

# Work on new wildlife sanctuary begins

## Busch plans to open its \$15M Jupiter Farms-area facility to public in 2023

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Palm Beach Post  
USA TODAY NETWORK

JUPITER – Five wetlands, hundreds of native trees and no interstate noise.

Those are some of the benefits of a new 19.4-acre site in Jupiter Farms for the Busch Wildlife Sanctuary and its 200 animals.

Crews broke ground on the new \$15 million sanctuary last week.

It sits at Rocky Pines and Indian-town roads, 6 miles northwest of the current sanctuary, which is sandwiched between Interstate 95 and Central Boulevard on land owned by the Loxahatchee River District.

Right now, visitors to Busch Wildlife Sanctuary drive through an industrial area that is home to limousine services, landscaping agencies and construction companies to access the sanctuary.

The Pineland Nature Trail that brings people to see bears and panthers crosses over an active access road before plunging them back into the lush greenery and tree canopies



**Amy Kight, executive director of Busch Wildlife Sanctuary, holds a rescue fox. Work has started on a new, larger site near Jupiter Farms.** PROVIDED

that surround the animal habitats.

In the background of squawks from birds and jitters from raccoons is a droning noise from the 50,000 vehicles, on average, that cross Indiantown Road on Interstate 95 each day.

The new sanctuary will provide an immersive experience to the 150,000 people who visit Busch annually, ac-

ording to a news release from the organization.

It purchased the property in November 2020 for \$1.6 million.

Initially founded in 1983, the current wildlife center opened in 1993 when the Peter W. Busch Family Foundation

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**An aerial rendering of the new Busch Wildlife Sanctuary, to be located on Rocky Pines Road near Jupiter Farms.**

PROVIDED BY BUSCH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

## Sanctuary

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agreed to support it.

Growth over the past two decades has made it necessary for the sanctuary to seek a larger facility, sanctuary chairman Peter Busch told The Palm Beach Post in early 2021.

The sanctuary estimated that 6,000 animals received medical treatment there in 2021, an increase of 9% from 2020 and 17% from 2019.

In 2021, Busch signed a yearlong lease extension with the Loxahatchee

River District – a taxing entity that runs the local wastewater plants, conducts river research and promotes environmental education – in hopes of moving the sanctuary to the Jupiter Farms area by early 2022.

Now, Busch leaders expect the new sanctuary to be open for public visits in 2023.

Once it relocates, Busch will be responsible for returning its site on Jupiter Park Drive to its original condition.

Busch Wildlife Sanctuary's new facility will remain free and open to the public, according to a news release from the organization.

It will include five wetland habitats and feature birds, alligators, panthers, bears and other animals rescued and treated by wildlife experts there.

Sanctuary leaders expect it to take about a week to move all its animals safely and calmly to their new homes.

The new education building will provide programs in English, Spanish and American Sign Language.

The building will be fully accessible under the terms of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act for people with mobility needs.

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