years of experience as corporate leaders, engineers, and designers. The certifications of our staff communicate our commitment to quality service: over twenty Registered Professional Engineers, Engineers in Training, Registered Landscape Architects, and certified for INDOT Construction Inspection. In addition to quality service, our clients appreciate the responsive staff at Engineering Resources. We understand that the client is the most important member of the team, and strive to provide a superior service of exceptional value that exceeds expectations. Headquartered in Fort Wayne, Indiana, we are honored to have been able to be the civil engineer of record of many transformational projects in northeast Indiana and we look forward to working on many more. ERI is currently working with Merritt Chase on the Treeline District.





A photograph of the interior of a modern building at the Naples Botanical Garden. The space is characterized by a large, dark wooden structure with horizontal slats that create a grid-like pattern. Through the slats, lush green plants and trees are visible. In the foreground, a wooden bench is partially obscured by dense foliage. In the background, a woman wearing a hat and two children are looking out towards the garden. The overall atmosphere is bright and natural.

# Relevant Experience

Naples Botanical Garden

© 2019 The Naples Botanical Garden





**Merritt Chase**  
Landscape  
Architecture



## **Dunham Tavern Museum and Gardens**

**Cleveland, OH**

Dunham Tavern Museum, LAND Studio, The Cleveland Foundation, MidTown Cleveland

*A museum master plan transforms a historic campus into an inclusive Midwest cultural destination.*



One of the oldest buildings in Cleveland, The Dunham Tavern Museum is an institution for urban history, education, nature, and community, located at the heart of the MidTown Civic District in Cleveland, OH. The Master Plan process engaged a diverse audience to acknowledge history and position the landscape as the opportunity to address racial and political division, expand the Museum's mission and programming, and preserve Dunham's historic character and identity. The resulting plan balances the Museum's role as a regional cultural destination while becoming a welcoming, inclusive, relevant neighborhood amenity.





**Merritt Chase**  
Landscape  
Architecture

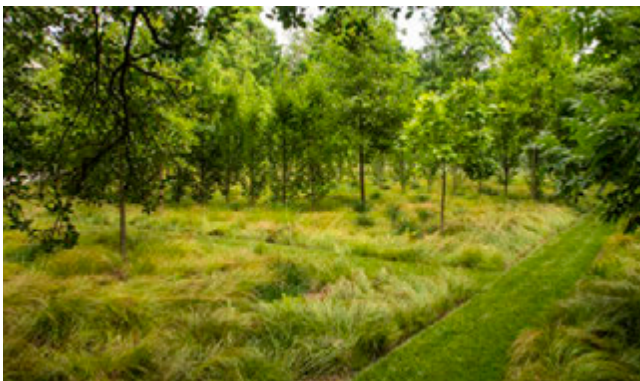


## White River Farm & Gardens

Indianapolis, IN  
Private

*Renewing a historic property with cultural sensitivity, contemporary design, and ecological focus.*

White River Farm is a beloved multi-generational family property and former farmstead along the White River in Indianapolis. The original landscape was designed by Jens Jensen in the 1920s. The late 19th-century 400-acre working farm was slowly developed into an estate neighborhood. Working with the current owner, the property's history has been documented and a proposed landscape framework plan has been developed. The landscape plans includes a meadow, ravines, pond, farm and orchards. Additionally, the plan integrates the existing collection of barns and cottages for a new creative artists residency program. The planning process has focused on preserving the property's historic character and honoring the legacy of the landscape while enhancing the environmental stewardship of the property.







**Merritt Chase**  
Landscape  
Architecture



## **The Park at 16 Tech**

**Indianapolis, IN**

16 Tech Community Corporation

*A connected and vibrant regional park celebrating cultural heritage, ecology, and innovation.*

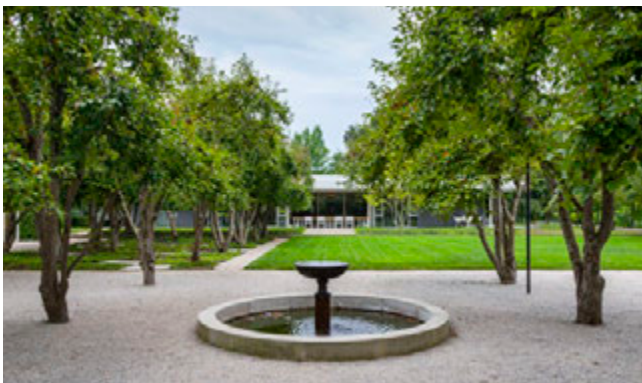
The 16 Tech central park is an inspiring community public space in the Riverside neighborhood of Indianapolis. At the heart of 16 Tech, Indianapolis's innovation district, the central park will become the social common ground that uncovers stories, amplifies existing neighborhood culture, and connects residents, visitors, and tenants. The design of the central park explores the significant and meaningful history of northwest downtown Indianapolis, including the legacies of social resilience and innovation along Indiana Avenue and in Riverside. The central park is a flexible and adaptable space where people can engage with nature, connect with history, and showcase local creativity and talent.







**Merritt Chase**  
Landscape  
Architecture

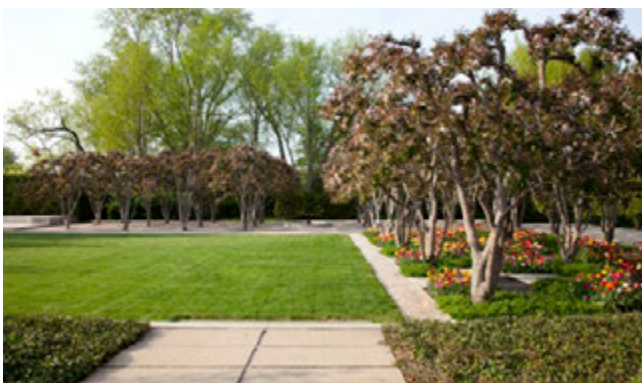


## **Miller House & Garden North Garden Restoration**

Columbus, IN  
Newfields

*A modern landmark garden restored to its original design intentions.*

The Miller House in Columbus is a design icon and significant example of modern design through architecture, art, and landscape. Commissioned by industrialist and philanthropist J. Irwin Miller and Xenia Simons Miller in 1953, the house showcases the work of leading 20th-century architect Eero Saarinen, designer Alexander Girard, and landscape architect Dan Kiley. The garden is one of Kiley's most notable and intact projects. The North Garden restoration renovates a tree orchard, decomposed granite grove, kitchen garden, and lawn that has suffered from alteration and aging materials.







## **Treeline District Park**

**Fort Wayne, IN**

**Browning, City of Fort Wayne**

*A signature public space connecting a riverfront, trails, downtown and a new mixed-use district.*

Fort Wayne, Indiana has been making significant progress connecting its riverfront with a network of trails and new park spaces. The Treeline District will bring a new park to downtown Fort Wayne immediately adjacent to Promenade Park, the Treetop Canopy Trail, and the new Esplanade. The Treeline District Park will create a garden-like setting with a meandering elevated walk that weaves the park together. A central plaza is framed by stone scrambles that connect densely planted hills. At the center of the park, a new landmark in Fort Wayne, the Treehouse, will attract visitors and residents alike as a destination to connect with neighbors and enjoy expansive views of downtown and the river.





