



News  
from the  
Wildside

*idea to implementation*

## Texas Chenier Refuges Visitor Center Opens

Texas Chenier Plain National Wildlife Refuges Complex has a new LEED-certified headquarters and visitor center, featuring exhibits and interpretive audiovisual media designed and produced by Wilderness Graphics. The exhibits incorporate universal design and many environmentally responsible elements, in keeping with the LEED program. As a gateway to the Texas coastal chenier ecosystem, the visitor center boasts state-of-the-art media, offering diverse opportunities for people to connect with the refuges in the Complex and other nearby public lands. An eBird kiosk and various interactive, fun, and hands-on programs introduce visitors to the coastal ecosystem. An object theater that incorporates an actual airboat and special effects and animated alligator is popular with visitors. Wilderness Graphics produced multiple videos to provide entertaining educational experiences throughout the visitor center.



Fun, interactive exhibit about migration



Bookstore



Outdoor signs in the breezeway



Super-sized alligator nest

SOUTHEAST TEXAS

### De Soto Trail

Visitors can now follow Hernando de Soto's route through Florida on a new heritage trail sponsored by the National Park Service, Florida Department of Transportation, and other partners. Hernando de Soto led the first major foray into the "New World" in 1539. This expedition of exploration, conflict, and conquest in search of gold began at Tampa Bay. The De Soto Trail traces the expedition's route, with 34 sites stretching from Bradenton to Pensacola.



Wilderness Graphics designed and coordinated the interpretive program, which includes signs in kiosks, a website, and a comprehensive guide leaflet based on scholarly works and research. The program was developed for the National Park Service through De Soto National Memorial.

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## CONCEPT PLANS

### Five Rivers Delta Resource Center

The Five Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort, Alabama opened to provide educational and recreational opportunities in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta.

Wilderness Graphics was selected to develop a concept plan including a comprehensive review of interpretive and public use programs. Hank Burch, site manager, explains, "While a great deal of planning went into the initial design and installation of the facility, you sometimes cannot fully see how a place will work until you open the doors and the people arrive. After four years of operation, we find ourselves with field-tested knowledge of what is working, as well as areas that need improvement. We are using the concept planning process to take a step back and critically review all aspects of the facility so that we may set a course for its growth and improvement. . . . Ultimately, we will have a menu of exhibits and signage enhancement concepts, along with budget estimates for their full implementation. . . . We will identify those tasks that we can quickly accomplish with our in-house expertise and existing resources. For larger scale improvements, we will have solid design concepts and visuals that we can utilize in our grant writing and fundraising efforts. We believe that this modest investment in concept planning will save significant time and resources as we move forward toward implementation."

ALABAMA

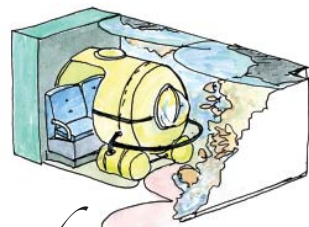


### Why Have A Concept Plan?

Whether creating a new cultural heritage or natural history venue or improving an existing one, success is more likely if a thoughtful and practical overall plan is created for the project. Wilderness Graphics provides concept planning services that can be used to refine ideas and outline considerations for budgeting and implementation.

Wilderness Graphics starts with an assessment of existing conditions, including facilities, programs, resources, and constituents. The next step produces design solutions and general guidance tailored to each project's special character. This approach has been very successful for heritage trails, parks, refuges, and museum exhibits. The value of a concept plan lies in getting the ideas right before embarking on a large commitment to develop formal specifications.

Concept plans also help establish budgets and propose how a project might be funded for implementation, as well as operation. Upon completion of a concept plan, a client can proceed to seek professional expertise for specialized disciplines, such as architects and engineers, and Wilderness Graphics as exhibit designer.



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### FSU Coastal and Marine Laboratory

The outreach and education concept plan recently developed for the campus of the Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory in St. Teresa, Florida provides a framework for development of public use programs.

Marine Lab Director Dr. Felicia Coleman says of the plan, "When we recently changed the mission of our marine lab from a support facility to a research institution, conducting science in support of marine and coastal conservation, we also changed the culture of the lab dramatically and significantly raised our visibility to the public. Wilderness Graphics helped us develop a suite of interactive displays, interpretive trails, and site developments that clearly will imbue visitors with a sense of the wonder and serenity found in the coastal marshes and seagrass meadows of the northeastern Gulf of Mexico."

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Wilderness Graphics uses its staff's talent and broad experience to help clients refine their visions into workable plans. The company's familiarity with the customer's programs and sensitivity to their mission make Wilderness Graphics well suited to the task.

Concept plans by Wilderness Graphics can help parks, museums, and resource managers with:

- Heritage trail planning
- Signage and wayfinding
- Planning for public use and interpretation
- Visitor Center or museum exhibits
- Nature trails and boardwalks

Wilderness Graphics approaches concept plans as fixed fee projects rather than percentages of a total project budget. Based on the level of effort needed to devise a program and its complexity, costs for concept plans start at about \$5,000, plus travel. Fees can increase due to the scope of work, additional travel, and optional marketing materials, such as posters and fundraising media.

## Kiosks and Wayside Interpretive Signs



Through the downturn in the economy, many customers are returning to purchase the quality products that Wilderness Graphics offers. Clients understand the value of our pricing structure, which includes full services that often are extras or not available from other sources. Lydia Long, the friendly voice handling catalog orders, notes, "We offer content and art development as a standard part of our services. We have in-house writers and illustrators in addition to talented graphic artists and exhibit fabricators. And, for those who come with signs ready to produce, our prices are very competitive for production-only projects."

