



Project Introduction

January 2018

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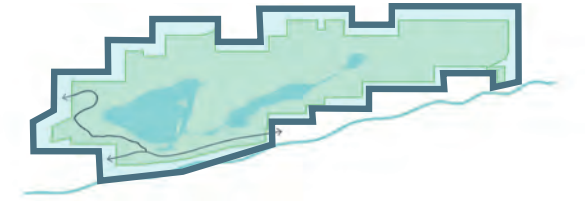
Project Schedule

Vision Statement

Defining the Goals and Aspirations of the Enhancement Project

Gulf State Park will be an international benchmark for environmental and economic sustainability demonstrating best practices for outdoor recreation, education, and hospitable accommodations.





Community Open House Participant - March 2015

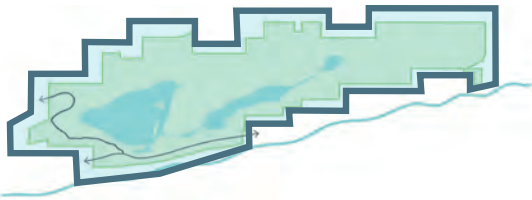
Goal

Develop a plan to successfully achieve the Project Vision by integrating Enhancement Project elements with the existing park amenities.

Outcomes

- Integrated input from 6 public open houses, more than 2,600 responses to an online survey, 12 stakeholder meetings, and numerous discussions with public officials
- Identified additional opportunities to expand the enjoyment and use of the park
- Developed strategies for long-term environmental and economic sustainability

Master Plan & Project Elements



Dune Restoration

An Innovative Return to Natural Systems



Regulatory sign at the Fishing & Education Pier

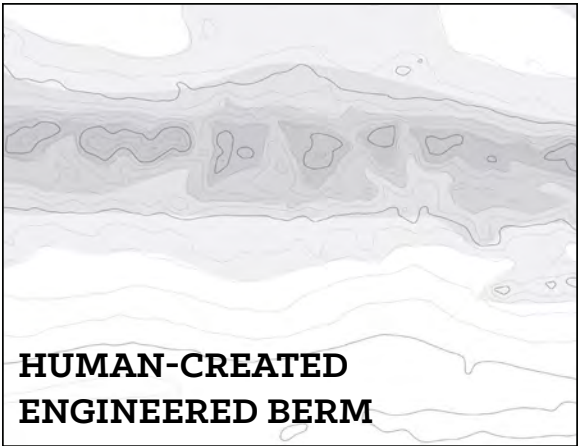
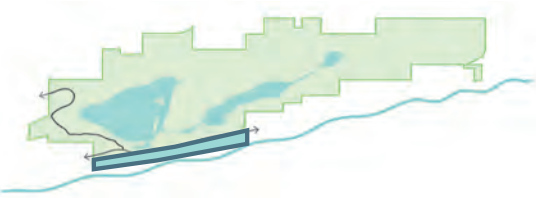
Goal

Restore natural systems so the dunes can regrow themselves over time.

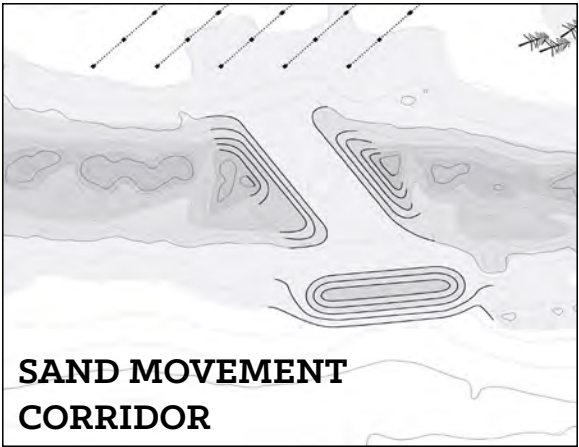
Outcomes

- Installed five dune cuts that are monitored for sand accumulation
- Removed invasive plant species
- Installed regulatory signs to protect new dune growth
- Supported Park Staff efforts to place recycled Christmas trees in areas behind the engineered berm to facilitate dune growth
- Develop adaptive management techniques informed by annual growth measurements

