

Focus Group Summary Notes

In the spring of 2024, various members of the NERR community were invited to three different focus groups. Each group consisted of audiences relevant to the NERR: informal educators, formal educators, and “community” members. Informal educators included representatives from Alabama Aquarium, USM Marine Education Center, USM GenSea Program, DMR’s MS Gulf Coast National Heritage Area, USFWS Grand Bay NWR, and Pascagoula River Audubon Center. Formal educators represented a local Mississippi public high school, a local Alabama private middle school, and a local community college. “Community” members were a bit tricky to invite since it was a catch all sort of group, but the members who attended included a representative from Chevron Pascagoula, Gulf of Mexico Alliance, City of Moss Point Parks & Recreation, and a retired aquarium exhibits person who moved to the Gulf Coast for kayak fishing and frequents fishing in Bayou Heron.

The following questions were asked in each focus group. A summary of responses follow each question, and the responses are in randomized order.

1. Icebreaker: **What is your favorite museum?** *(A museum is any informal learning institution with a collection of information and things to see. It can mean science learning centers, history museums, art museums, zoos, aquaria, and more.)*

Louisville Slugger Museum in Kentucky: Because it combines history and art and it’s an interactive exhibit on America’s favorite pastime. Appealed to kids and parent, so everyone could have a good time. Motivation for attending was that they were already in town for a traveling baseball game, stumbled upon it while walking downtown. What drew them in was a giant baseball bat outside.

<https://www.sluggermuseum.com/>

Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson, MS: because they worked there twice. Love the mission and what they do.

Museum of Natural Science in Jackson- they have different exhibits (i.e., scat, the various cow stomachs), it is engaging for all ages, and cool preserved specimens are on display.

Mississippi Shipbuilding and Maritime Center in Pascagoula, MS: chose this one because it was most recent visit (night before). They’ve done rebranding and have new exhibits. The building is on a flood plain and no one wants to use it as a house, so the building has been repurposed as a museum instead.

<https://msmaritimemuseum.org/>

Waikiki Aquarium and National Aquarium in Washington, D.C.: Have many other favorites too but mostly favorites because they're small and commonly locally focused. They have professional and personal interests in aquariums.

"Museums" to this person meant lots of text, stillness, quiet, or no interaction. This person then explains a couple of places they loved.

Insectarium in New Orleans: A lot to look at, but with bits of information they can read quickly like quick facts. Taste testing room with crickets. Dollhouse full of roaches.

But all my favorite museums are like Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Chicago Museum of Fine Arts, National Gallery...but **my favorite art museum is the one in Jacksonville where I grew up.** What I love about it is a number of things. One, they have a really good kids' area that's like a maker space, hands-on stuff that the adults can do too and it's fun. They have changing exhibits so there's always something new. They also have a garden space outside that's really lovely. There's lots of pockets of things so no matter who you are you can find something to do there.

Holocaust Museum in Washington- made an impact and the interactivity made a lasting impression; visitors got a passport and saw at the end if they survived or not. Motivation- visiting the area and it was a topic she was interested in learning about.

WWII museum. Same thing, interactive. It's been a while since I've been, but I remember they gave you a dog tag and as you went through the museum you heard the voice of the person you have. As you go through the museum you're hearing it in their words. Motivation was to go on business, but I'm fascinated by you know...no one likes war, but at the same time you want to learn about it as much as you can.

Science Center in St. Louis, MO- interactive and hands-on and liked it because that's how things are done in her classroom; motivation- free and proximity to home and the zoo was next door, so you could do both in the same day, if you wanted.

My favorite aquarium is **Baltimore. National Aquarium.** It's so interactive. It's an amazing aquarium. It's circular. You go around on the outside and each part of that is segmented with rock wall, but there's so much to see as you go up and spiral to the top. When you go back down you go through the middle.

American Museum of Natural History in New York. They layer information in a way where you can walk through and get information without reading any of the details. You can skim and get a little bit or you can stand there and get really in depth information. That's something I remember, even if you didn't stop and read all of the interpretive information, you can still get a sense of what they wanted you to learn about, which I think is really good.

2. Okay, now we are going to shift our focus to the **NERR**, and I want you to think about your first time here. And **what were your first impressions?** What stood out?

