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For Immediate Release

Cypress Gardens to Close for Rebirth of Park in March

Revamped Gardens to Reopen in March with New Focus, Expanded Water Park

Winter Haven, FL (November 10, 2008) - After months of exhaustive analysis by park officials and owners, Florida's first theme park, Cypress Gardens, will temporarily close on Monday, November 17th, for a major renovation. With a reopening scheduled for March of 2009, the plans include expanding the wildly popular water park, while preserving the history and nostalgia of the original park, with a focus on the original botanical gardens and their worldwide notoriety. The ski show shall continue as part of the original park experience. The existing animal area and the ride area will be permanently closed. "The operating expense of running 38 amusement rides, a zoo, the botanical gardens, a ski show, and a water park are considerable," said Cypress Gardens co-owner Rob Harper. "It is obvious the park cannot successfully function as four parks in one. We have some exciting new plans that everyone will be thrilled to see come March," Harper added.

To finish planning for the future of the park and renovate the grounds prior to the March 2009 reopening, Cypress Gardens will complete its last full day of operations on Sunday, November 16. "We are in the process of notifying our employees. The vast majority of them will be temporarily without work at the park during the renovations, and those eligible will be reinstated when renovations are complete," Harper said.

The renovation plans for the park are centered around the core elements that have made Cypress Gardens famous around the world, while simultaneously making it a sustainable long-term success. According to Brian Philpot, Harper's business partner, the key is ensuring that the integrity of the original Cypress Gardens is not compromised by non-original and non-essential elements. "The last thing we want to do is jeopardize the history and long-term future of this storied park with elements that do not promote what made Cypress Gardens what it is today - a beautiful botanical garden for enjoyment by all ages," said Harper. The goal is to add a modern flair to a timeless classic, Harper added. Planned changes include adding a parking area and moving the main entrance back to where it was when the gardens first opened. The new parking area will provide convenient access for visitors

to the water park and gardens. Visitors had complained about the long ¾ mile walk from the current parking lot through the ride area to the water park and botanical gardens. Among other changes come March 2009 are new cultural components showcasing the history of Cypress Gardens. These changes will make the visitor experience much more enjoyable. “Rob Harper and Brian Philpot are doing the right thing with these plans and we look forward to helping them along the way,” said Polk County Tourism and Sports Marketing Director, Mark Jackson. “Polk County benefits greatly from the thousands of visitors that come to Cypress Gardens each year and this move will ensure the long-term sustainability of one of Polk County’s largest tourism assets.”

The renovations come during a normally slow time of year for tourism and with the park ready to reopen right before the peak of the busiest tourism season, the new Cypress Gardens will be poised to attract the many visitors that will be coming to Polk County. Harper stated that it has been a difficult decision to temporarily close for the renovations because the park didn’t want to cause any inconvenience to its employees or guests, however, in the long term, this approach is best for all involved. “We regret any inconvenience this may bring to our employees and many guests, and ask for their patience and understanding as these changes are necessary for the sustained long-term success of the park. More information will be available for our pass holders in the weeks ahead and ask that they check our website in coming weeks. We are excited about the future of Cypress Gardens, and look forward to an improved guest experience,” he said.

More information and updates will be available periodically on the park’s website, www.cypressgardens.com as the renovations progress.