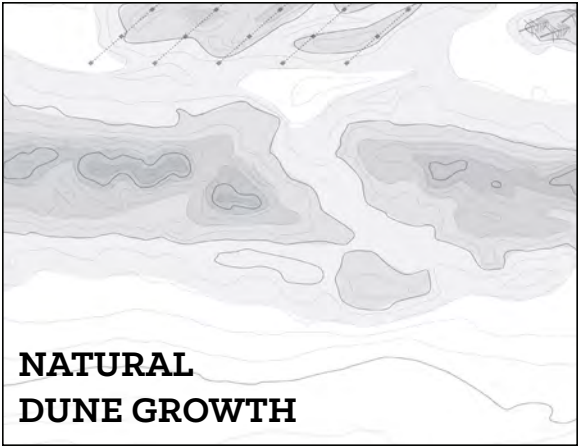
Strategy



The current primary dune is a human-created engineered berm that prevents significant growth of new dunes.



Sand movement corridors were inserted into that engineered berm to allow for wind-borne sand to accumulate behind the berm.



Recycled Christmas trees are placed behind the cuts to capture wind-borne sand and rebuild a natural dune environment.



Restoring the park's environment was the #1 priority among locals and people under age 40.

Interpretive Center

The Launching Point into the Park



Interpretive Porch

Goal

Create a gateway to the park that excites visitors about the entire 6,150 acres and entices them to explore the green side of the park.

Outcomes

- Construction is underway with completion scheduled for Spring 2018
- Targeting full Living Building Challenge, LEED Platinum, and FORTIFIED Commercial certifications
- Coordinating interpretive elements and interactive exhibits to tell a comprehensive story about the park and how the building is designed to meet Living Building Challenge criteria

Site Plan

1. Pedestrian Bridge
2. Interpretive Porch
3. Interpretive Meeting Room
4. Interpretive Sand & Water
5. Improved Vehicle Entry



Overview of connection between Interpretive Center and Park Trails

Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.

*Fred Rogers
Children's Advocate; TV Host, Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*

Interpretive Design

The Interpretive Center features interactive exhibits that introduce visitors to the diverse ecosystems within the park. They are encouraged to explore the park via a connected Pedestrian Bridge where they can continue self-guided exploration of the park on nearly 28 miles of trails with interpretive signage and educational pause places.



Interpretive Center Exhibit Porch

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing you can do is keep your mind young.

Mark Twain

Construction Progress



Interpretive Center Construction Progress - Dec 2017

Construction Progress

- Safe pedestrian connection to the park trail system
- Interpretive Porch containing interactive introduction to the park environment
- Sand & water play area for children
- Design setback to allow for dune regrowth
- Meeting space for organizations and educational events



Interpretive Center Construction Progress - Dec 2017



Natural Play Concept Area

Goal

Create an educational base camp that provides a variety of opportunities for learning through innovative programming and experiences throughout the park.