I **came out here to scout Bayou Heron**, and I actually **didn't know this was here** and I was very pleasantly surprised. So I stopped and came in and that's when I signed on as a volunteer. First time I was here, **the place is a little intimidating and you don't know if you can come here**. I cycle to stay in shape and keep the weight down. I cycle through Pascagoula and up the waterfront. NOAA has a big facility there and it's fascinating, but they don't have any visitors. At home, it's tornadoes and storm predictions. Here it's water and wildlife. But I would love to go through it. So, when I first saw this place I thought "They probably don't want people around." I thought since it was a research facility, so when I did come in to try to get some information I was shocked that this was here. In my opinion, for whatever it's worth, you should have a sign at the bottom of your main sign that says "visitors welcome." Because I look at a sign that says research facility and I don't want to bother you guys.

I live in Alabama. I **passed this place for 25 years before I turned right. I had no idea this place existed**. I will say when I first came down, it's been amazing to watch the transformation of the restoration. This property around here has changed drastically even in the last few years since 2015/2016.

For me **it's the address itself. Moss Point**. That's one of the biggest things that did it for me, because this is not the first connection with the center. Years and years ago, for summer camp, we would have representatives come and do exhibits for our summer camp. They would do it on site. But, we never brought the children here for field trips. They could take advantage of the knowledge and the information offsite, not actually at the center, but the fact that it's actually in the city of Moss Point, I think that is something we need to do a better job of doing as a city to be able to highlight.

So **I always think about the NERR being remote**, which is something we've talked about, and that you have to make an effort to get to... But it's worth the effort. And also think about how – and this is something other people have touched on – is **it's one of the only places on the coast where you can appreciate the connection from the upland all the way to the water**. It's not interrupted. Like you have some of the same habitat in the Sandhill Crane Refuge, but it doesn't have that connection to the water. And you have some places where you can go visit the marsh, you can go visit the bayous, but it doesn't have that same connection to the upland. So it's a unique place where you can talk about how those connections are important. Even if it's not somebody who lives on the water, it can be someone who lives more upland. They can appreciate that they have a connection to the water and the connection to the coast. So I think that's a special aspect of the NERR and a special aspect of the community here.

In **awe because it is so beautiful, quiet, and didn't know it was out here**...staff is nice and helpful, too.

Exciting to know a **resource like this is so close**. One thing that stood out was the Fibonacci sequence– it's amazing. It's so **peaceful, quiet out here and so BIG! I also didn't know it was here**.

Also didn't realize it was here. Allows her to get students out of the classroom, but we are also teaching the second they step foot out here. Everything she talks about in class is here and all the things we hear about here can be brought back to a lesson that we've done inside the classroom.

I am embarrassed to say **that it is my first time visiting the NERR**. My first impression is that it seems like there were a lot of people that died on the road to get to the building. There are those **memorial crosses** out there. I know it doesn't have anything to do with the actual museum- I hope not! But coming in you've got work going on so it's good to see you're keeping up with the building.

Came for a public meeting we were hosting with Sea Grant and I couldn't believe I **had been here for 15 years and didn't know this beautiful place existed**. That was my first impression.

This may not be what you're wanting to hear if you're trying to attract people to this space. But **one of the things I like about this place is that the traffic through the space is not overwhelming**. Also with the interpretive space. I really like the recordings of the local folks.

I did grad school at GCRL and one of the projects I worked on with my advisors was on pine trees here so that was a **fun drive**. I loved the building. I **feel like you are on your own here**.

I was in a teacher workshop when the building first opened. It was on climate literacy. It was really exciting because there's a bee in the urinal from the men's bathroom. I **can't tell you anything about the actual workshop but we all went into the men's bathroom and that's what I remember**. It was a long time ago. I was a brand new teacher and it was my first PD so I had no idea what to expect. So that was my first adventure out here. It's exciting to...I mean **it still feels the same, it still looks the same**. And that it's endured the weather and the things it was supposed to that they taught us about.

My first time out here was like 15 years ago, and I was running a summer camp. It was a coastal camp for kids all across Mississippi except the coast, trying to do anything coastal and across the coast. I came here because I called to find out if they had anything to offer. And the older gentleman who used to be the educator here [Rick] took us kayaking and just did whatever. He took us kayaking, showed us shell middens, showed the group how to cast net, gave us the little dip nets, and we walked around and **my impression was "wow this is awesome."** Here we are in Moss Point with a very large space. And just to reiterate what you said about the traffic. Over the years I've been here a few times. I love the large space and there are small

opportunities to go into the large space is something I've noticed. There's a boardwalk, and then a lot of times a lot of times you go into spaces you just trailblaze.

