

Oscoda Township Observation & Fishing Pier
GLFT
Final Narrative Report

Background/Overview

1. The project in its initial conception (almost 6 years ago) had originally started as a wood piling constructed pier. In order to withstand the conditions of Lake Huron, the action of both ice and waves needed to be incorporated in the design and the engineer opted to use steel caissons as opposed to the traditional wood pier construction. The project submitted to the GLFT for funding was this modified design utilizing steel caisson and prefabricated pedestrian bridge sections.

Outcomes

2. Outcome #1 obtain federal, state and local permits: All permits necessary to begin the project were obtained prior to starting and included; Bottomland Conveyance from the MDNRE, MDEQ permit, Army Corp of Engineers permit and finally the MDNRE permit. 100% of the deliverables were achieved.

Outcome #2 Construct 8' x 150' boardwalk: The boardwalk was engineered by Spicer group and constructed by the Township's Department of Public Works. Prefabricated aluminum railings were attached and lighting was installed in the 75' of the boardwalk closest to the pier. 100% of the deliverables were achieved.

Outcome #3 12' x 300' Pier construction: Project was awarded to RCL Construction for the caisson construction and setting of the pedestrian bridges. Contech Engineered Solutions were awarded the contract for the fabrication/painting of the pedestrian bridge structures. 100% of the deliverables were achieved.

Outcome #4 Engineering services: Spicer Group of Saginaw was hired in 2010 as the engineer for the project. The firm handled the design, DEQ permitting, bidding process and oversight on construction. 100% of the deliverables were achieved.

3. The intended use of the pier was that of observation as well as fishing. The goal was to provide new recreational opportunities as well as enhance those that currently exist. Persons wishing to access the lake with the intent of enjoying scenic views, observing wildlife, picnicking, fishing, walking/hiking and a multitude of other activities would be offered a unique opportunity in an unspoiled Great Lakes setting.

Park patrons would be able to see, hear and experience the natural environment in a manner very similar to that of being in a watercraft without having to make the often substantial investment required. This experience would be made available at no cost to all members of the general public on a barrier free basis.

Feedback received to date has been favorable. Due to the late November completion of the project fishing opportunities were not able to be explored to date, however the observation component of the pier has been fully utilized. To date this writer is aware of two weddings that are being planned to occur on the last caisson of the pier as well as producing a new location for family photos (as depicted in one of the images included in our close-out materials submitted). All these are a sure sign of all the beautiful memories this project is bound to become a part of as it is woven into the fabric of our community.

4. It would have to be the increased recreational opportunities for the general public that were enhanced and strengthened through the pier being built with this project.

5. The most important intended benefit of this Pier was the barrier-free accessibility to the water that this project now provides. Whether that person is in a wheel chair, elderly, a family with a

stroller or someone without mobility restrictions for that matter...they now have the ability to experience this “on the water” activity they might not previously been able to.

Site Specific Information

6. The access structure is an 8-foot-wide, 150-foot-long wooden boardwalk that leads to a 12-foot-wide, 300-foot-long observation and fishing pier. Some of the amenities incorporated into the design are accessible fishing area, new ADA benches as well as lighting that will give the pier identity in the evening hours. This lighting is along the railing shining downward onto the walking surface so it would not affect the night time star gazing opportunities.

The Pier is located at the Oscoda Township Beach Park which is in the downtown business district and has approximately 1,025 feet of Lake Huron beach frontage and comprises nearly 11 acres.

The design of the Pier was engineered to withstand the open waters of Lake Huron and consists of three concrete/steel caissons built 100 feet apart from each other. Three 100 foot Pedestrian bridge structures were manufactured off site, each section was then split in half and trucked via freight haulers to the Oscoda beach park where they were re-assembled and set into place by way of a crane from the beach.

The third caisson was designed to allow the Township to add onto the end and extend further into the lake as funds allow.