Merritt Chase  
Landscape  
Architecture



## Canal Basin Park

Cleveland, OH

City of Cleveland, Canalway Partners

*A riverfront park that celebrates river ecology, industrial heritage, and connects to the future of downtown.*

Canal Basin Park is a 20-acre confluence of connected public green spaces and a significant historic site on the Cuyahoga River in downtown Cleveland. The public planning process for Canal Basin Park will create a design that aims to be visionary and implementable. The project will build upon past planning efforts and will focus on celebrating the park's unique industrial heritage, river ecology, and cultural history while creating an experience for all park users where everyone feels like they belong. The park is meant to connect to a broader context in the city along the river and trails, and transform the varied and disparate land uses into a unified and complementary park experience. The park planning will also focus on future amenities and programming, repurposing infrastructure and updating utilities, and sustaining future funding and operations for the park.







## Naples Botanical Garden Naples, FL

The Naples Botanical Garden Visitor Center incorporates extensive natural areas with developed gardens to create an engaging and varied visitor experience, exceptional venues for education and research, significant plant collections and a beautiful location for events.

The vision for the gardens sought to preserve 170-acres of natural resources from conversion to urban development space. Lake Flato designed and scaled the buildings to be a backdrop to the larger landscape, by breaking the program down into a series of smaller buildings and moving the circulation to the exterior so that the visitor is continually engaged with the gardens. Wooded pavilions crafted from local and durable sinker cypress entwine throughout lush gardens and plant collections to create an immersive and engaging experience for visitors and researchers as well as an enticing venue for events.

SIZE 14,000 sf conditioned | 16,000 sf unconditioned  
COST \$11.5M

TEAM PIC: B. Harris | PM: T. Florian

SUSTAINABILITY LEED Gold

RECOGNITION APGA Garden of the Year Award | National Building of America Award | San Antonio AIA Design Award | USGBC Florida Gulf Coast LEEDership Award | ASLA Florida Honor Design Award | Intelligent Use of Water Award



Pristine Habitat Preserved

90 acres

Potable Water Reduction for Irrigation

73%

Relevancy

Immersive dining centered around local, sustainable and seasonal food

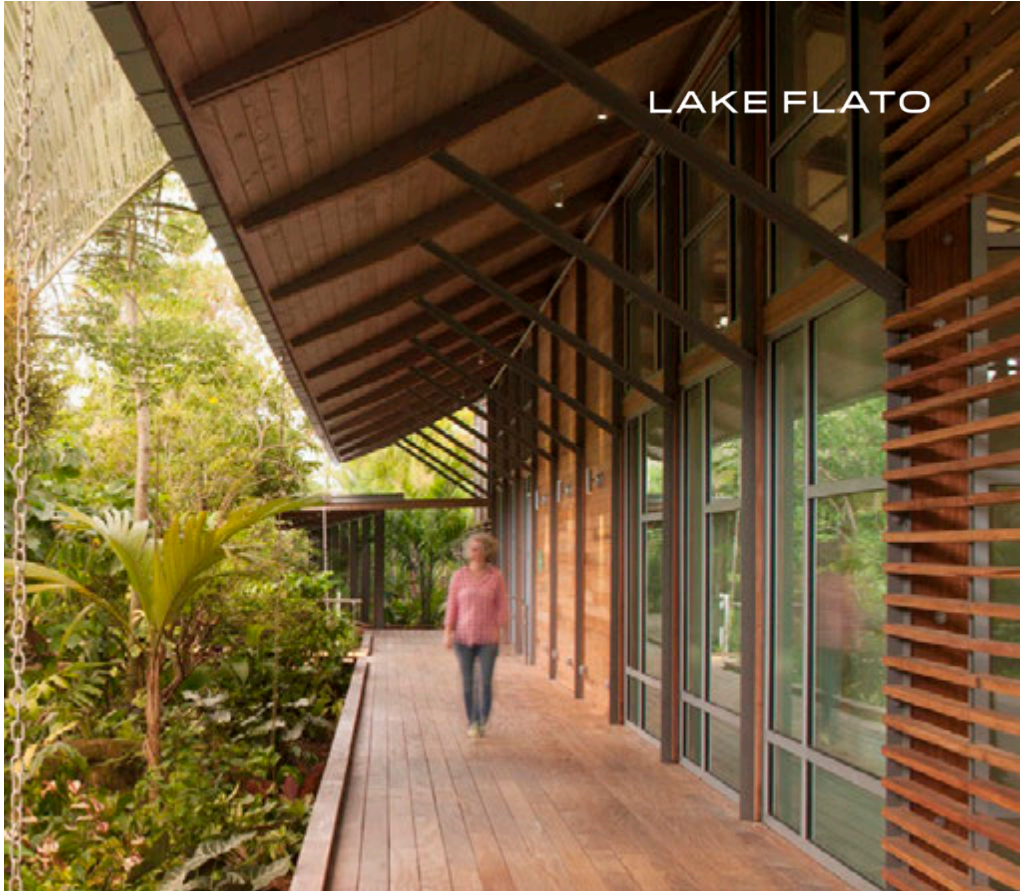
Unique pavilion buildings & gardens pay reverence to and partner with restored natural habitats

Food and Event venues that merge with landscape

Flexible indoor and outdoor dining

Carefully integrated and concealed large service area for dining, events and catering.

LAKE FLATO







## Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center San Antonio, TX

Surrounded by a thick woodland area of the 311-acre Phil Hardberger Park, the Urban Ecology Center is a recreational and educational amenity focused on retaining a rich and diverse array of ecosystems.

The Urban Ecology Center emphasizes the dynamic interaction between natural and urban systems, thereby educating and fostering the stewardship of the natural and cultural landscape. The complex consists of a series of pavilions housing programs such as offices, restrooms, and classrooms. These structures frame outdoor rooms of various scales that allow people to interact with the natural environment in contrasting ways, and demonstrate how buildings and people can develop a symbiotic relationship with the native landscape.

The revenue-generating spaces, the Gathering Hall and a Classroom can accommodate up to 250 auditorium style or 168 banquet style. Large sliding windows which open to the savanna and courtyard creating a seamless connection with nature.

SIZE 7,240 sf conditioned | 11,360 sf unconditioned  
COST \$6.3M

TEAM PIC: M. Wallace | SL: H. Holdridge

SUSTAINABILITY LEED Gold

RECOGNITION Texas Society of Architects Design Award |  
San Antonio Green Building Award | AIA San Antonio Merit  
Award



Energy Generated On-Site

13%

Non Potable Water for Irrigation

98%

Relevancy

Provides a natural sanctuary within a dense urban area

Serves as a community destination where a multitude of events and scales can be accommodated in a large multi-purpose space, classroom or outdoor courtyard

Incorporates diverse ecological zones within the building footprint to increase engagement with the landscape

Serves as a demonstration tool, illustrating best practices in stormwater management and conservation. Rain gardens and bioswales are integrated into the architectural design at all scales.