3. What motivates you to come to the NERR?

Fishing.

For me it's about the **knowledge of what an estuary does**. But I never thought about the offshore fish when I go with my brother-in-law and we go catch snapper. Never in a million years would I think that the babies would need an estuary. And so that's one aspect of it. The second aspect is what it does during a storm. It's got a function to mitigate flooding and protect us from storm surge. If we don't protect them, things aren't going to get better. So for me, that's the two things that motivate me.

The **connection between the environment and allowing the kids to see it firsthand**...she loves the stewardship and management aspect of it—it's not just here it is, but it's also preserved. They can tell staff love it and that helps keeping everyone engaged—seeing us engaged is great.

Bringing students here to get them out of the classroom, trying to do as many outdoor labs and fieldtrips as she can. She likes when students can see firsthand what fire suppression looks like and then seeing what it looks like after controlled burns. They can also see some of the history of southeast MS vs what we see now (what it should look like vs what it looks like now). Bringing in that biodiversity—when it comes up in the classroom, everyone always thinks of a tropical area, meanwhile we have a biodiverse gem here. Most important part (to her)- not just the educational aspect, but getting students out in nature and experiencing something new/never done before—giving them the opportunity to go outside their comfort zone.

Yes, lessons and state tests are important, **everything out here puts an emphasis on what is taught in the classroom, but getting students out here and letting them be kids again through exploration** (like the Montessori method used on younger audiences), is important because she can't give them that experience in the classroom setting.

Now that I know there's more than one boardwalk trail, I'm like, where are these trails? **I would like to come out!** I am interested in plants. That's just personal interests, so that I know this place provides that along with the other wildlife that's here. When I see educational opportunities from the staff and last time I was here staff led an amphibian workshop where we watched a webinar for the first half and the second half we came out here and went in the field with them. That kind of stuff is just the bee's knees for me, and **that's what motivates me to come out if it has something specifically to do with the plants or seeing the diversity of plants in Mississippi or the Gulf Coast ecosystem**. Pine ecosystem.

I have come here for events and programs, workshops. I've come here for walking the trails. And I will say just because you're focusing on the interpretive center, I also think it's important to look at the whole of what you're offering. Because it fits in that context. I like your interpretive center. It's kind of small and you can digest what is there. **I will say I haven't returned specifically for the interpretive center.** Also, just with my schedule and my kids' schedule, I've found it hard to come during the regular open hours but we've come to the evening events and things.

I bring trips here. My program is not a marine science education program. It is a coastal workforce development, STEM workforce development, blue economy jobs. And they already had a curriculum for what I do and **the greatest days in the world are when we get to bring kids to the NERR because we can show up and hand them over** and then hang around and maybe go kayaking. It's great. But **I've come for meetings, both that I was involved in the back end running, and I've come for meetings that I didn't plan.**

Since I haven't been here before, but I'm thinking about **what has prevented me from being here prior to now. I think the biggest thing is distance.** But you know I love hiking and trails and things like that. And so I don't necessarily know how long the trails are, if they're something if I drive 40 minutes to get here, is it a 20 min hike or it may be a great trail, but I've got to justify the drive here.

4. What is Grand Bay NERR's role compared to where you work?

Since work for the same agency, **it's very specific to this site and the activities that take place here, whether it's the research or the management of the land or the interpretation of this specific site.** I think that's the difference, from my perspective, even though we're in the same agency. We're interpreting different sites. DMR covers the three coastal counties, the Heritage Area covers the six coastal counties, and the Office of Restoration and Resiliency- we manage marinas all throughout the state. My boss, she drives all the way up to Memphis sometimes. So it's kind of different from what all the other departments do in the agency.

