

Ormond Beach Observation Platform

Concept

Implement the **Observation Platform** project concept as identified and supported during the Sept. 2005 Ormond Beach Task Force (OBTF) meeting to establish a near-term facility for enhancing visitor experience at Ormond Beach wetlands while raising awareness and public appreciation of the long-term, broader wetland restoration project. Location to be at terminus of Arnold Road in or near the City road corridor between the barricade and shoreline.

Field Meeting, 13 March 2008

1. Oxnard Mayor Tom Holden initiated a meeting at the site, with 10 interested people present (photos available) for about an hour discussion there.
2. Informal discussion led to general consensus about the need for better public and agency awareness of the whole Ormond Beach project, especially manifest through a structure or facility with appropriate informational signage and interpretative panels about the natural resources right there at the beach and wetlands. David Pritchett brought up the Observation Platform project concept previously supported by participants in OBTF, and folks there recalled that and agreed its time was due. Further clarification occurred that an Observation Platform project is not a substitute for an actual Visitor Center or Nature Center facility with associated infrastructure.
3. Pritchett further described the status of the visitor access planning, to include paths, boardwalks, visitor center, etc. as part of the greater Ormond Beach project. All agreed that something installed on the ground near-term in 2008 would be important as the other planning continued. "We do not want to prevent the long-term plan," Mayor Holden remarked. He added: "this is the start of a dialogue on a concept" and that any installation at Arnold Rd. site was not "an either/or with the Gateway Park" concept.
4. Specific issues further discussed were about a need for portable outhouses at the 20-space car lot there, a docent or guide program, and how any observation platform or "tower" needed to be durable in anticipation of vandals. Someone halfway seriously mentioned large buses from Leisure World needing an improved access point to the site. Pritchett remarked several times that the existing barricade at Arnold Rd. terminus first had to be converted into a durable gate to allow access for installing an Observation Platform as well as regular police patrols along the shoreline.
5. Without anyone asking, Mayor Holden mentioned that City Redevelopment funds could (would?) be available for this effort. That was noted but no one discussed funding any further.
6. All agreed to meet further just prior to the scheduled OBTF meeting upcoming on 03 April.

Mayor-Hosted Meeting, 03 April 2008

1. The second meeting occurred with lunch hosted by Mayor Holden. Attendance was 13: Mayor Tom Holden, City Manager Ed Sotelo, SCC Project Jefe Peter Brand, David Pritchett, Penny Boehm, Pat Brown, Roger Pariseau, Lupe Anguiano, Larry Godwin, County Supervisor Kathy Long, Lauren Bianchi, Morey Navarro, Nancy Pederson.

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2. This meeting largely was a refinement of issues initially discussed during the earlier field meeting. Since this was a brainstorming session, items suggested sometimes were inconsistent with each other, but are outlined here, more or less by participant commenting and in no particular order:

Brand: Described overview of Observation Platform concept and history.

Anguiano: Wonderful project idea; it's about time. Should involve CSUCI somehow.

Pederson: Trash receptacles need to keep area clean, as clean conditions encourage more clean.

Pariseau: Observation Platform / Tower needs detailed criteria or specifications on wood versus metal as the construction material. Gate should be further inland, across Arnold Rd. just south of Agromin access point.

Holden: Likes the approach for a *Design Contest* based on criteria specified, also suggests the design include a storage room or locker.

Long: Public support for whole project will be gained with a conspicuous structure like an Observation Platform. The site will need outhouses.

Navarro: SeaBees can construct it with enough early notice. Availability of donated construction materials influence the final design. Some components could be fabricated off-site and brought in later so no equipment or material staging would be necessary on-site.

Sotelo: Tri-County Labor Council (local labor union) could build it.

Pritchett: Stressed again the need for the barricade to be converted into a durable gate. Noted this likely will require a Coastal Development Permit or equivalent under Oxnard Local Coastal Plan. Must be coordinated with USFWS and CDFG for a design that minimizes predator perches.

Godwin: Gate should be outside (towards shoreline) of a "tower" so not to hinder public access.

Boehm: Definitely need to integrate an Observation Platform into the larger visitor access plan and distinguish from a Visitor Center facility.

3. Other design issues raised and lightly discussed: Design specifications must be for durable materials, surfaces must be tagging resistant and amenable to cleaning, interpretive panels need a size to be determined to allow content and graphics by expert, design should incorporate seating on top and at ground level, platform weight capacity to be matched with standing space available, platform height may have limits especially if adjacent Navy is concerned, whole effort must be ADA-compliant for accessibility standards, whole structure could be portable to accommodate final site plans.
4. Next steps were not fully solidified, although a design contest approach was generally agreed, possibly to include architect-instructor Ralph Fernandez from Ventura College and/or Cal Poly Pomona 606 studio class for a graduate students project.