

FINAL REPORT

Holland Channel Accessibility and Amenities
2013.1375

PROJECT PROFILE

Synopsis:

- **Project Title:** *Holland Channel Accessibility and Amenities*
- **Grantee Organization:** Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- **Project Team:**
Joe Strach, DNR/ Jody Johnston, DNR/ Scott DeKorte, Michigan Department of Technology Management and Budget (DTMB)/ Robert Ford, LAP/ Matt Hull, LAP/ Matt Lincoln, DNR
- **Contact Person:** Matt Lincoln, DNR
- **Grant Amount:** \$200,000
- **Time Frame:** 01/30/2014 to 06/01/2016
- **Focus Area:** Access
- **Brief Project Summary:** The purpose of this project was to design and construct barrier-free fishing access along the channel between Lake Michigan and Lake Macatawa within Holland State Park. In addition to access, fishing amenities were also provided including picnic tables, benches, interpretive nodes and an outdoor classroom for fishing education classes.

Project In Context:

The project improves access to channel fishing opportunities within Holland State Park. Prior to improvements, the walkway along the channel was too narrow and did not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards. The project improved access to the channel by providing a widened walk, benches, interpretive signage and an outdoor classroom for fishing classes. The project serves Holland State Park visitors and the Holland region in conjunction with the existing fishing access amenities located along the channel and in Lake Macatawa.

Goals and Effort:

The key goal for the project was to improve access to the channel for an improved fishing experience. The purpose of the project was to construct a widened walkway, provide connections to the parking lot, improve seating and construct an outdoor classroom along with interpretive signs for the visitors of Holland State Park.

Results:

The result of the project was an improved promenade along the channel including a widened 12-foot wide walkway, benches, interpretive signs and an outdoor classroom complete with picnic tables and a seat wall all connected via a walkway to the parking lot for use by park visitors.

Although it was desired to include a shade shelter over the outdoor classroom and extend the walkway west further towards Lake Michigan, it was not feasible due to funding constraints.

Products and Resources

The new amenities are being advertised at the park through informational kiosks and hand-out material. Additional promotion for the project will occur once Phase 2 of the project is completed, which will extend the walkway 180 feet towards Lake Michigan. This is expected to take place in 2017. Information related to the park and its amenities can be found on DNR's website: www.michigan.gov/holland

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Background/Overview

1. The project was completed as originally intended except for two scope items. Due to funding constraints, a shade shelter over the outdoor classroom and an additional 180 feet walkway was not completed as part of this project. The preliminary cost estimate for the project proved unrealistic. Nevertheless, the DNR was able to provide a quality project outcome through donations of benches and in-kind demolition services. The finished project accomplishes the original project goal by providing improved access to the channel fishery.

Outcomes

2. Activities pursued included hiring a design consultant to prepare engineering plans and bid documents for the construction of the project and hiring a construction contractor to carry out construction activities of the project which included demolition of existing concrete structures and the construction of concrete walks, benches, picnic tables, an outdoor classroom with brick pavers and interpretive signage. Pursued and achieved outcomes of the project included increased use of the channel for fishing and use of the site for fishing classes.
3. The audience we were hopeful to reach was the visitors of Holland State Park and local school groups. DNR has received positive feedback from local school groups that regularly use the park for learning activities. The DNR has also received positive feedback from visitors to the park, although the DNR did not actively pursue feedback.
4. The DNR's relationship with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) played an integral part in this project's success. In order to perform any work along the USACE's channel wall, all project activities needed to be approved by the USACE prior to construction. The information was shared proved to be vital to the project outcome.
5. The most important benefit to this project is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant improvements that resulted from this project which allows the disabled public the opportunity to fish in the channel. The other important benefit is the construction of an outdoor classroom that will be used by school groups to learn about the importance of the Great Lakes fishery for future generations.

Site-specific information

6. The improved concrete walkway is 12 feet wide by 469.73feet. This includes seven benches, two interpretive signs, six tables and eight seat walls. The outdoor classroom area consists of a 24.5-foot radius half circle adjacent to the 12-foot walk. This space includes brick pavers surrounded by an 8-foot wide concrete pathway and houses the tables and seat walls. The project also consists of an 8-foot wide concrete pathway extending from the outdoor classroom to the parking lot area
7.
 - a. From US-31, north of Holland, vehicular traffic accesses Holland State Park via Exit 55. From there, travel west one mile to Douglas/Ottawa Beach Road and turn left. Visitors access the Holland Channel Fishing area by bicycle, walking or vehicles via Douglas/Ottawa Beach Road.
 - b. Amenities offered at the access site include a 12-foot wide concrete pathway connected to the parking lot, an outdoor classroom consisting of seat walls and tables, interpretive signage and benches.
 - c. Two interpretive signs are located along the walkway. These signs inform visitors about the Great Lakes Fishery and species that can be found in the channel.
 - d. Common species found in the channel include: coho salmon, Chinook salmon, walleye, brown trout, steelhead, lake trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, white bass, bluegill, black crappie, freshwater drum, channel catfish, yellow perch and Great Lakes muskellunge.
 - e. The channel is stocked annually with lake trout and Chinook salmon. Every other year, the channel is stocked with walleye and muskellunge.
 - f. DNR recommends typical rod and bobber casting methods with minnows to catch these species.
 - g. Being located within Holland State Park, the park offers two modern campgrounds. The park is also located within two miles of Downtown Holland, where overnight accommodations include motels, hotels, bed and breakfasts and seasonal rental properties.
 - h. If visitors have any questions, they are free to ask a park ranger who regularly patrols the campgrounds, beach and channel site.
 - i. All project objectives were met due to the creative collaboration between the consultant, contractor, DNR staff, local partners and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Pictures

8. The completed project deliverables have been uploaded and attached to the grant program website. In addition, photos of the completed project can be found here.
9. A photo of the program acknowledgement sign has been installed and has been uploaded on the program website.

Related Efforts

10. This project was a stand-alone project, although the project was inspired by a similar project performed by Ottawa County Parks.
11. The DNR plans to continue with Phase 2 of the project in 2017 provided that funding is secured, which will consist of extending the walkway along the channel for 180 feet west towards Lake Michigan. This will provide additional access to fishing along the channel.

Reflections

12. The project was completed without any major issues, although it was discovered early in the process that we did not have sufficient funds to carry out everything outlined in the original project scope. Through creative collaborative efforts, however, we were able to achieve the desired goals and objectives of the project.
13. DNR recommends budgeting conservatively for a future GLFT project, taking into consideration all research and expenses necessary to deliver all scope items listed in the proposal. For larger projects, recommends completing the engineering for a project before seeking funding for construction to ensure a more accurate project cost estimate.