

North Beach Eco Park

Planning Initiative

Experts' Guidelines

Two experts workshops have been conducted to guide the planning and design of the North Beach Eco Park. These workshops were attended by area professionals working in natural resources, education, tourism, and recreation.

These are some of the ideas and guidelines generated during the experts workshops held in May and August 2019.

Design

- Directional and educational signage that includes area history and culture
- Boardwalk and trails with twists and turns
- Accessible design where possible
- Welcoming entrances from beach area to draw beach users in
- Incorporate history/culture signage and exhibits
- Pervious parking lot
- Barricades to prevent walking and driving on protected areas
- Sensitive light design (minimal and turned off during peak migration)
- Elevated viewing platform or tower
- Shaded areas along platforms and trails
- Open-air pavilion for classes/gatherings
- Design to allow closing with gates
- Recreational uses south of the jetty
- Wildlife habitat north of the jetty
- Extended jetty to form lagoon and buffer
- Oyster reef
- Living shoreline
- Vegetative buffer between park and highway

Connectivity

- Bike trails
- Shuttle to park and North Beach destinations
- School bus parking area
- Park-once facility with central parking lot on higher ground
- Limit access to Timon Blvd portion in planning area (egress for RV park), or create two-way frontage and close Timon

Models to Consider



Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve and Learning Center



Packery Channel Park and Oak Motte Sanctuary



Port Aransas Nature Preserve



Bayou Greenways 2020 Implementation and Management Plan



South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center

Issues to Consider

- Kite surfing and lighting can impact migratory birds
- Bird blinds are not necessary for shorebird watching, but shade is important for summer visitors
- Enclosed areas on trails or boardwalks have attracted campers in this area
- The area is not conducive to kayaking, but closed lagoon area could be conducive to monitored or guided kayaking or canoeing
- Biking on pedestrian trails and boardwalks can be hazardous

Implementation/Operation

- Minimal staff: education/interpretation center with exhibits
 - Aim for staffed center as usership increases
- Manage to prevent overcrowding (multiple large groups visiting at once)
- Improve existing amenities (lighting and boardwalks)
- Consider allowing equipment concessionaires
- Partner with police department for rule enforcement
- Plan for school fieldtrips of up to 150 children
- Partner with County Parks or other agencies to operate