## Ryerson Woods Education Center Deerfield, IL

Nestled within the flatwoods along the Des Plaines River, the Ryerson Environmental Learning Center acts as a beacon of both ecological education and environmental stewardship for the residents of Lake County and the region at large. In addition to supporting educational programs in partnership with local schools and community organizations, the Net-Zero energy building serves as a trailhead and launching point into “the resource” of the surrounding forest preserve, which includes one of the only remaining quality flatwoods ecotones in Northern Illinois. The story of preservation of this fragile ecosystem is told by the building through active demonstration of water conservation, energy production and material resiliency.

Passive House strategies include super-insulated assemblies, continuous air barrier, thermally broken envelope, high performance glazing, optimized for passive conditioning, energy recovery ventilator and all electric systems. The facility's sustainable design supported the Lake County Forest Preserves in receiving the prestigious Illinois Association of Park District's Best Green Practices Award.

SIZE 3,739 sf

COST \$3.9M

TEAM PIC: M. Wallace | SL: H. Holdridge

SUSTAINABILITY PHIUS Zero 2021 Certified | Targeting Net Zero Energy | Bird Safe Strategies | Dark Sky

RECOGNITION Illinois Association of Park Districts' Best Green Practices Award



Energy Demand Offset by Passive Strategies

90%

Wastewater Treated On Site

100%

Relevancy

Net Zero with Roof-Mounted PV

Complies with ICECF Grant Program which requires public education about Net Zero

Real-time energy monitoring displayed in building showing daily, weekly, and annual energy use and production

Classrooms act as trailheads into forest

Creates a welcoming and inclusive environment and is fully accessible for all visitors

Easily operated and maintained; constructed with extremely durable and long-lasting materials







## Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District The Ditch Learning Center Stephenville, TX

The Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District was created to conserve and promote the health of the Trinity Aquifer. Monitoring the amount and purity of available groundwater resources is essential to support the communities now and in the future. The design creates a venue and landscape for educating visitors on the ecology, geology, and biology of the region while demonstrating best practices for aquifer health.

The meeting and classroom spaces leverage sliding barn doors along both sides for connection to the landscape and natural ventilation based on the given climatic conditions of any particular day. A large set of interior sliding doors act as a movable partition to the breezeway that can be an extension of the education space during large gatherings and establishes the building as an integral part of the landscape.

SIZE 200 sf conditioned | 2,500 sf unconditioned  
COST \$1.9M

TEAM PIC: T. Florian | SL: H. Holdridge  
SUSTAINABILITY Net Zero Energy | Natural (Passive)  
Ventilation | Rainwater Catchment for Irrigation | SITES  
Gold Certification



Restored Native Vegetation

100%

Education + Meeting Space

750 sf

#### Relevancy

Leverages adjacent stormwater drainage ditch that channels throughout the entire city, providing an open window into groundwater and conservation to inspire stewardship through experience.

Showcases green infrastructure, environmental education, and the restoration of the Cross-timber savanna and riparian habitat

Program includes flexible education/meeting spaces, a multi-functional breezeway, a protected porch overlooking the restored riparian habitat, offices with daylight and views, storage and restrooms. as a movable partition to the breezeway







## White River State Park Kahn Pavilion Indianapolis, IN

The White River State Park Kahn Pavilion transforms a former automotive GM factory into a dynamic public park, embracing the rich industrial heritage of Indiana while creating a space for future community use. The design of the park is informed by the constraints and opportunities presented by the existing structure, with the placement of key program elements thoughtfully integrated within the industrial framework.

The design tells the story of the site's transformation from a place of manufacturing to one of gathering, celebration, and community. A signature pavilion acts as a flexible, multipurpose space, seamlessly blending the indoors and outdoors to encourage a wide range of activities. The pavilion opens up to the surrounding park, creating an uninterrupted connection to nature while serving as a hub for social events and communal gatherings.

Kahn Pavilion is designed to be a beacon for community engagement, where the past and future of Indiana converge to foster connection, celebration, and a strong sense of place.

SIZE 15,750 sf  
COST \$14.5M

TEAM PIC: M. Wallace | SL: H. Holdridge  
SUSTAINABILITY Net Zero Energy | Natural (Passive)  
Ventilation | Rainwater Catchment for Irrigation | SITES  
Gold Certification









## Marine Education Center at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory Ocean Springs, MS

Envisioned as a living laboratory where visitors “come and do”, the Marine Education Center serves as an outreach and education facility where educators have an unparalleled opportunity to teach about the ecologically critical bayou and marsh wetlands of coastal Mississippi. The primary facility includes outdoor classrooms, laboratories, administration offices, assembly spaces, exhibition areas and a 200-foot long pedestrian suspension bridge.

Designed to be naturally resilient, the team sited the Center’s six new buildings tightly within the existing tree canopy, allowing the trees to serve as a natural wind buffer. Considering both acute natural disasters and durability, the design centered on how to use and maintain the land to serve as the first line of defense. The team assessed all building materials for their ability to withstand intense weather conditions and wear over time. Low-impact materials were carefully selected for the health and wellbeing of the building’s occupants and to avoid contaminating the ocean in the event of a natural disaster.

SIZE 29,700  
COST \$13.5M

TEAM PIC: B. Harris | PM: M. Wallace | SL: H. Holdridge

RECOGNITION AIA COTE Top Ten Award | AIA Honor Award for Architecture | America By Design: Architecture Season One Winner | Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award | Architizer A+ Jury Award for Architecture + Climate Change | Texas Society of Architects Design Award | AIA Gulf States Honor Award | AIA Mississippi Honor Award | USGBC Mississippi Chapter Sustainability Award



Energy Reduction over Average for Building Type

46%

Potable Water Used for Irrigation

0%

#### Relevancy

The Forested Bayhead ecosystem is protected from siltation and runoff through preservation of the tree canopy, root systems and ground cover. Re-establishment of native understory design helps restore resilient natural systems

Strategically designed buildings are designed to touch the ground lightly and capitalize on unique views, habitat types & teaching opportunities for expanded experiential programs

Utilizes shade canopy, breezy porches, outdoor classrooms and high performance systems to reduce energy impacts and connect people to the outdoors





## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE | BOTANICAL GARDENS

### Naples Botanical Garden NAPLES, FL

The new Visitor Center sits delicately upon a world class 160-acre botanical preserve and continues a legacy of preservation by partnering with the local ecosystem. Wooded pavilions crafted from local and durable sinker cypress entwine throughout lush gardens and plant collections to create an immersive experience for visitors as well as an enticing venue for events. LEED Gold

### Shangri La Nature Education Center ORANGE, TX

The combination of gardens and nature at Shangri La presents a serene oasis for retreat and renewal, as well as the opportunity to explore, discover and learn. This project preserves more than 250 acres of cypress/tupelo swamp and wooded uplands while serving as a facility for study and research. AIA COTE Top Ten Award

