

Restoration Initiatives at the INFINITY Science Center Project

Phase III Proposed Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Restoration Initiatives at the INFINITY Science Center project would provide visitors with interactive science, education, interpretive, and research opportunities for exploring the Gulf ecosystem. The goal is to increase access to coastal natural resources. The estimated cost is \$10.4 million.

The INFINITY Science Center is located southwest of the Interstate 10 and Highway 607 interchange in southern Hancock County, Mississippi. It is adjacent to coastal estuarine habitats including the Hancock County Marsh Preserve. The project site is bordered by the Pearl River to the west and would connect to the “Logtown Scenic Byway to Space” trail to the south.

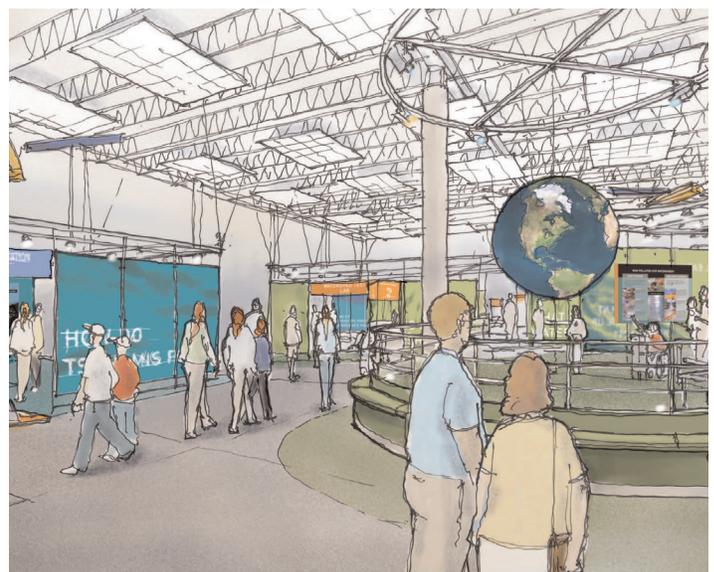
INFINITY is a joint effort between public and private entities such as NASA, the State of Mississippi and private funders. The proposed project would enhance and expand the state-of-the-art interactive science, education, interpretive, and research center for use by visitors, thus increasing appreciation and awareness of the Gulf of Mexico’s natural resources. It also would restore lost recreational use through the provision of increased access to coastal estuarine habitats, wildlife viewing areas and educational features.

The majority of the total available space in the Center would be reserved for exhibits about the Gulf of Mexico, including marsh ecosystems, oceanography, Gulf species, hurricanes, and restoration monitoring. Exhibit designs would allow the public (using computers, simulations and graphics) to experience how scientists model and study the Gulf’s ecosystem. Exhibits would highlight the importance of science and scientific research, natural processes and environmental stewardship, coupled with wise use of resources.

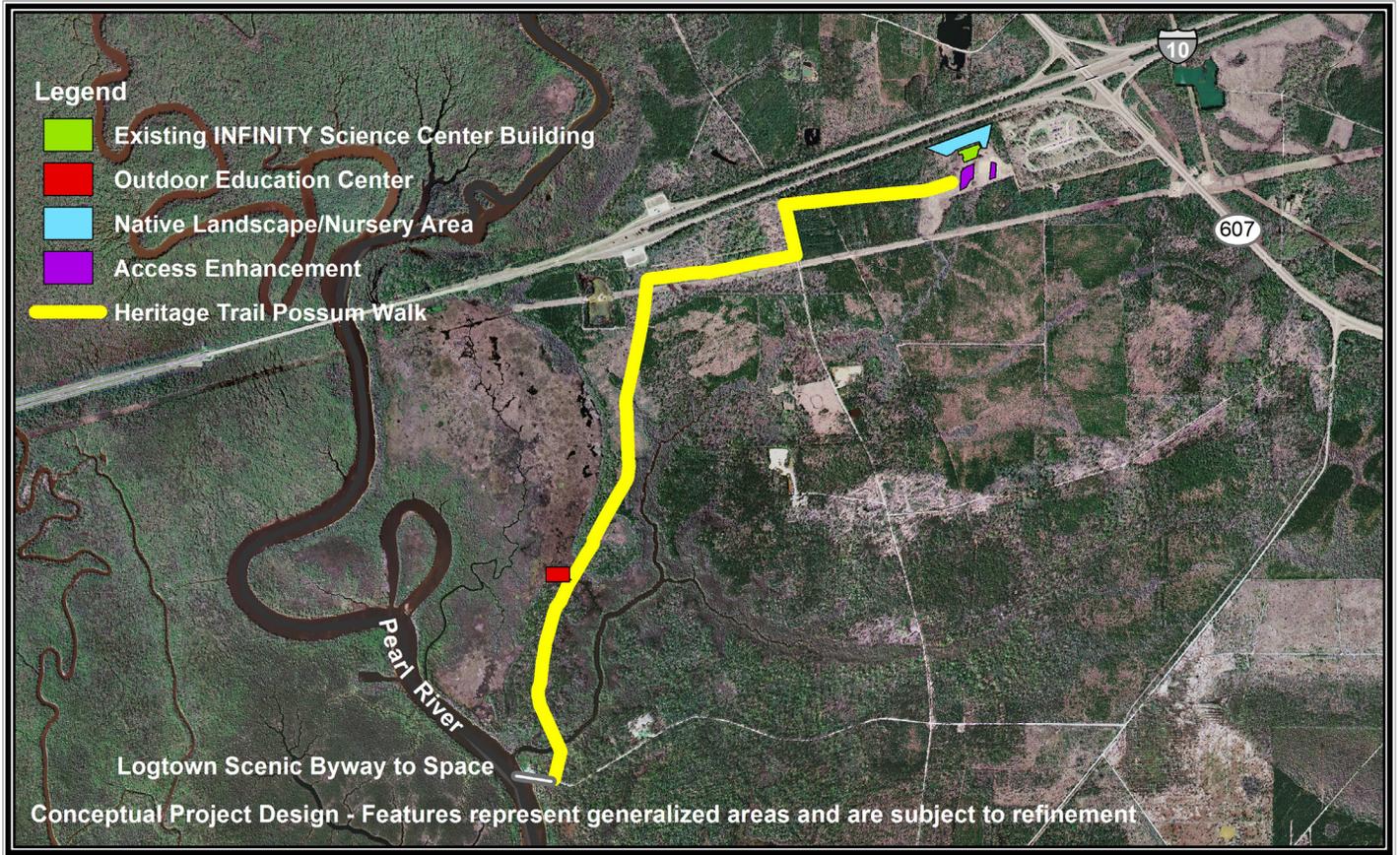
The Heritage Trail-Possum Walk would bring visitors through multiple coastal habitats that occur throughout the immediate area, including marsh, bayhead swamp, cypress swamp, and pine flatwoods. It would enhance access to a coastal trail system that connects with estuarine marsh and beach habitats for those who choose to bike or walk. A public Outdoor Education Center would be constructed for informing visitors of the ecologically sensitive nature of coastal habitats and would be part of the Trail experience. Also included would be the development of a native landscape/nursery area.

As a result of the spill, the public was unable to or limited in the ability to use and enjoy natural resources along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Completion of this project would increase access to coastal natural resources.

ESTIMATED COST \$10.4 million.



Artist's rendering of the Restoration Initiatives at the INFINITY Science Center



The proposed Restoration Initiatives at INFINITY Science Center would include improvements to the Heritage Trail-Possam Walk, an extension of the scenic byway system that provides access to the Hancock County Marsh Preserve, coastal beaches and estuarine marshes.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
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