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ESJ CAPITAL PARTNERS TO DEVELOP SOUTH FLORIDA'S FIRST-EVER TRUE ECO-ADVENTURE PARK AND RESORT IN MIAMI

Opening in 2022, the \$300 million re-imagined "Jungle Island" will feature a thrilling aerial adventure course with zip lines, up-close animal encounters, water attractions, one-of-a-kind entertainment and nightlife, and a new hotel, just minutes from downtown Miami and Miami Beach

MIAMI (April 23, 2021) – [ESJ Capital Partners \(hereinafter: 'ESJ'\)](#), an Aventura, Florida-based commercial real estate firm and a registered Investment Advisor, has secured the final approvals necessary to move forward with developing a one-of-a-kind eco-adventure destination and hotel on 18.5 acres of prime waterfront in Miami.

The \$300 million project is an ambitious re-imagining of the historic "Jungle Island," a zoological theme park and botanical gardens built in 1936 that once boasted the largest and rarest collection of exotic animals and birds. It is located on Watson Island, roughly five minutes from both downtown Miami and the world-renowned South Beach neighborhood of Miami Beach, surrounded by the crystal blue waters of Biscayne Bay.

Inspired by some of the world's most successful eco-adventure destinations and conceived by a team of the top hospitality/nature attraction experts, ESJ's master-plan for redevelopment of the park caters to the 21st-century guest, while still preserving historic elements that has made the Jungle Island experience a favorite landmark for nearly a century – including an unparalleled collection of over 50 parrot species in its multi-story aviary.

Set to re-open in mid-2022 as "Jungle Island: Miami's Adventure Oasis," the redesigned park will include the only aerial adventure course in South Florida featuring zip lines, ropes courses, bridges, and climbing nets suspended up to 60-feet in the treetops; a 19,000-square-foot trampoline park; interactive and hands-on animal nature tours that allow guests to get up-close and personal with over 100 species of wild animals, such as swimming with capybaras; a 1,200-seat outdoor amphitheater with new and unique, family-friendly entertainment featuring aerialists and acrobats; elevated dining and nightlife experiences; a Mediterranean-style beach club and cocktail lounge on Miami's only private beach; and several water features including a new 900-foot "lazy river" that meanders through the park's lush green and animal habitats.

A key component of the park will be a new 300-key, family-friendly eco-resort, scheduled to open in late 2024 or early 2025.

Based on market research, ESJ expects to draw more than 500,000 guests during its first year of operation, comprising a 50-50 mix of both local/domestic visitors and out-of-market travelers.

“Florida is finally getting its first true eco-adventure park, where nature and wildlife provide inspiration for guests to explore, play, challenge themselves physically, or simply relax,” said Arnaud Sitbon, CEO of ESJ. “Best of all, it’s going to be in a city that is one of the world’s top-rated travel destinations, just minutes from Miami’s top-rated beaches and attractions. It’s a privilege to have the honor of breathing new life into this much-beloved landmark, and our hope is that it will spark appreciation and respect for nature and our planet’s precious wildlife.”

“A nature-oriented destination of this magnitude in the heart of Miami’s urban core is truly remarkable,” said Micha Dubernard, Senior Vice President of ESJ Capital Partners. “In addition to providing a unique attraction that enhances Miami’s reputation for tourism and culture, Jungle Island’s lush habitat will also serve an important ecological role by helping absorb some of the city’s carbon emissions and serving as a natural preserve for Florida’s wading birds and other wildlife.”

According to the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), there is substantial demand for this type of venue. “We are extremely pleased to add such a compelling attraction to our community,” said William D. Talbert III, President & CEO of the GMCVB. “We look forward to continue working with the Jungle Island team.”

In 2019, Greater Miami attracted a record-breaking 16.3 million overnight visitors and an additional 7.9 million day tripper, for a record number of 24.2 million total visitors with a total economic impact close to \$18 billion, according to the GMCVB. Industry experts expect Miami’s hospitality and tourism industry to recover steadily over the next year, in conjunction with COVID-19 vaccine roll outs.

In addition to the adventure park and nature attractions, Jungle Island will also feature a strong corporate appeal, with more than 10 indoor and outdoor meeting and event spaces, catering to small or large groups, and ranging from small celebrations to 1000+-person gatherings.

ESJ acquired Jungle Island in April 2017, which involved the transfer of the existing land lease on the City of Miami-owned Watson Island to ESJ. In August 2018, Miami voters approved a city charter amendment to waive competitive bidding and allow ESJ to modify Jungle Island’s lease and allow the construction of a 300-room hotel. In February 2021, the City of Miami provided final approval on a long-awaited land-use ordinance change and special area plan, both necessary to redevelop the 18-acre property with a hotel and additional recreation amenities. ESJ plans to begin construction on the new adventure park this summer, and will break ground on the new \$100+ million hotel in 2022, pending a final building permit.

To lead Jungle Island’s transformation, ESJ has pulled in some of the world’s leading hospitality, attraction, entertainment and construction experts. These include **IDEAS Brand & Experience Design**, led by 25-year Disney executive Bob Allen; **HKS Architects**, an interdisciplinary global design firm which recently completed Royal Caribbean’s \$250 million redevelopment of CocoCay Island; **EoA**, an award-winning design firm; **Gardiner & Theobald**, an independent construction and property consultancy noted for its development of Miami’s acclaimed Faena District and the \$4 billion Baha Mar resort in the Bahamas, the largest resort development in the Western Hemisphere; and several additional specialists in the field of animal entertainment and education.

For more information about Jungle Island updates, bookings and hours of operations please visit www.jungleisland.com.

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About ESJ Capital Partners

ESJ Capital Partners, founded in 2008, is a diversified, institutional vertically integrated, real estate investment firm. ESJ utilizes its breadth of experience and expertise to invest in attractive opportunities throughout the United States. For more information, please visit www.esj.us.

About Jungle Island

A favorite South Florida landmark since 1936, Jungle Island is located across from the cruise ports, between Downtown Miami and South Beach. Miami's premier eco-adventure park proudly takes guests on an epic journey through adventure, nature and play. From thrilling attractions, behind-the-scenes VIP tours, elevated dining experiences at a waterfront restaurant & lounge to unforgettable interactions with some of the world's most fascinating animals, Jungle Island offers guests a variety of real-life jungle adventures. For regular updates, follow @JungleIsland on social media and visit www.jungleisland.com.