### Houston Arboretum & Nature Center

HOUSTON, TX

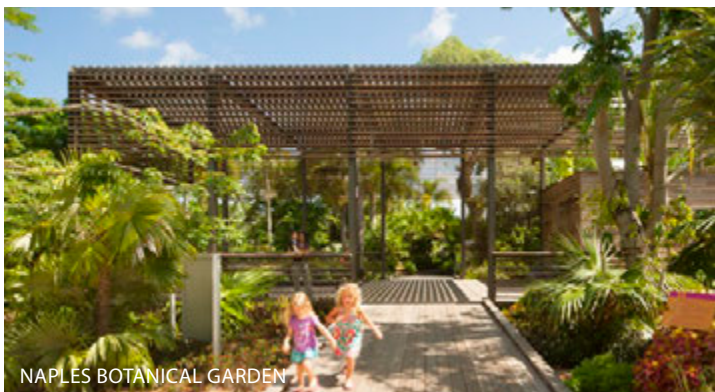
Recovering from the effects of a hurricane and drought within the last five years, the Houston Arboretum is in the process of restoring their site to its natural state. In addition to landscape restoration, three new buildings will occupy the site: a visitor center, education pavilion, and maintenance facility. The visitor center is designed for occupants to enter with a framed view of the prairie, move along a bar through the woodlands, and finally look out at the ravine.

### Dallas Arboretum DALLAS, TX

The massive limestone walls of Dallas Arboretum's Trammell Crow Visitor Education Pavilion create a boundary and transition zone between urban Dallas and the sprawling gardens beyond. Visitors arrive through a gap in the walls to the plaza courtyard, defined by the primary public spaces, including an orientation theater, lecture and banquet hall, meeting room, classrooms, shop and café. The stone walls of the buildings are punctuated by copper and glass pavilions. As the plants mature, the line between garden and buildings continues to blur.

### Santa Fe Botanical Garden SANTA FE, NM

The Santa Fe Botanical Garden is a world-class public garden and a cultural and education center that is a destination for visitors from around the world. The new Visitor/Education Center will provide a powerful first impression to visitors through its aesthetic design, showcase the Garden's mission of sustainability and devotion to education and the arts, and provide much-needed amenities to ensure a welcoming, hospitable place for visitors.





## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE | BOTANICAL GARDENS

### Hilltop Arboretum BATON ROUGE, LA

The Hilltop Arboretum, affiliated with Louisiana State University, is located at the convergence of three ecosystems indigenous to the Baton Rouge area of Louisiana: boggy wetlands, scrubby highlands, and open meadows. The building has been sited and designed to frame the narrow natural site, and preserve and highlight the existing ecosystems.



### Delaware Botanical Gardens DAGSBORO, DE

Sited on a 37-acre waterfront parcel in southeastern Sussex County, Delmarva's first botanical garden celebrates the coastal plain with a sustainable garden preserving the region's native landscapes.



### University of California Davis Arboretum DAVIS, CA

An engaging new visitor destination and learning center with indoor and outdoor learning spaces that will link the University campus to a public garden featuring architectural and horticultural exhibits that promote sustainable practices.



### Desert Botanical Garden Children & Family Master Plan PHOENIX, AZ

The Master Plan for a new 3,500 SF interactive learning center integrates key themes around plants, nature and science by fostering the education, research, exhibition and conservation of desert plants.

### Powell Botanical Garden KINGSVILLE, MO

The Master Plan for Powell Gardens brings the Botanical garden's strategic visioning plan to fruition providing a variety of multi-purpose spaces that celebrate the native midwestern habitat while providing spaces that will unite the community.

### University of North Carolina Botanical Garden Plant Biodiversity Research Building CHAPEL HILL, NC

New herbarium building includes classrooms, laboratories, museum collections, educational displays, and library space; features world's first Automated Storage and Retrieval System for herbarium specimens with the ability to house over three million specimens under archival conditions at minimal energy costs.

### San Antonio Botanical Garden Master Plan SAN ANTONIO, TX

Master Plan and Site Plan for the San Antonio Botanical Garden in partnership with MESA.





## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE NATURE CENTERS

### Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center SAN

ANTONIO, TX

Visitor/education center serving as the gateway to a 300 The Urban Ecology Center serves as the gateway to a 300 acre park with a focus on ecological restoration, watershed, aquifer preservation and the impacts of urban development. A series of pavilions provide office and classroom space framed by outdoor rooms that encourage a symbiotic relationship between people, the built environment, and the native landscape.



HARDBERGER PARK URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER

### Big Bend National Park Fossil Discovery Exhibit

BIG BEND, TX

The Exhibit is an off-grid, open-air center located in Big Bend National Park. A combination of fossil replicas, interpretive displays and geologic diagrams, allow visitors to discover the connection between the fossils in the region and the geologic formations near the pavilion.



BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK FOSSIL DISCOVERY

### Headwaters at the Comal NEW BRAUNFELS, TX

New Visitor & Education Center and multipurpose space focused on native habitat restoration, education, and public engagement. Many structures and existing building pads on the 16-acre property were reused to reduce the carbon footprint and restore as much of the site to its natural state.



HEADWATERS AT THE COMAL

### Will Smith Zoo School SAN ANTONIO, TX

The San Antonio Zoo School is the largest nature based pre-school in the country. To expand its educational mission, the Zoo developed a new on-site preschool facility and adjacent grounds to accommodate up to 160 students ages 3 to 5.



WILL SMITH ZOO SCHOOL

### Cibolo Creek Research and Learning Center

BOERNE, TX

Located on a 100-acre preserve in the Texas Hill Country, the Learning Center demonstrates the nonprofit's mission to promote good stewardship of land and wildlife. The building stuck carefully amongst the dense stands of Live Oak trees to capture views, provide shade, and create spaces to fit program elements.

### Jenna Welch Nature Center MIDLAND, TX

The new Visitor Center focuses on the education and stewardship for migrating sandhill cranes. This hub of discovery and launch point for site interpretation offers interpretive exhibits, multi-purpose classrooms, gift shop, administrative space, catering kitchen and open air pavilion space.





# Key Team Members

Ryerson Woods Education Center



## Resumes | Merritt Chase



**Nina Chase, PLA, ASLA**  
Managing Principal

Nina is a Founding Principal of Merritt Chase. She brings her experience managing complex urban public realm projects and teams to every project.

### ***Recent Project Experience***

#### **Canal Basin Park**

Cleveland, OH - City of Cleveland, Canalway Partners

#### **West End Connector Parks**

Pittsburgh, PA - Riverlife

#### **Monument Circle Park**

Indianapolis, IN - City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development, Downtown Indy



**Chris Merritt, PLA, ASLA**  
Design Principal

Chris is a Founding Principal of Merritt Chase. He will lead the team with a passion for designing thoughtful, vibrant, connected public gardens.

