

Final Narrative Report

Background/overview

1. Briefly summarize project description from proposal: This element of the Besser Fishery Heritage Project develops a “vision” and conceptual plan for the Fishery Heritage Exhibit that will help assure that Besser Museum uses its resources and future grant funding to achieve its mission of fostering knowledge-based stewardship of the Great Lakes and their watersheds. The project deliverables include schematic renderings of the exhibit layout, and a “Narrative” of what visitors will experience. The Narrative will include a description of learning tools and opportunities that will be available to visitors as they travel through the exhibit, from the Great Lakes Stewardship Classroom to the Native American Gallery and along the walk way leading to the outdoor displays of a mid-20th Century commercial fishing vessel and a recently retired research vessel. The Narrative describes how these museum attributes, including the vessels, will be used to tell the story of Native fishing, the rise of commercial fishing, invasive species, the collapse and recovery of Great Lakes fisheries, and how research informs management in the wise stewardship of Great Lakes fisheries. Some educational resources that will be available to students and educators are also described.
2. Was project completed as originally proposed? Yes.

Outcomes

3. What activities pursued in relationship to intended outcomes, and what extent did you achieve the following intended outcomes from the proposal?
 - Develop RFP for conceptual plan development: The Museum Director and the Fishery Heritage Committee Chair visited the Pigeon River Discovery Center <http://pigeonriverdiscoverycenter.org/discovery-center/> near Vanderbilt, Michigan to learn from them their design/visioning process. The Pigeon River Discovery Center had retained Good Design Group to develop a conceptual plan and narrative for this new forestry museum and they were in the process of build-out during our visit. They generously shared with us their learning experiences as they developed their project and helped us in drafting bid specifications for our conceptual planning contract. The Museum Director and the Fishery Heritage Committee drafted an RFP for the Fishery Heritage conceptual design work in early June 2017 and sent the RFP to three highly recommended Museum Design specialists the week of June 12. The project was awarded to the Good Design Group (the only firm that submitted a bid) on August 30, 2017.
 - Convene Advisory Panels: On October 30-31 the Fishery Heritage Committee, with Sea Grant playing the lead role, convened an educators panel and Agency Panel and all met with Good Design group at Besser Museum to guide their work. One of the members of the Educators Panel was successfully recruited to serve as a member of Besser Board of Trustees. We have yet to recruit a Student Panel although students have been serving on an ad-hoc basis as the conceptual planning proceeded.
 - Produce a Conceptual Plan and Display Narrative: To guide the work of Good Design as they drafted the plans, the Fishery Heritage Committee drafted “**Interpretative Plan Highlights for Besser Museum’s Fishery Heritage Display for Conceptual Planning Purposes, February 22, 2018.**” Much of this document is reflected in the final Narrative

produced by Good Design. The Fishery Heritage Committee and Museum Director reviewed several renditions of Good Design's products until satisfied that they represented the Museum's stewardship-driven vision for the Fishery Heritage Display, and could be maintained, once completed, by existing Museum staff. We were very much satisfied with the work of Good Design and their willingness to work closely with staff and advisory panels as their work progressed.