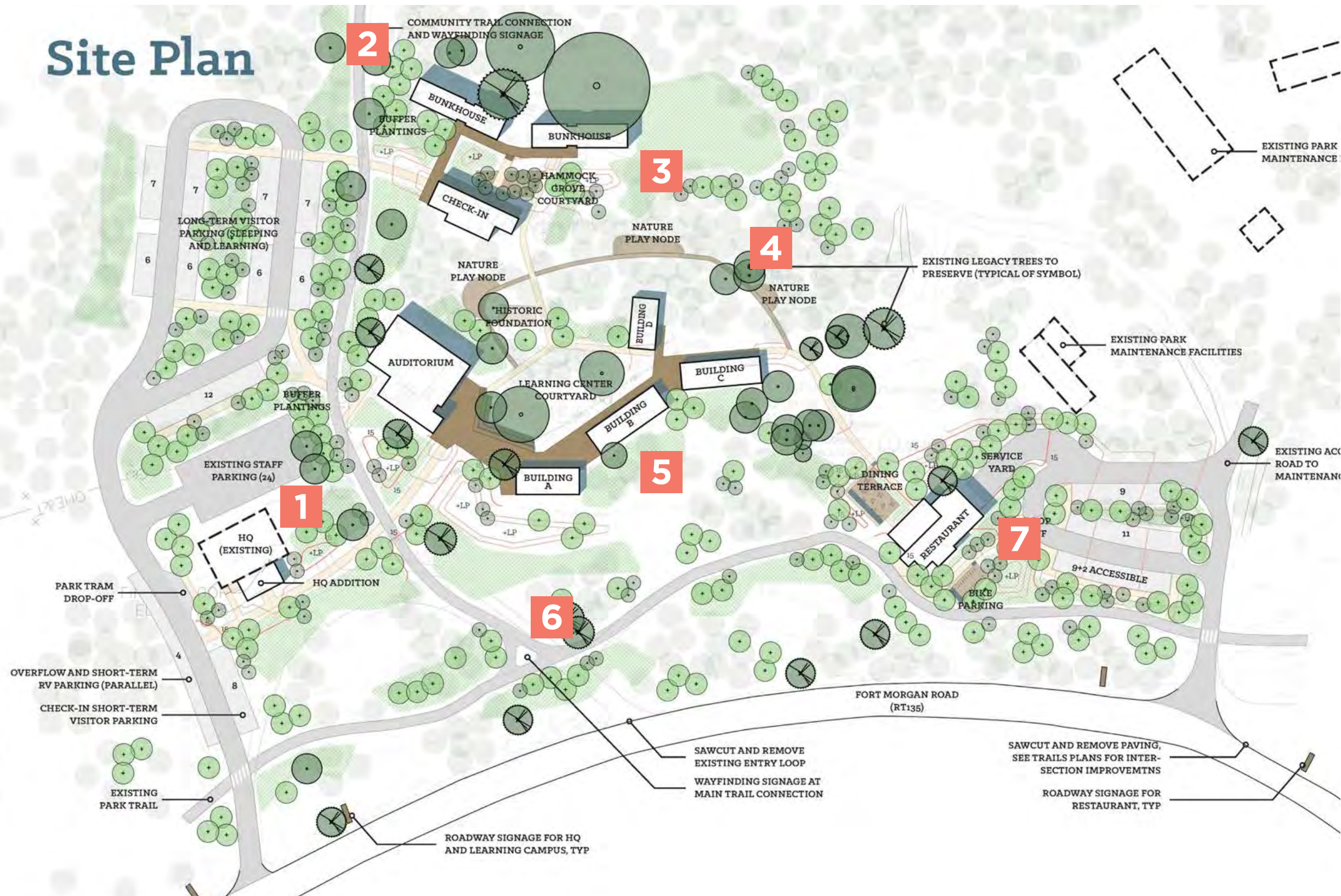
Outcomes

- Designed a facility that includes classrooms, labs, offices, a student lodge, public restaurant, and meeting space
- Implemented plan to protect legacy trees during construction that will begin in Spring 2018
- Developing educational programming in partnership with park staff and operator

Site Plan

- 1. Existing Park Headquarters
- 2. Neighborhood Connection
- 3. Student Lodge
- 4. Natural Play Areas
- 5. Classrooms, Labs, & Meeting Space
- 6. Trail Connection
- 7. Woodside Restaurant

The Learning Campus will act as an educational base camp for visitors to Gulf State Park.