### ***Recent Project Experience***

#### **Dunham Tavern Museum and Gardens**

Cleveland, OH - Dunham Tavern Museum, Cleveland Foundation, MidTown Cleveland, LAND Studio

#### **Fort Wayne Treeline District Park**

Fort Wayne, IN - City of Fort Wayne, Browning

#### **The Park at 16 Tech**

Indianapolis, IN - 16 Tech Community Corporation



**Gabriella Rodriguez,**  
**ASLA**  
Senior Designer

Gabriella is a Senior Designer with Merritt Chase. She has a passion for public gardens and public space, and foregrounds an interest in horticulture in every project.

### ***Recent Project Experience***

#### **Miller House & Garden North Garden Restoration**

Columbus, IN - Newfields

#### **Columbus Downtown Entrance Park**

Columbus, IN - City of Columbus

#### **Fort Wayne Treeline District Park**

Fort Wayne, IN - City of Fort Wayne, Browning



**Craig Rowe, PLA, ASLA**  
Senior Associate, Project  
Manager

Craig is an Associate with Merritt Chase. A Fort Wayne native, he has extensive experience managing complex urban built projects across central Indiana.

### ***Recent Project Experience***

#### **Fort Wayne Treeline District Park**

Fort Wayne, IN - City of Fort Wayne, Browning

#### **Georgia Street**

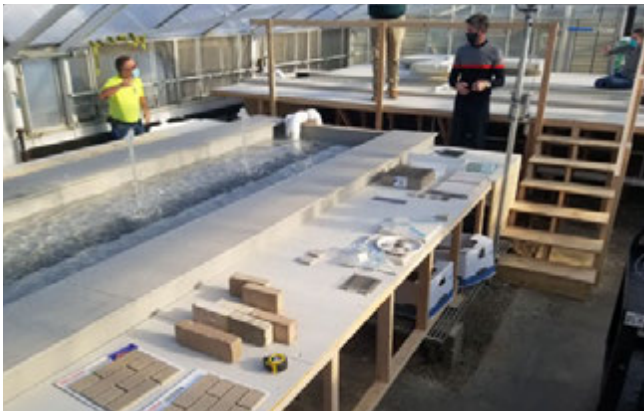
Indianapolis, IN - City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development, Capital Improvement Board



## Resumes | Merritt Chase

### Gabriella Rodriguez at Longwood Gardens

Prior to joining Merritt Chase, Senior Designer Gabriella Rodriguez was a lead designer at Reed Hilderbrand for the Longwood Reimagined project. Her work focused on the design of the site, pools, and planting within the new conservatory building. Longwood Gardens is a premier public garden and the Longwood Reimagined project is truly exceptional for its blend of history, architecture, design, horticulture, and stewardship. Gabriella facilitated early design iteration and client engagement.







## Partner-in-Charge **Lake Flato**

# MATT WALLACE

AIA, LEED AP BD+C

Matt is a Partner and co-leader of the firm's Eco-Conservation studio, which fulfills his passion for championing projects that encourage environmental stewardship. Matt's work reflects an innate respect for the land, where architecture first considers the natural environment and then responds organically to its unique character of place. Design resilience and understanding how the environment can influence and create design synergies is a defining principle of his approach allowing a process that values the indigenous ecosystem and each site's best assets.

### LICENSE

Architect: TX 21896

### EDUCATION

Master of Architecture | University of Washington

Bachelor of Design in Architecture | University of Florida

### YEARS IN PROFESSION 25

### PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

American Institute of Architects

Texas Society of Architects

United States Green Building Council

AIA San Antonio Lecture Series Co-Chair

San Antonio River Foundation Executive Board Member

## Representative Projects

### Ryerson Environmental Learning Center Riverwoods, IL

Serving as a trailhead for the surrounding forest preserve, this net-zero energy building tells the story of preservation of its fragile ecosystem through active demonstration of water conservation, energy production and material resiliency. 3,739 sf | \$3.9M | PHIUS Zero 2021 Certified | Targeting Net-Zero Energy | Illinois Association of Park Districts' Best Green Practices Award

### White River State Park Indianapolis, IN

White River State Park is an ambitious adaptive reuse of a historic Albert Kahn building located in White River State Park in downtown Indianapolis. The building will provide parking and event center support, flexible plaza spaces, active recreational opportunities, and enhanced connections. 15,750 sf | \$13M

### Penn State University Pollinator & Bird Garden State College, PA

The 3.5-acre Pollinator and Bird Garden at The Arboretum at Penn State synthesizes research through the creation of beautiful and ecologically rich habitats for pollinators and birds. The innovative design crafts moments in the landscape that support bird and pollinator habitats, provide places to conduct research, and educate and inspire visitors to rebuild habitat at both individual and collective scales. 600 sf unconditioned | \$7.9M | Net-Zero | World Landscape Architecture Shortlist | Architizer A+ Jury Award

### Headwaters at the Comal New Braunfels, TX

The new Visitor & Education Center acts as a multipurpose space focused on native habitat restoration, education, and public engagement. The 16-acre property was transformed from an unused parking lot to a restored native habitat. A major spring head was un-capped, cultivating riparian zones and restoring habitat for native species. 12,934 sf conditioned | 27,272 sf unconditioned | \$16M | Tracking LEED Gold

### Jenna Welch Nature Center Midland, TX

The new Visitor Center focuses on the education and stewardship for migrating sandhill cranes. This hub of discovery and launch point for site interpretation offers interpretive exhibits, multi-purpose classrooms, gift shop, administrative space, catering kitchen and open air pavilion space. 20,00 SF | \$8.5M | Tracking Living Building Challenge Certification





## Design Performance Lead **Lake Flato**

# HEATHER HOLDRIDGE

LEED FELLOW

Leveraging her background in mechanical engineering, Heather directs all Lake Flato project teams in establishing achievable sustainability goals. She devises strategies and establishes methods and systems to realize those goals under programs such as LEED, the 2030 Challenge, and the International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge, Zero Energy Certification, and Zero Carbon Certification. Heather works closely with design teams to evaluate appropriate passive systems and performs energy modeling throughout the design process.

### EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration | The University of Texas at San Antonio

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering | The University of Texas at San Antonio

### YEARS IN PROFESSION 19

### PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

United States Green Building Council

Texas Society of Architects

AIA Committee on the Environment, Co-Chair

USGBC CT-B Chapter, Board Member

Build San Antonio Green, Technical Advisory Committee Member

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Texas

American Institute of Architects

## Representative Projects

### Ryerson Environmental Learning Center Riverwoods, IL

Serving as a trailhead for the surrounding forest preserve, this net-zero energy building tells the story of preservation of its fragile ecosystem through active demonstration of water conservation, energy production and material resiliency. 3,739 sf | \$3.9M | PHIUS Zero 2021 Certified | Targeting Net-Zero Energy | Illinois Association of Park Districts' Best Green Practices Award

### Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center San Antonio, TX

Visitor/education center serving as the gateway to a 300 acre park with a focus on ecological restoration, watershed, aquifer preservation and the impacts of urban development. 7,240 SF conditioned; 11,360 SF unconditioned | \$6.3M | LEED Gold | Texas Society of Architects Design Award

### Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District "The Ditch Learning Center" Stephenville, TX

The Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District's new Learning Center creates a venue and landscape for educating visitors on the ecology, geology, and biology of the region while demonstrating best practices for aquifer health. 200 SF conditioned | 2,500 SF unconditioned | \$1.9M. Targeting Net Zero Energy and SITES Gold Certification.