I think one of the contrasts between this place and the aquarium at the Sea Lab, is that I think **this is really kind of a local gem and you guys probably focus your attention on a local community user group,** because it is kind of remote and not necessarily a place where people pass through and not necessarily a destination, a local tourist attraction where people come and stay and come visit here. You might have some of that, but it's not your primary target. Or even like people who are passing through on a road trip or anything. We get a lot of tourists but would like to serve our local community. We depend a lot on tourists and **I feel like you guys are really focused on your local community.**

So the Center for STEM Education, we're not a place-based center for education. We are more "theory behind STEM education," what's effective...we're all about trying and measuring new programs... But **we work with place-based education sites.**

At the Marine Education Center, I think our sites are – **we serve the same mission and purpose for our agencies. Our goal is to share the research that happens across coastal USM to K-Gray audiences and provide a variety of programming types and opportunities for our K-12 groups, our teacher groups, our community stakeholder groups.** I think y'all's role is to do the same for agencies and institutions that use y'all's site here. So I think we're very similar in program design and mission at our separate sites, we're a lot of marine and ocean research. Y'all's is a lot of the land resources and forestry things.

Yeah I agree and I feel like when I go there [USM MEC] there's a lot more tech involved in the interpretation. Technology. And then here, land-based research focused. **But space in general. In Jackson County, this is the biggest space you can come to. Maybe, I don't know about Sandhill Crane. As far as I know their education center might be open now? I'm not sure. But large space to explore, fascinating ecosystem.** Pine savanna ecosystems to me remind me of Dr. Seuss books and caricature of the trees and everything, the way it looks, and so that to me is one of the most unique things you have to offer around here. Seeing that, getting in that and learning about that and the research behind that. The fire that's needed to maintain that. And lastly, both of y'all have this but a residential environmental education program. I think y'all pretty much have the only two spaces that I know of in the state. I don't know many places in Mississippi where you can spend the night and have lengthy or long-term field trip. I think that's phenomenal. I don't know if that's used often or again if it's a priority, but that ability I think is really great.

Yeah I think that's the overlap in our roles. **In a lot of different ways is how we do the same thing, but we also recognize, "okay this space is much better for this use than this space would be"** so sending people to your spaces.

And for specific birds in this space. I get a lot of birders asking the questions. Like there might be better for coastal birds and here might be better for inland.

Raptors has been a big topic of discussion at our site and I don't have anything on them so I send them to you guys [PRAC].

For me it's easy. Y'all are a research reserve right next to our oil refinery. **Y'all are monitoring water quality and bays, other things that we strive hard to make sure we stay within our parameters.** Y'all are perfect partners to be next door. I spoke to our retiree group, and Dennis was there too, but I pointed out the fact that I forget that the major flood and Bangs Lake had acid get into and I'm sure a lot of people's first thought was "Oh Chevron did that." But we knew it wasn't us. And y'all were there to validate that because you have a water quality monitoring station in Bangs Lake. So for us it was a win, right? It's harder to prove your

innocence, I guess, once somebody says something about you. But then there's data to back that up. So we were thankful that y'all were there to validate that.

For me it would be **promoting programs and attracting audiences**. That would be the closest to my role. From start to finish, you're the organizer, marketer, you know. So that side of things where you're having to actually design the programs. You have to do all the risk management and assessment, you've got to test the programs. You know, and once you launch something and you go back and do an assessment whether it's 90 days, 6 months to see what works or didn't work. But you also have to be the one to attract people to the program. That's the closest I would say relationship to my role.

For us, **Grand Bay is a partner that does on-the-ground work for priorities that we support, and also is a voice for successes of things that are going on in Mississippi** to the broader Gulf regions. So we work on all five Gulf states and really rely on our partners to be really engaged and share those success stories from across the region so people can learn from each other and help each other. Have a broader support network for things going on in the region so it's important for us to have Grand Bay as one of our partners sharing the work that you're doing for our region.

In the classroom setting, we are doing lessons, outdoor labs and hands-on activities, but **NERR role is to educate students and motivate them to become scientists, to learn more and to explore**. They will not appreciate it until they see it and it might motivate them to take better care of their own ecosystem.

So focused making sure students take the classes they need to graduate. The school does do some outreach, but it's not geared towards everyone, it is more focused on their students. **Whereas the NERR does a lot with the community as a whole—the veterans program, kiddos, and then family-friendly events**. We reach farther into the community and bring people's attention to the habitat while the school is more geared toward just getting the classes done to get a degree.

NERR shows students the various career fields that are out here and what their day can look like.

3, **How can the NERR complement your programming? Could it or should it be captured in our interpretive center?**

Would love to see an exhibit on the green infrastructure of the building, showing an example of where each piece came from or the process to make the building green.