Renderings



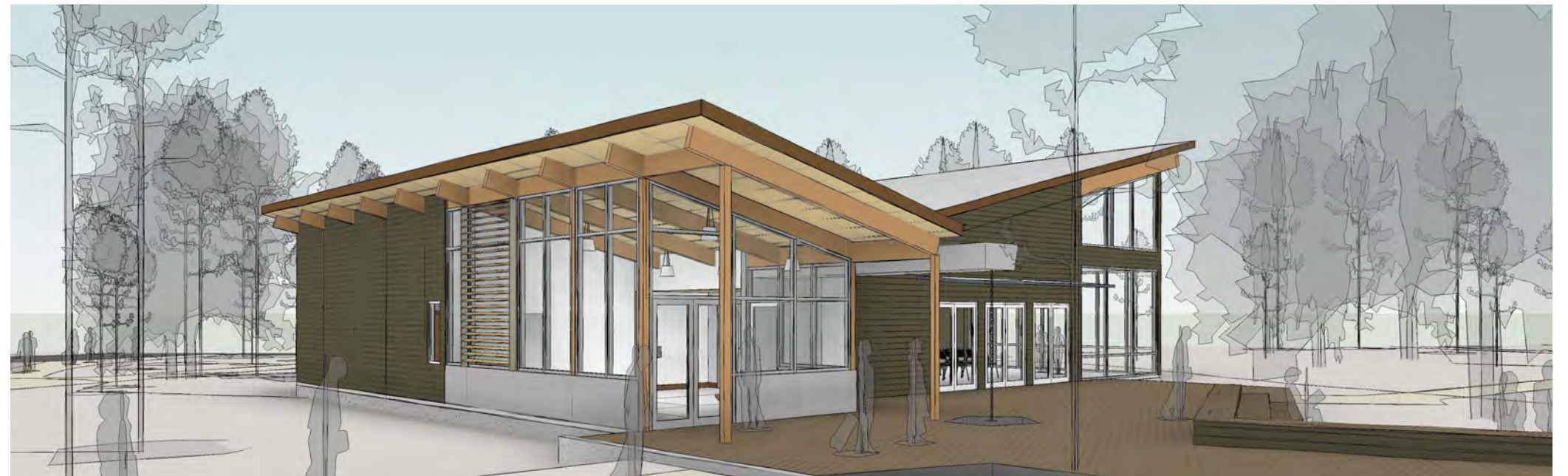
Woodside Restaurant



Legacy Trees to be preserved

Gulf State Park is Alabama's outdoor classroom, providing opportunities for all visitors to connect with and learn about the natural world.

Gulf State Park Master Plan



Meeting Space & Outdoor Classroom

Renderings



Indoor and Outdoor Gathering Areas



Classroom Buildings



Student Lodging Bunks



Screened Classrooms

Rebuilding the Lodge

A Beautiful Place



Casual relaxed atmospheres
for everyone

Goal

Create a model of sustainable hospitality that attracts the eco-tourism market, provides a launching point for learning in the park, and supports the economics of the park.

Outcomes

- Pursuing LEED Gold, SITES Platinum, and FORTIFIED Commercial certification
- The world's largest flag and reservation system
- The operational partner is a renowned international firm known for their hospitality, educational programming, and sustainable practices
- Numerous interpretive signs that describe the park, building's design, history, and artwork

Site Plan

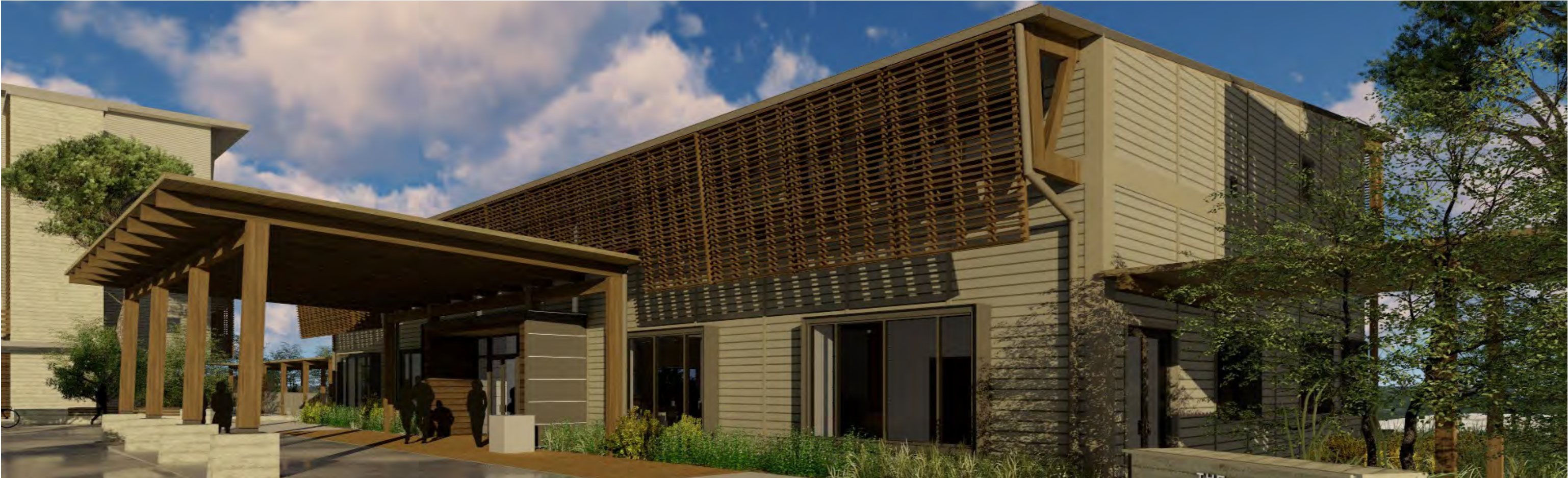
1. Lobby
2. Restaurant
3. Guest Rooms
4. Meeting Space
5. Ballroom
6. Dune Restoration
7. Restored Wetland