Trail signs have become an industry standard for a cost-efficient and professional means to share natural history content with trail users. If the hundreds of standard titles don't fit the bill, we will often develop new topics at the standard price. Custom trail signs are also affordable to create a special style or themed trail.



Three-panel Kiosk



Sheltered Kiosk



Angled Aluminum Frame



Town Center Kiosk



Standard Sign about Wetlands

Kiosks are available in pressure-treated wood, cedar, aluminum, and recycled plastic. Our kiosks have been used from Fairbanks to the Caribbean, in many different environments, for trailheads and visitor contact stations. Easy to assemble, kits include all hardware. Many are engineered to meet modern hurricane wind loads.

Federal agencies can order standard products through GSA. We also accept MasterCard and Visa.



## In the Works...

### Coastal North Carolina Refuges

Designs are final and production is well underway for the Alligator River and Pea Island Refuges headquarters and visitor center on historic Roanoke Island just inside the famed Outer Banks. Exhibits will include an object theater inside a replica historic store with videos and multimedia presentations produced by Wilderness Graphics. Visitors will be able to take a virtual aerial tour over a dozen refuges from the cockpit of a Cessna airplane and walk through a wetland diorama to see firsthand the seasonal changes supporting waterfowl migration. Other innovative exhibits include information about red wolves and black bears.

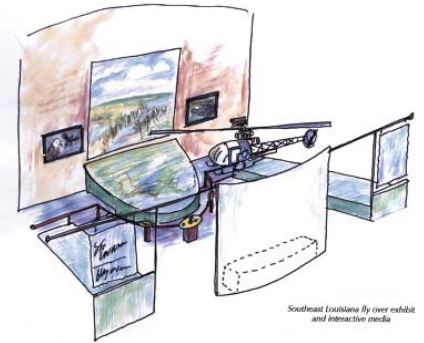


Exhibits under construction in our studio

NORTH CAROLINA

### Southeast Louisiana Refuges

High definition aerial videography of 8 national wildlife refuges near New Orleans has been completed. The footage of the vast wetlands is being assembled into an exhibit that will give visitors an aerial tour. The video, keyed to a large topographic map model, will be shown from a scale helicopter model. The aerial view on the large screen will be interrupted to show on-the-ground videos of wildlife and habitats of each of the refuges. The exhibit at Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges Complex headquarters in Bayou Lacombe should open in a few months.



Southeast Louisiana fly over exhibit and interactive media

LOUISIANA

### Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve Opens

A generous gift from The Leon Levy Foundation and philanthropist Shelby White, in memory of her late husband Leon Levy, has opened in Governors Harbour, Eleuthera. The Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve is dedicated to the rich cultural and natural values of the coppice habitat, with special focus on ethnobotany.



Wilderness Graphics was engaged by the Bahamas National Trust to create a concept plan which served as the foundation for development of the preserve. The site includes an education pavilion, visitor center, boardwalk, observation tower, freshwater wetland, and numerous trails.

Eric Carey, executive director of the Bahamas National Trust said, "The Preserve is an immediate success and is now one of the jewels in the national park system. Wilderness Graphics' initial concept plan, and guidance throughout its development, was critical to help shape the program and facilities for the Preserve."

THE BAHAMAS

## More Projects Underway

### Gumbo Limbo Nature Center

Vacationing visitors, residents, and particularly school children will learn about sea turtles from the exhibits being installed at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton. Exhibits focus on the three species that nest on the local beaches. The life history of the loggerhead, green, and leatherback turtles are presented with interpretive panels, interactive units, and a small diorama. These exhibits are an example of the many displays designed and fabricated by Wilderness Graphics on the subject of sea turtles.



### Gulf State Park



Wilderness Graphics is working with Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores on several projects designed to enhance visitors' enjoyment of the park's amenities. For the park's well-known pier, Wilderness Graphics is providing interpretive signs and murals with interactive features flanking a diorama depicting the diverse sea life found on the pier's pilings. The nature center will receive an update to several live animal displays, while a new classroom will have several exhibits designed to present information about the park's diverse habitats.

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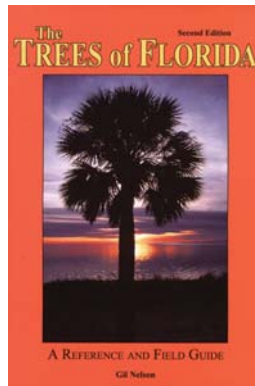
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### Trees of Florida

#### New Edition Now Available

Dr. Gill Nelson's popular book, *Trees of Florida*, is now available in a second edition published by Pineapple Press. The new edition includes more photos by the author and additional illustrations.

**Marvin Cook** provided hundreds of illustrations for the new edition and Dr. Nelson's companion book, *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida*. These books are comprehensive guides for use as reference or in the field.



**Yelena McLane**, exhibit designer with Wilderness Graphics since 2003 is nearing completion of her Ph.D. degree at Florida State University, specializing in museum and exhibition design. This degree will add to her outstanding academic credentials, including graduate degrees in interior design and linguistics, and NCIDQ and LEED certifications.

### Everglades Trail Welcomes Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The Seminole Tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation was added to the Everglades Trail as the 21st site. The **Everglades Trail** was developed by **Wilderness Graphics** in partnership with the Nature Conservancy and US Senator Bob Graham to help connect people with the Greater Everglades and Big Cypress Ecosystem. The nonprofit Everglades Trail Association, Inc. supplies brochures at plazas along Florida's Turnpike and at Welcome Centers to lead people to public lands where they can experience the wonders of the Everglades. The project is funded from sales of a 2 CD set with songs by Florida musicians including Jimmy Buffett. The CD is available at **Amazon.com**.



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