### Confluence Park River Pavilion San Antonio, TX

This unique pavilion and education center— part of the San Antonio River Improvements Project, the country's largest urban environmental restoration project—serves as a living learning laboratory designed to inspire community engagement with a focus on ecology and the impact of development on urban watersheds. 2,152 SF conditioned; 6,000 SF unconditioned | \$3.6M | AIA National Honor Award | AIA COTE Top Ten Award | Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award

### The Marine Education Center at The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) Ocean Springs, MS

Envisioned as a living laboratory where visitors "come and do", the Marine Education Center serves as an outreach and education facility where educators have an unparalleled opportunity to teach about the ecologically critical bayou and marsh wetlands of coastal Mississippi. 29,700 sf | \$13.5M | AIA COTE Top Ten Award | Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award | Architizer A+ Jury Award — Architecture+Climate Change



A photograph of the Marine Education Center at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, featuring a modern building with a corrugated metal facade, surrounded by lush green trees and a paved area where children are sitting on concrete blocks.

# Project Approach

Marine Education Center at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory



## Project Approach

The Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory is an extraordinary community asset on a remarkable site in downtown Fort Wayne. The public garden has significant untapped potential to create new opportunities for community gathering and social interaction, education, and play immersed in a diverse horticultural environment.

Our Project Approach outlines a process that is aligned with the Fort Wayne Parks Department's aspiration for world class design and technical expertise. Our aim is to help guide the Conservatory to engage with the community through broader accessibility and new experiences, planted environments, play and delight.

The following project phases and associated tasks align with the scope outlined in the RFP, the corresponding fee estimate, and a goal to build excitement and consensus toward implementing a transformative project for the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory:

Phase 1: Inventory & Analysis

Phase 2: Needs Assessment

Phase 3: Concept Design (Bldg & Landscape)

Phase 4: Schematic Design (Landscape Only)



### Phase 1

#### Inventory & Analysis: Existing Conditions

With our team, we have developed a project approach to foreground visionary design thinking and ample opportunity for thoughtful engagement at the beginning of the project. This phase includes creating a strong foundation for the project with a clear understanding of the team structure, schedule and milestones, project goals, engagement strategy, and project due diligence. As the project progresses, the process will streamline — design options will converge into a final implementable plan with precise cost estimates, potential phasing, and a road map for permitting and approvals.

##### Task 1.1: Project Kick-off

Project kick-off will include a first consultant team and client team meeting. Initial project management tasks will include drafting a detailed working master schedule with clear milestone deadlines, and coordinating a communication plan for internal and external communication.

##### Task 1.1 Deliverables:

- Lead kick off meeting with client team

##### Task 1.2: Conduct Physical Site Inventory & Analysis

During this task the consultant team will be on site to perform investigation of the existing facilities. We will perform our site survey and Geotech investigation.

##### Task 1.2 Deliverables:

- ALTA Survey
- Topo and Utility Survey

##### Task 1.3: Conduct Facility and Program Inventory and Analysis

This task creates the time and opportunity to observe existing conditions, understand the site's full history, complete necessary site reconnaissance, and learn from the City and stakeholders. We will be on site to observe the existing landscape, gardens, programs, building facilities, utilities and equipment to gain an understanding of the qualitative and quantitative experience of the space. We will provide a narrative with supporting visuals that document our impressions and analysis of the current use and experience of the existing facilities.

##### Task 1.3 Deliverables:

- Narrative and diagrams that illustrate the quantitative and qualitative experience of the existing conditions.



# Project Approach

## Task 1.4: Review Previous Plans & Studies

During this task, we will study any connected work that has been done to-date starting with the six plans outlined in the project RFP. The goal of this task will be to collect and synthesize all available information in order to identify gaps in information that will inform the design recommendations. We will review recent plans or studies for both programming and strategic planning recommendations as well as physical, design, and maintenance needs. The consultant team will use existing plans and reports as the basis of understanding and update accordingly to address physical changes, new features, or adjacent connections.

### Task 1.4 Deliverables:

- Assemble and review all existing relevant project documentation

## Phase 2

### Assessment: Needs & Preferences

#### Task 2.1: Needs Assessment

This phase would include staff and stakeholder engagement and a unique 1-2 day design workshop for the full design team, client and stakeholder groups. We anticipate this phase would include big ideas, multiple options, and time for exploration and fun. We are excited for the potential to design a unique outreach and design process that meets and exceeds the aspirations of the City's engagement goals. Through an engaging and inclusive design process, our aim would be building consensus, momentum and excitement toward the future physical improvements of the Exploration and Terrace Garden. Our team approaches every project not only as a chance to design a transformative physical space, but also as an opportunity to design a unique process by which we build trust as a team and define a final project. We value unique engagement, and we believe this project has the potential to be recognized for its process as much as the project. We would work openly and creatively with the City to develop the most inclusive strategy to engage staff and relevant stakeholders.

An initial consultant team led site visit is recommended to familiarize the consultant team and the client team with the many physical components of the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory and to confirm the goals of the project. A listening tour is also recommended to meet staff and relevant stakeholders. Individual small group listening

meetings and site tours could include Parks staff, horticulturalists, gardeners, and maintenance crews, volunteers, adjacent property owners, and community groups and organizations with a connection to the Conservatory.

### Task 2.1 Deliverables:

- Facilitate staff and stakeholder workshop, tours, and individual meetings
- Confirm project goals and verify project scope



Columbus Downtown Entrance Park



Columbus Downtown Entrance Park



# Project Approach

## Phase 3

### Concept Design (Bldg & Landscape)

#### Task 3.1 Concept Design Options

This phase includes worksessions and engagement with the client and stakeholders to create three different Concept Design options for the project. Each option will be documented with supporting diagrams, illustrative site plans and renderings, and an outline that describes the differences in each option. We will review each option with the owner and facilitate a workshop to solicit feedback.

The Concept Design phase will generate a preferred plan whether it is one of the three options, a hybrid plan, or a new plan altogether. Our team is collaborative and iterative and will engage with the client in creating design options and refining the ideas into a single plan.

#### Task 3.1 Deliverables:

- Concept Design presentation summarizing the design options, research, engagement, and needs assessment process.
- Preferred Concept Design plan with supporting graphics



## Phase 4

### Schematic Design (Landscape Only)

#### Task 4.1 Schematic Design (30%)

Building off of the research and project priorities developed from first phases and Concept Design, the Schematic Design phase will develop more detailed design recommendations for the Exploration and Terrace Garden. Key design concepts, landscape character and experience, and circulation and connectivity recommendations will be documented with compelling, easily understandable graphics. This includes illustrative site plans, detailed site plans of the key features and perspective illustrations of the site as necessary. The SD phase will include a digital building model and floorplans with supporting design documentation. This task includes presentations to the client and relevant stakeholders. The SD phase will also coordinate existing and proposed utility needs with private and public utility providers. We will provide an SD cost estimate and outline potential permitting and approvals needs.