The Gulf State Park is my favorite place to be in the whole world. I have hundreds and hundreds of memories of my wife and kids in the park.

Vacationer from AL, a respondent to online survey



Renderings



Lobby Entrance



Lobby Interior

Renderings



Lodge Pool



Lodge Ballroom & Meeting Rooms

Construction Progress



- Area for Dune Growth
- Guest Rooms & Amenities
- Main Entry
- Educational Lobby
- Public Restaurant
- Restored Wetland
- Meeting Rooms
- Ballroom
- Permeable Parking

Construction Progress



Meeting
Rooms

Ballroom

Public
Restaurant

Educational
Lobby

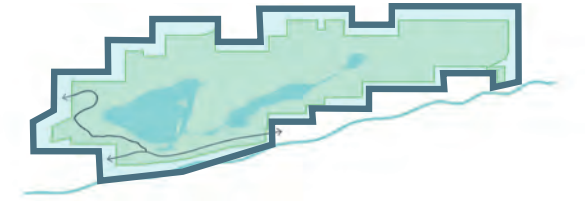
Guest Rooms &
Amenities



Construction Progress - November 17, 2017

Trail Enhancements

Connecting the Park on Feet and Wheels



Family biking on Gopher Tortoise Trail

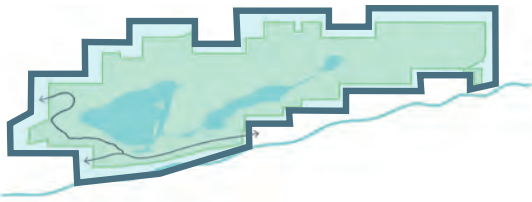
Goal

Improve and encourage pedestrian access to the entire park to provide opportunities for education and car free mobility.

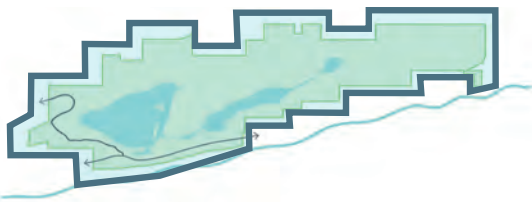
Outcomes

- An expanded Trail network of almost 28 miles that connects all the park's amenities
- Accessible for all levels of physical ability
- Multiple car-free loops
- 3 educational Pause Places along the trail network that create destinations highlighting different ecosystems
- 38 engaging interpretive signs along the trail network about the park's diverse ecology and cultural history will be installed Spring 2018
- Wayfinding signs and trailhead maps will be installed Spring 2018