The longleaf pine exhibit is awesome, but would love to see a plot and how many species can be found within the plot, depicting the biodiversity here—maybe with some of the cooler species or an exhibit with carnivorous plants (students always love stuff like that). An exhibit with the types of

species you might find out here, why they eat insects and how they do it (i.e., cross section of a pitcher plant).

Maybe have a touch table where they see/feel fish bones, turtle shells, hermit crabs (basically anything that is locally found)- different specimens to let them have a hands-on experience.

Tie in some more of the history aspect of the shell midden because that is really interesting. Maybe tying in different species adaptations...or different mini lessons in a way

History- maybe even an exhibit on how the coast has changed, cutting longleaf pines down to build ships or how the railroad came through and I-10 has changed the landscape. Have a model showing the progression of how man impacted the area.

Having a mini lesson before or after looking at exhibits will help extend their knowledge and help understand the concepts better.

Maybe have a QR code to connect them to the NERR- volunteer ops and whatnot.

The more interactive. The buttons [at previous workplace] didn't do anything, but kids would just go in and engage and pretend and they loved it. Over the years, and I worked there for 20 years, that seems to not change. They just want to push buttons.

Another thing was touch tanks. They loved to be able to touch things. We had horseshoe crabs and other things. On one end of it was a shrimp boat that I built. On the inside were shrimp tanks, but on either side of the boats were the touch tanks where you could pick up the horseshoe crabs. That exhibit is extremely popular. I don't know if you have the space to do a touch tank.

We wanted to make our summer camps diverse. And so we would have a week called "Wildlife Discovery." When we think about 200 kids in summertime, they want to play. And nowadays fewer and fewer of them want to go outside. We have to get them outside. It's because back then we wanted to introduce kids to something they wouldn't be exposed to. We had that summer and had exhibits brought in [likely she meant guest speakers], we would find that if we go to the park or another field trip, each of them would say "oh that's a blue jay" or start identifying something and extend scavenger hunts and talk about what was native, and we extended it into the curriculum. Have fun while you learn. I would say the same thing. As a camp counselor or science teacher. They're always looking for a way to engage or extend their curriculum. And so that's one thing that could help.

I have these ideas but, one day, hopefully we can bring these into fruition. So I've been thinking about like your block printing in different...I really love that you do so many art and science programs. I would like to put plankton in our big window lobby so that the light is shining through them. I would love to do a collaborative program with you where people are – we have the community produce these pieces and maybe they can do it in duplicate like you guys often do and they contribute a piece to that project on site and keep part of it. I think there is a lot of room for programmatic collaboration. And I know you're specifically focusing on the interpretive center but again I think that when you're considering update the interpretive center you put it in context

with your other – instead of just focusing on the physical space and the messaging, you know just the physical space in isolation, you've got to think about programming, programmatic offerings. And also your outdoor space.

One of my first projects when I got hired was the swash tank and I had to paint the signage for the tank and they were going to five different locations, and they didn't tell me where the locations were so I have no idea where they're at. I tried to make it as relevant and as neutral as possible for the different sites. I think the aquarium also has one. What do we have that is the same and how can we connect? It was really funny because I was with the Discovery Hall Program and they were like what's your favorite lesson to teach? And they were like 'Plankton.' And so all of us talk about plankton in our programming. So how can we say connectivity but also what's special about what we find in our locations. We talk about this plankton that feeds this fish in aquaculture, and it's really important with what we're feeding you know, red fish and their juveniles or whatever they talk about. So that might be a really interesting piece to connect. If you're talking about plankton at Dauphin Island all the way across the different places.

That was neat, at Gulf State Park the inside/outside interactive. [She is referring to the SAME annual meeting in January 2024.] For supporting our programming, I never thought about "oh I could bring my summer camps here." We always think about, oh what do we do? I think we could be working better to focus on what each of our facilities do to collaborate and use both sites.