7.

a. In order for visitors to access the Observation and Fishing Pier they would utilized River Road Scenic By-way east towards Lake Huron. River road dead ends at the Oscoda Beach Park and visitors would turn left into the northern parking lot of the park. The Pier is visible from the road and there is a barrier free board walk that leads you directly to the Pier.

b. The Oscoda Beach Park offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities: playground equipment, picnic benches, grills, skate-park, basketball, and bath house with restrooms and a band shell with weekly concerts in the summer. There is barrier free access, ample handicap parking availability, and the parking lot, board walks and pier are all illuminated.

c. Discussion is underway with area representatives with the Michigan Sea Grant agency to develop interpretative signs in regard to what angling opportunities are available from the pier. Anticipated completion and installation would be this summer 2013.

d. A letter of support from the DNR was obtained and submitted with the Townships GLFT grant application. In this letter David Borgeson identifies that the pier will allow anglers seasonal fishing opportunities for the following species of fish: perch, walleye, catfish, steel head and whitefish. In addition Tim Cwalinski with the MDNR identified that Brown trout and Salmon could also be caught.

e. In the same letter of support that is identified in letter d above, Mr. Borgeson indicates that the DNR invests a significant amount of resources in their steelhead stocking effort that occurs in the AuSable River in Oscoda (100,000 yearlings annually). In addition to that stocking Tim Cwalinski indicated that they will be stocking Atlantic salmon (30,000 yearlings annually) in mid April of 2013 at the Whirlpool location in the AuSable River. The AuSable River flows into Lake Huron at the “mouth of the river” which is less than a ½ mile away from the Observation and Fishing Pier location at the Oscoda Beach Park.

Best times to catch: Steelhead (year round-spring is best), Salmon (spring & fall), Walleye (early spring during open fishing season), Whitefish (fall), Perch and Catfish (Spring-Fall).

f. Steelhead, Trout, Walleye and Whitefish recommended fishing tactics would be small spoons or spawn (depending on time of year), perch and catfish anglers should use live bait.

g. As Oscoda and AuSable are both destinations for many tourists throughout the year, lodging is available in many venues from the somewhat rustic accommodations in campgrounds to motels and hotels and finally several local B&B's. These accommodations can be best found by going to the Oscoda Convention and Visitors Bureau website on the internet at www.oscoda.com.

h. This access site is extremely family friendly, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

i. All of the projects objectives were met.

Pictures

8. We have provided additional photos over the three that were required and can be found on a thumb drive that is included in our packet of close out material.

9. There were two other grants that Oscoda Township secured for this project in addition to the GLFT assistance. All three signs are located together and a picture of same is included on the thumb drive.

Related Efforts

10. The Oscoda Township Observation and Fishing Pier project started almost 6 years ago. The original thought was to build a wooden pier structure but over time that concept evolved into the concrete/steel caisson construction that is now in place. This change in design was deemed necessary as the Township mandated a project that would withstand the open waters of Lake Huron for a minimum of 50 years. With these upgraded materials and construction methods came additional costs, and what was originally thought to be an estimated \$750,000 project now exceeds one million dollars.

Two other grants, besides the GLFT grant, were secured for the project. The Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund was the first secured in 2007 in the amount of \$460,000. Second came the Michigan Coastal Management Grant in 2011 in the amount of \$50,000 and later in 2012 because of a change in their maximum grant amounts (and excess 2012 grant funds available) they increased the amount to \$100,000 in late fall of 2012.

With these two grants just identified and the GLFT grant there was a total of \$761,500.00 in grant funding for the project. The project came in at \$1,029,482.49 which left a little over a quarter of a million dollars, \$268,000.000 from the Townships general fund.

11. The Township is currently working on its goals and objectives for 2013 and based on initial discussion the entrance to the Oscoda Beach Park has been identified for improvements to enhance the experience the visitors will feel and create more of a "gateway" effect as they enter the park.

Reflections

12. I would say the biggest challenge occurred in 2011 when the project went out to bid and one day prior to the contracts being signed with the low bidder for the construction, the firm walked away from their proposal. That left the Township without a contractor and the next lowest bid was substantially over budget and the entire project had to be delayed until 2012.

13. I cannot think of any recommendations to make.