Trail Map



New Trails and Amenities



Accessible Fishing Pier at Lake Shelby

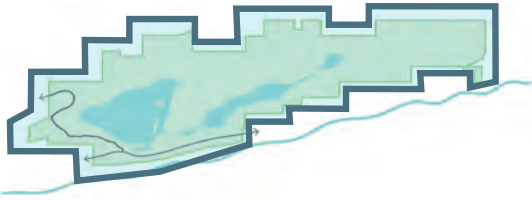


Campground Trail



Seating & Shade Structures

New Trails and Amenities



Lakeview Trail



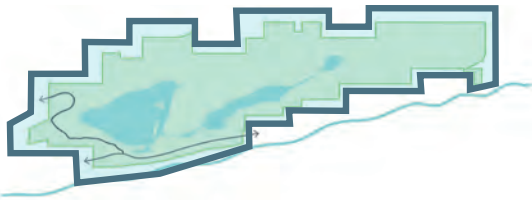
Lake Crossing Trail



Canal Trail

Pause Places

Pause Places are educational and recreational destinations along the trail network that encourage visitors to explore the park. Each Pause Place is designed to celebrate its unique surroundings and features seating, shade structures, and interpretive elements.



Rosemary Dunes Pause Place



Gulf Oak Ridge Pause Place



View from Gulf Oak Ridge Pause Place

Interpretive and Wayfinding Signs

Interpretive Signs throughout the park engage visitors with questions and imagery to inspire curiosity.

Original Southern Hospitality

ARE GOPHER TORTOISES THE SOUTH'S MOST WELCOMING HOSTS?

Gopher tortoises have been living in these upland scrub dunes for a very long time.

These reptiles are known for being very welcoming to other critters. You might even say that these long-living tortoises started the tradition of southern hospitality. When a gopher tortoise digs its home in the sand, it builds one that is big enough to entertain guests. The tunnel-like home is about the width of the tortoise's body and can be up to 10 feet deep and 40 feet long.

DON'T STICK YOUR HAND IN THERE.

It's a nice home, but it's not one you want to be invited into. Some guests who stay with gopher tortoises include eastern coachwhip snakes, eastern diamondback rattlesnakes, gopher frogs, armadillos, bobwhite quails, cave crickets, and more.

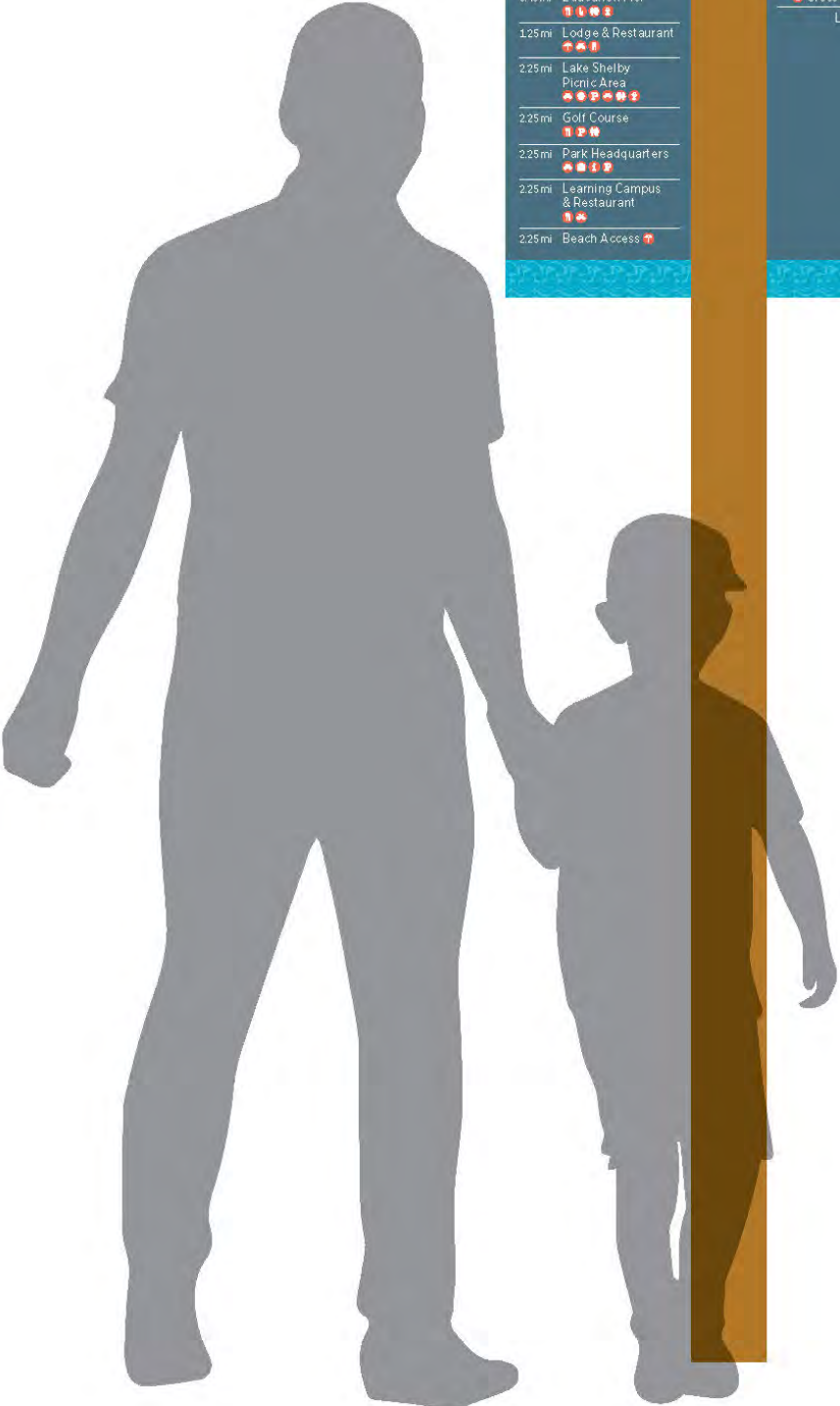
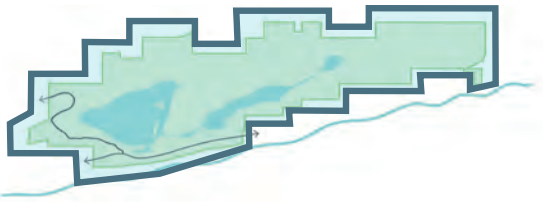
THE KEY TO IT ALL.