#### Task 4.1 Deliverables:

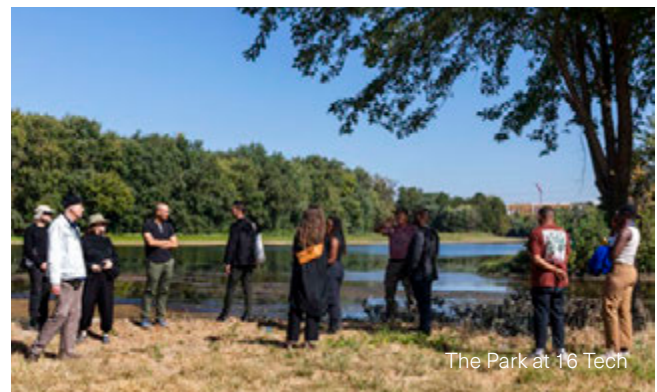
- Schematic Design drawings including diagrams, renderings, site plans and technical information
- Utility coordination
- Potential permitting coordination
- SD Cost Estimate



## Project Approach

### Future Implementation

We are passionate about our work and often develop close relationships with our clients. We are interested in being your partner, not just your consultant. We are committed to seeing this project through and will be ready to engage in Design Development through Construction to realize this project. In addition, we are prepared to help with fundraising efforts. We often help with presentations and attend meetings to help advocate for our projects. We are interested and willing to work with you to continue to advance this project.





## Lake Flato

### Aligned Approach & Sensibility

Over the years, Lake Flato's Eco-Conservation studio has had the great fortune to lead the design of many ecologically focused projects across the country including several Botanical Gardens. A common thread for most of these projects is that the clients want to use their available resources to reinforce their mission, not maintain a building.

Lake Flato's approach to botanical garden projects is rooted in environmental stewardship, immersive visitor experiences, and sustainable design that harmonizes with the natural landscape. This philosophy is exemplified in all of our work including projects we have completed with Botanical Gardens.

#### Integration with the Local Ecosystem

Lake Flato designs buildings that are thoughtfully crafted to serve as a subtle backdrop to the landscape. This approach ensures that visitors remain continuously connected to the gardens and surrounding ecosystem, allowing the natural environment to take center stage and fostering a seamless relationship between built and natural elements.

#### Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

Our process is rooted in sustainability and environmental stewardship, emphasizing the conservation of energy and natural resources while promoting healthy, high-performing environments. This commitment ensures that every design decision supports ecological balance, protects native habitats, and fosters a deeper connection between people and the natural world.

#### Use of Local Materials

We prioritize the use of local, durable materials to create immersive and engaging experiences for visitors, researchers, and event attendees. In a botanical garden setting, integrating regionally sourced materials into the architecture and landscape design ensures that built elements are seamlessly woven throughout lush gardens and plant collections. This approach not only grounds the garden in its unique ecological context but also enhances sustainability, supports the local economy, and enriches the overall visitor experience.

#### Educational and Research Venues

Lake Flato's designs create exceptional spaces for education, research, and community engagement, supporting the mission of botanical gardens as dynamic centers for learning, discovery, and environmental stewardship. We work with our clients to design flexible classrooms, laboratories, and gathering areas that thoughtfully integrate within gardens, fostering collaboration among students, researchers, and visitors while deepening connections to the natural world.

#### Preservation and Enhancement of Natural Resources

Botanical gardens serve as living showcases for the importance of preservation and enhancement of natural resources. Our design approach centers on protecting expansive areas of native landscape, safeguarding them from urban development, and ensuring the long-term vitality of local ecosystems. By actively partnering with the surrounding environment, our designs uphold a legacy of stewardship—restoring and enriching native habitats while fostering meaningful connections between people and the natural world.

#### Recognition and Awards

Lake Flato's botanical garden projects have received numerous accolades, including the APGA Garden of the Year Award, ASLA Florida Honor Design Award, and USGBC LEEDership Award, underscoring the firm's commitment to excellence in sustainable design.





# Proposed Schedule & Fee

Marine Education Center at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory



# Project Schedule

Fort Wayne Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory

## Exploration & Terrace Gardens Design

Month	Dec '25	Jan '26	Feb	March	April	May
Task						
Client Review & Coordination Meeting						
<b>1 Inventory &amp; Analysis: Existing Conditions</b>						
<b>1.1 Project Kick-off</b>						
1.1.1 Lead kick off meeting with Fort Wayne Parks and FFBC						
1.1.2 Review project program, scope, schedule, and deliverable expectations						
<b>1.2 Conduct Physical Site Inventory and Analysis</b>						
1.2.1 Perform site ALTA survey, topo survey, and Geotech survey						
1.2.2 Perform site physical inventory and analysis						
<b>1.3 Conduct Facility and Program Inventory and Analysis</b>						
1.3.1 Perform physical and experiential inventory and analysis including: physical character and identity, circulation and connectivity, mobility and accessibility, programming, art, events, furnishings and amenities, vegetation and stormwater, utilities, and precedent and program review						
<b>1.4 Review Previous Plans and Studies</b>						
1.4.1 Review existing background information including but not limited to the six plans and studies outlined in the project RFP.						
<b>2 Assessment: Needs &amp; Preferences</b>						
<b>2.1 Needs Assessment</b>						
2.1.1 Facilitate staff and stakeholder workshop and interviews to confirm operations, programming, and maintenance needs / preferences that will inform future recommendations						
2.1.2 Confirm project goals and scope						
<b>3 Concept Design - Bldg &amp; Landscape</b>						
<b>3.1 Concept Design Options</b>						
3.1.1 Develop 3 Concept Design Options with supporting diagrams, illustrative site plan and renderings, and outline describing differences between the options						
3.1.2 Review Concept Design Options with owner and key stakeholders						
3.1.3 Facilitate staff and stakeholder Concept Design review						
3.1.4 Confirm feedback and direction on Concept Design options with owner						
<b>4 Schematic Design - Landscape Only</b>						
<b>4.1 Schematic Design (30%)</b>						
4.1.1 Develop Schematic Design plan and supporting drawings including diagrams, renderings, site plans, and technical information that convey design intent.						
4.1.2 Review SD plans and confirm direction with owner and stakeholders						
4.1.3 Coordinate existing and proposed utility needs with private and public utility providers						
4.1.4 Prepare Schematic Design Cost Estimate						
4.1.5 Outline permitting and approvals needs based on SD plans						
<b>Funding &amp; Project Implementation</b>						
<b>Design Documentation</b>						
Collaborate with Fort Wayne Parks and FFBC key stakeholders to secure funding with project documentation, meetings, and presentations showcasing the Exploration and						



# Project Fee

Based on the information provided, we propose a lump sum fixed fee as follows for design services as detailed in this proposal inclusive of the following consultants: Landscape Architect, Architect, Civil Engineer, and Cost Estimating Services.