4. What audience were you hopeful of reaching; to what extent did you reach them; and did you receive any feedback. While our principal audience for the Fishery Heritage Display is K-12 students, educators, and general Museum visitors, the specific audience for this planning process during the grant period was agency and educator stewardship and outreach experts. Michigan Sea Grant agreed to facilitate and coordinate Advisory Panels with Museum staff. We were also able to engage input from these groups by recruiting certain educators into the membership in the Besser Museum Fishery Heritage Committee. On October 30, Michigan Sea Grant facilitated meetings of the Educator and Agency Advisory Panels with Museum and Good Design staff to review the proposed Narrative and draft renderings of the display. Representing agencies at the October 30 meeting were: Scott Koproski, USFWS Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office; Dave Fielder, Michigan DNR Alpena Great Lakes Fishery Research Station; Lauren Holbrook, Hammond Bay Biological Station; and Brandon Schroeder, Michigan Sea Grant. Representing education were Bob Thomson (Alpena Public Schools TEACHER), Liz Thomson (Alpena High School STUDENT), and Tracy Page (Michigan DNR Education PARTNER). Their recommendations were used to design the content of the Narrative and the next renderings of the planning process so as to better meet the needs of educators and to validate the accuracy of our messages. Input from educators was additionally sought during the May 22 BWET training "Our Fisheries Our Future" at Besser Museum where we explained and piloted a student experience with BWET teachers; shared Museum plans and our vision for the future, using the Good Design products; and organized and compiled appropriate, relevant educational resources and materials in relation to the museum exhibit experience. We will continue to use all three (Educator, Student, and Agency) panels as we proceed to final planning and build-out to help assure the accuracy and relevancy of our messages.
5. What opportunities or relationships were developed or strengthened through this work? The Museum Director, the Fishery Heritage Committee Chair, and certain members of the Fishery Heritage Committee used this opportunity to visit other museums, look at the design work of a variety of museum consulting companies, and to develop closer relations with other sites on the Great Lakes Fishery Heritage Trail. The sites visited since the inception of Besser's Fishery Heritage Program include: the Pigeon River Discovery Center (a Good Design Group project) near Vanderbilt, Michigan; the Michigan Maritime Museum, South Haven, Michigan; West Shore Fishing Museum, Menominee, Michigan; "Fishtown" at Leland Michigan; the *Aloha* fishing vessel at Sleeping Bear Dunes, Glen Arbor, Michigan; Harbor Springs Area Historical Society Museum (a Good Design Group project) in Harbor Springs, Michigan; the Michigan Maritime Heritage Alliance display of vessels and restoration projects at Traverse City, Michigan; and the Ziiibiwing Center of Anishinabek Cultural and Lifeways, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The Fishery Heritage Project has led to a closer association between Besser Museum and the Northeast Michigan Stewardship Initiative, the BWET program, and the

northern Lake Huron Sea Grant staff. We also worked with DNR Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and USGS agencies who participated in the focus groups and contributed during the initial planning phase. Students are already using the Museum's Fishery Heritage display (the *Katherine V* display is almost complete) and making use of the Museum's classroom and recreational fishing display.

6. Was an evaluation included as part of this project? If so, key findings? Provide attachment if applicable. While an evaluation was not included specifically as part of this planning project, our Advisory Panels will be used to provide feedback as we evaluate the plans and move toward final design and buildout. We have only recently received the plans from Good Design Group and have only had the opportunity for the Besser Museum Board of Trustees and the BWET "Our Fisheries Our Future" teacher group to review them; we will be presenting these plans to agency partners and the Student and Agency advisory panels when these panels are next convened. We will use feedback from these reviews to revise plans accordingly.
7. What were most important benefits and outcomes of this project, whether intended or unintended? Most importantly, the Conceptual Plan and Narrative have proved to be valuable tools for crystalizing the Besser Museum's vision for the Fishery Heritage Display and sharing that vision with others. Our agency and educator partners will now have a strong sense of what we propose to build. Agencies will see how their ongoing fisheries research can be publicly disseminated using this Besser project to educate the public, and our partners now have a better basis for critically reviewing our intentions. It is also a useful vehicle for budgeting purposes and for sharing with potential contractors as we request courtesy bids for build-out elements of the plan.