Gopher Tortoises are a keystone species. That means some animals can't survive without the tortoise's tunnel home for shelter.

In the Park, our gopher tortoise population is stable, but in other places along the Gulf Coast they are listed as endangered. It would be very sad to lose such a wonderful example of southern kindness.



Interpretive Sign



< Campground Trail

0.25 mi	Interpretive Center & Beach Pavilion	0.25 mi
0.45 mi	Education Pier	0.45 mi
1.25 mi	Lodge & Restaurant	1.25 mi
2.25 mi	Lake Shelby Picnic Area	2.25 mi
2.25 mi	Golf Course	2.25 mi
2.25 mi	Park Headquarters	2.25 mi
2.25 mi	Learning Campus & Restaurant	2.25 mi
2.25 mi	Beach Access	2.25 mi

Campground Trail >

0.25 mi	Forest Pavilion & Butterfly Garden	0.25 mi
0.45 mi	Cross Park Trail	0.45 mi
1.25 mi	Little Lake	1.25 mi

Wayfinding Sign

Two Pedestrian Bridges

Completing the Pedestrian Network



West Pedestrian Bridge

Goal

Safely connect the park trail system to the beaches and celebrate the entry into the park.

Outcomes

- The West Pedestrian Bridge connecting the Fishing & Education Pier to the Picnic Area opened in October 2017
- The East Pedestrian Bridge connecting the Campground to the Interpretive Center and Beach Pavilion will open in Spring 2018
- Integrated interpretive elements that introduce visitors to the variety of animals and natural features found in the park

Construction Progress



East Pedestrian Bridge Construction

In the online survey, the #1 barrier to walking and bicycling in the park was crossing East Beach Boulevard (45% of respondents said it discouraged them from walking or bicycling.)