- Phase 1: Inventory & Analysis
- Phase 2: Needs Assessment
- Phase 3: Concept Design
- Phase 4: Schematic Design

**Total Fee** **\$250,000**

The proposed fee does not include services from the following: MEP, Structural Engineering, Ecologist, Horticulturalist, Traffic Engineer, Commercial Kitchen Design, Interior Design, Interpretive / Exhibit Design, Materials Testing Laboratory, Security, and AV/IT.

In addition, we have excluded a consultant for business planning or operations and maintenance planning at this time. We assume our team's experience will be sufficient and can advise on these matters. However, if it is determined a more robust planning exercise is necessary, we have great relationships with firms we would recommend such as James Lima Planning & Development for operations, placemaking, revenue and market study, or ETM for maintenance planning.



A green-tinted photograph of a modern building with a large tree in the foreground and a group of people sitting on a bench in front of it. The building has a long, low profile with a series of vertical slats or louvers. A large, thick tree trunk is on the left side of the frame, with its branches spreading out over the building. In the foreground, a group of people are sitting on a low, dark-colored bench or wall. Two large, dark-colored planters with tall, spiky plants are positioned on either side of the group. The overall scene is peaceful and suggests a natural or educational setting.

# References

Shangri La Nature Center

National Taiwan Botanical Conservatory Exploration & Terrace Garden

Merritt Chase Cultural Center



# References

## **Merritt Chase**

**Georgia Street  
City Market  
Monument Circle**  
Megan Vukusich  
Director  
City of Indianapolis  
Department of Metropolitan Development  
megan.vukusich@indy.gov  
317-327-3922

**The Park at 16 Tech**  
Emily Krueger  
President & CEO  
16 Tech Community Corporation  
ekrueger@16tech.com  
202-641-2282

**Dunham Tavern Museum & Gardens**  
Lauren Murray  
Executive Director  
Dunham Tavern Museum & Gardens  
lauren@dunhamtavern.org  
216-431-1060

**White River Farm & Gardens**  
Sarah Green  
Owner  
sarah@monumental-gestures.org  
347-527-0316

**Columbus Downtown Entrance Park**  
Heather Pope  
Executive Director  
Columbus Redevelopment Commission  
hpope@columbus.in.gov  
812-376-2547

**Canal Basin Park**  
Jim McKnight, ASLA  
Senior Landscape Architect  
City of Cleveland Mayor's Office of Capital Projects  
jmcknight@clevelandohio.gov  
216-952-2408

## **LAKE FLATO**

**Ryerson Education Facility**  
Becky Mathis  
Landscape Architect  
Lake County Forest Preserve  
847-968-3270

**Marine Education Center at Gulf Coast Research Lab**  
Jessie Kastler  
University of Southern Mississippi  
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228-818-8090

**Headwaters at the Comal**  
Nancy Pappas  
Managing Director of Headwaters  
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**Confluence Park**  
Frates Seeligson  
Director  
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**Merritt Chase**  
Landscape  
Architecture



# COUNCIL DIGEST SHEET

## RFPs , BIDS, OTHER PROJECTS

Bid/RFP#/Name of Project	#9873460 Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Garden Design
Awarded To	Merritt Chase
Amount	\$250,000
Number of Registrants	26
Number of Bidders	15
Required Attachments	RFPs – attach Award Matrix; Bids – attach Tab Sheet

## EXTENSIONS

Date Last Bid Out	NA
# Extensions Granted To Date	

## SPECIAL PROCUREMENT

Contract #/ID (State, Federal, Piggyback--Authority)	NA
Sole Source/ Compatibility Justification	

## BID CRITERIA *(Take Buy Indiana requirements into consideration.)*

Most Responsible, Responsive Lowest	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>If no, explain below</i>
If not lowest, explain	The professional service proposals were evaluated and judged according to their merit and demonstration of each company's project understanding, ability to complete, experience, methodology, and proposed fee.



# COUNCIL DIGEST SHEET

## COST COMPARISON

<i>Increase/decrease amount from prior years For annual purchase (if available).</i>	NA
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## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT / NEED

<i>Identify need for project &amp; describe project; attach supporting documents as necessary.</i>	Request for approval on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners for a contract with Merritt Chase for design services on the Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Garden Design Project.
	Merritt Chase will prepare conceptual and schematic designs, including surveys, geotechnical services, and marketing graphics. The project includes the following general components: new indoor rental and program space, outdoor event space, greenhouse, redesigned landscape, accommodations for utilities and maintenance needs, universal accessibility throughout, and sustainable elements throughout.
	The Exploration Garden and Terrace Garden have declined over the years and are in need of renovation to improve the visitor experience and better accommodate the operations of the Conservatory. The space is underutilized for the growing needs of the conservatory and lacks horticultural diversity and quality. The gardens are very passive and in need of interactive elements. The infrastructure in the Terrace Garden is failing; the uneven pavers and tent tie-downs create trip hazards and limit accessibility. This area needs redesigned to better serve the multiple events and rentals in the outdoor gardens.

## REQUEST FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

<i>Provide justification if prior approval is being requested.</i>	NA

## FUNDING SOURCE

<i>Account Information.</i>	Park Trust Fund - Foellinger Foundation Grant



# MEMORANDUM

**To:** City Council Members, City of Fort Wayne  
**From:** Stacy Haviland  
**CC:** File  
**Subject:** Council Approval of Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Garden Design  
**Date:** December 4, 2025

The City of Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department (FWPRD), on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners has requested proposals with fees from firms qualified to prepare conceptual and schematic designs, including surveys, geotechnical services, and marketing graphics for the *Conservatory Exploration and Terrace Garden Design*. Proposals from fifteen (15) design firms were received on October 2, 2025. Four (4) firms were shortlisted and interviewed. Please see attached scoring sheet. This project includes the following general components:

1. New indoor rental and program space
2. Outdoor event space
3. Greenhouse
4. Redesigned landscape
5. Accommodations for utilities and maintenance needs
6. Universal accessibility throughout
7. Sustainable elements throughout

Proposals were evaluated by a committee consisting of various administrative members of the FWPRD. All proposals were evaluated and judged according to their merit and demonstration of each company's project understanding, ability to complete, experience, methodology, and proposed fee. The selection committee and Park staff recommend that the Board of Park Commissioners enter into a contract with Merritt Chase for the above-mentioned work.

We are requesting approval for a contract with Merritt Chase at a total cost of **\$250,000.00**. This project will be funded through Foellinger Foundation grant funding.

We respectfully request your approval of this contract so that we may proceed with the work. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 427-6240 or the Executive Director, Steve McDaniel at 427-6407.

Thank you in advance.

Stacy Haviland  
Superintendent of Planning, Development, and Botanical Conservatory – Ft. Wayne Parks and Recreation