

Paynes Prairie Preserve Visitor Center

Florida Department of Environmental Protection • Micanopy, Florida

Project Details

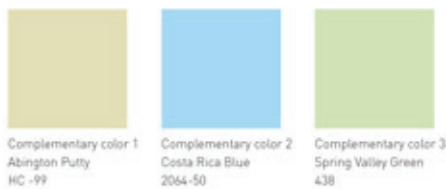
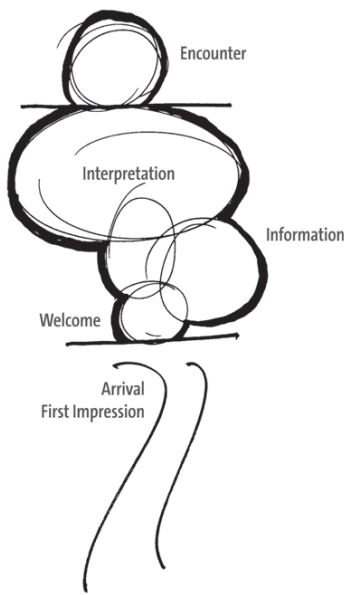
Scope: Visitor Center, 3,300 sf
Budget: \$900,000

Project Team

Project Manager: Edward Malouf
Exhibit Developer: Matt Kirchman
Exhibit Designers: Edward Malouf, Edward Krent, Shaai Sattar
Graphic Designers: Edward Malouf, Sarah Philbrick
Exhibit Researcher: Carol Lieb
Writer/Editor: Susan Timberlake
Lighting Designer: Available Light
AV Systems Developer: BPI

Our team planned and designed the interpretive program for the 3,300 sf visitor center at one of Florida's largest sinkholes, the Alachua Sink. Located just outside of Gainesville, the 22,000 acre wet prairie site and its ever-changing conditions support an astoundingly diverse system that includes alligators, bison, horses, fish, and numerous species of migratory and native waterfowl as well as small and predatory birds. After our team led several planning workshops, we developed a program to capture the site's biodiversity and address topics including hydrology, nature communities, and the roles of fire, invasive species and human inhabitants in shaping the landscape and site systems.

The project redesigned visitor interaction with the space, creating a new flow that facilitates richer experiences and improves physical accessibility. We created unique tools to acquaint visitors to the site and its dynamic conditions, including a magnetic, wall-sized map that staff and volunteers can update to illustrate events such as wildlife sightings and plant blooms using image markers. Additional project highlights include an immersive theater complete with storm and fire effects, a gesture-driven interface to explore the ecosystem, diorama cases, a table to explore the watershed, and the Raft of Diversity exhibit- a showcase for 30 site species in model form as well as painted in a field guide.



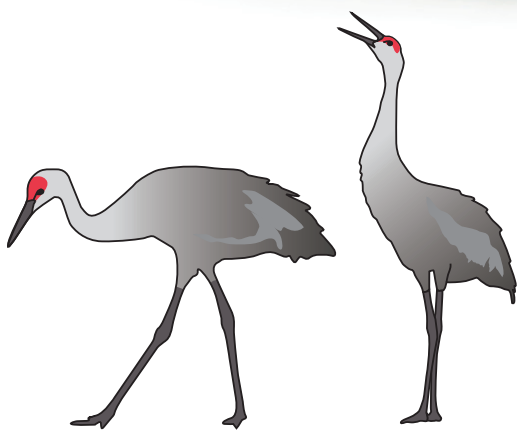
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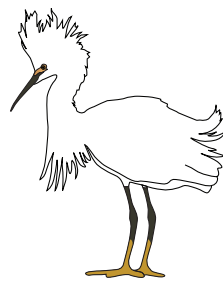
Zebra Longwing

Central to the program was creation of a new graphic identity for the site and center. This new identity was manifest through the series of trailhead and site maps we designed for trail entrances throughout the property as well as the unique magnetic map on the visitor center wall. The final program was beautiful to view, highly functional, and sensitive to the surrounding environment.

Schematic design sketch showing overhead crane sculpture and gallery extension.



Sandhill Crane



Snowy Egret



Little Blue Heron



Black-crowned Night Heron

Over 75 individual species illustrations were created for the interpretive program.

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The trailhead panels created a graphic ring that circled the million-acre site. Above the site orientation map at the visitor center, below right, a typical trailhead.