Gulf State Park Master Plan



Pedestrian Bridge Detail

Completed Pedestrian Bridges



West Pedestrian Bridge



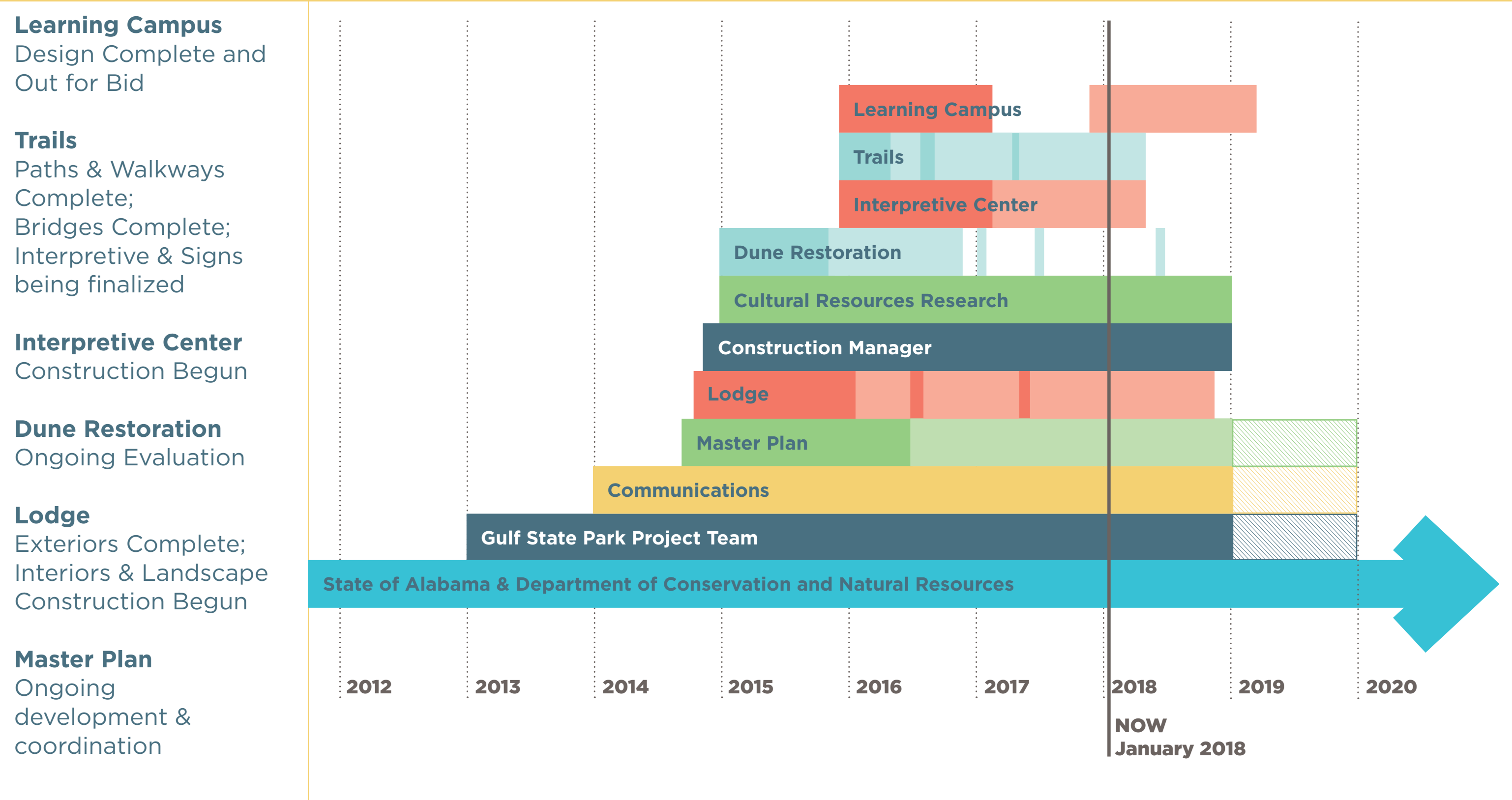
Aerial View of East Pedestrian Bridge



Accessible Ramping at the West Pedestrian Bridge

Project Schedule

Delivery





www.MyGulfStatePark.com

Stay updated and
sign up for the newsletter on the website!
Thank you.