Related Efforts

8. Was the project a stand-alone effort or was it part of a larger effort beyond what is funded by GLFT? Have other funders been involved either during the time of this grant or subsequently? The Fishery Heritage Display is one element of Besser Museum's art, history, and science interpretative program. The Fishery Heritage Display will especially complement Besser's history and science (including science-related mathematics) themes. Besser's Native American Gallery is being redesigned and enhanced from a grant from the Cook Family Endowment Fund and the Native American Gallery Project welcomes the opportunity to include in its display the importance of fishing to Northeast Michigan Native people's nutrition and culture. The development/buildout of the *Katherine V* display has proceeded uninterrupted since we applied to the GLFT for funding and the buildout is now nearly complete <http://www.bessermuseum.org/katherine-v-fisheries-heritage> . Total value of contributed, volunteer labor plus materials purchased with revenue from local fundraisers for the *Katherine V* project is currently at least \$125,000.
9. Has there been any spinoff work or follow-up work related to this project? Not much yet, but we did host the BWET "Our Fisheries Our Future" in-service educator training event. During this training, the Fishery Heritage Committee Chair addressed the topic of Great Lakes Fishery history and challenges, concluding with a presentation of the Fishery Heritage Conceptual Plan produced by this grant.

Communication/Dissemination

10. List the publications, presentations, websites, and other forms of formal dissemination of project deliverables, tools, or results, including those that are *planned* or *in progress*: The products of the Good Design Group, as developed under the guidance of the Besser Fishery Heritage Committee, have been finalized, unanimously approved by the Besser Museum Board of Trustees, and can be viewed on the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan web page <http://www.bessermuseum.org/visions-fisheries-heritage-2018> . We plan to use the conceptual plans in future proposals for final design and buildout funding.
11. Please characterize your efforts to distribute and encourage use of products, processes, programs, etc., developed through this grant: We are sharing the plans on our web page so they are readily available to our partners and others interested. We are requesting opportunities to address agency and educator partners on the state of our plans in order to obtain comments/feedback on our proposed direction. We participate in the Michigan Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium which will be holding their fourth annual conference in October 2018. We will be sharing with Consortium members at this conference our Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage exhibit Conceptual Plan and our planning process funded by the GFT planning grant.

Reflections

12. Please describe any unanticipated benefits, challenges, surprises, and/or important lessons learned over the course of the project: The Fishery Heritage Committee Chair has made presentations to teachers, including the Educators Panel on October 30, 2017, and most recently the BWET “Our Fisheries, Our Future” teacher training program at Besser Museum on May 23, 2018. In both cases teachers welcomed our proposed project, citing the costs of boat time (local boat time is approximately \$750 per 1.5-hour trip) and weather complications associated with “on the water” field trips. By offering a ‘virtual’ experience aboard a commercial fishing and a research vessel, while providing a variety of educational tools and stewardship opportunities, teachers expressed their belief that Besser’s Fishery Heritage Program will offer them more cost-effective, reliable, place-based learning opportunities, with a higher percentage of student time spent actively engaged, than what is currently available. A highly anticipated benefit was that the conceptual designs would help the Museum staff, trustees, and partners gain a shared vision of what the Fishery Heritage Project would look like and the benefits it would strive to produce: the plans have accomplished this and we hope they help us communicate this vision to future partners and funding entities. Finally, we were surprised to learn just how costly some of the interpretive messaging materials and software can be. We will be challenged to select low-maintenance equipment, keep these costs down, and to not build more interpretative infrastructure than our staff can afford to maintain.
13. What recommendations (if any) would you make to other project directors working on similar efforts or to the GLFT? The success of this planning project can be credited to working with experts in their subject matter. Besser Museum was intentional in bringing together a diverse team of experts representing Great Lake fisheries, museum exhibit design, and K-12 pedagogy to reach our goal. The Fisheries Heritage Committee hosted several meetings where everyone’s knowledge and ideas were valued and incorporated into the planning process.

Attachments

14. Please attach any reports or materials developed through the grant. We have attached:
 - a. In addition to the postings on our web site (<http://www.bessermuseum.org/visions-fisheries-heritage-2018>) we have attached the Good Design Group renderings of the display plan.
 - b. The Good Design Exhibit Narrative is also available on the web page and as an attachment.
 - c. We have attached a supplements to the financial report giving in-kind hourly contributions and expenditure details of the Grant including invoices and payments.
 - d. A Budget produced by Good Design Group for interpretative tools, technology, and certain materials needed for buildout of the design as proposed is also attached.