Any type of birding things that could happen out here, like of course automatically. We have a sign on the interstate that directs people to our center. And miraculously enough many people visit because they are passing through MS Gulf Coast and they see that sign and they want to stop. Not at a restaurant or a fast food place so you know, they just want a break. The next artist we have in our gallery was driving from Florida to Texas and stopped. With National Audubon Society they have these programs: Great Backyard Bird Count, Climate Watch, Christmas Bird Count. And to me, the goal of Climate Watch is to look for specific birds in your area that Audubon thinks will be affected by climate change so they start to watch them. And for whatever reason, the Pascagoula River Audubon Center is not in a box where we are gonna watch for these specific birds. So we have this national program that our center can't even carry out because we aren't even in the right location. So to me, maybe because y'all have the space, seeing how you can connect with the Climate Watch program. Sometimes with just your weekend events, somehow making your center available for the Great Backyard Bird Count. And again if your staff is smaller or not available on weekends, you could make it a self-guided thing. Um and back to first impressions. The signage on your way in was helpful. You turn into Pecan Road, which you can barely see. I always have to follow my GPS to find Pecan Road. And now, in addition to the graves, I don't know how old the signs are, but I feel like there's more signage now than there has been before which is very helpful. So um, additional signage and non-staffed events here on the weekend supporting Great Backyard Bird Count, Christmas Bird Count, Climate Watch things.

Yeah, you previously mentioned, you have helped us out a great deal. Sandra developed a program for the interpretation of our meadow and that guide through the meadow for kids. That's something we could probably make better use of. We don't have someone directly within our office that does nature-based interpretations. That's wonderful for the kids. We could probably do more programming for adults, or at least educate ourselves and so we can say, "hey if you want to know more about this great place..." Someone that's much more knowledgeable that can tell you.

Stretch Break: Walk around Interpretive Center with a partner and discuss.

Misc notes/discussions before walking the center that were worth noting here:

- Jenn said SHC is open on some days because it's staffed by volunteers that live at the R/V park
 - Katie usually asks people which direction they're heading so they could check out our centers.
 - Samantha said her best friend's grandmother is on the wall as one of the recordings. She passed away last year. It's really neat to see that sense of community have a lasting impact for someone she knows.
 - Mendel mentioned crochet reefs in DC where it was community contributions and it was assembled and she's always wanted to do something like that.
 - Christina: When the space was originally designed, it was very different as far as the staff capacity, so the space had to be able to take care of itself. It's different now because there's a potential for staff to keep up with the maintenance if there's interactive stuff if you decide to add more aquaria vs when we started out, it had to be a lot more self-sufficient.
 - Sandra: It still kind of is.
 - Christina: But that is good to know when you're thinking about what you want to design and how you want to design it. What capacity you're going to have. It's great to say "oh we want to have five fish tanks." But if you don't have people to keep up with them, that doesn't make sense.
 - Christina: When the Fish and Wildlife was housed here, that was the year I started, and then moved into this building and had an office here.
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6. What did you notice in our interpretive center?

Interactivity. It's really good. I like it, a lot of buttons to push and down lower where kids can push them. Stuff like that. It's been two years since I've been here and saw that, but I didn't realize how much it is. But it's really nice. It doesn't look like it's been worn down, it doesn't look like it's been

here for several years. I don't know how long it's been here but **it still looks new**. That's good. Very nice. You guys sure you need to remodel? Because it looks nice out there, it really does. Granted you don't have the traffic that I'm used to you, you know. You've got plenty of opportunities for it to get worn or dusty, and it's not there at all. It's very nice looking.

The exhibits are very nice. I assume they're 10+ years old? Physically they don't look damaged or roughed up.

It's attractive too. It says "hey, come" and it's inviting.

I like the **panels that come out**. It's a really good use of limited space.

I think it's a good use of space. It's a small space, but with the doors that pull out, you're effectively doubling and expanding your space.

It covers **so much content**. There's so many different things. **It's a lot, but it's done really well and it flows well**. Like your content is feeding into what is here, wildlife is here and flowing into the science and moving into the community. It's well done and moves through all those different areas in such a tiny space.

Lot of reading in each display. Maybe for people who are wanting info quickly- make the words larger, condensing the info, bulleted points, or QR codes that can take you to a video and you can just listen.

Someone mentioned the text. I think there's an assumption that people don't read. We like to put out a lot of information because we're educators. Some people assume that it's a waste of space. That people won't engage with it. But to kind of respond to that, I read hundreds of reviews of [] on Trip Advisor, and I was really surprised that over and over and over again, **people had appreciated the richness of the content**. We were considering how to engage with multiple audiences. There's this assumption that people don't want a lot of text, and to deliver information in bite size pieces. I don't think they're mutually exclusive. You can have rich content for people that want it and also pull out information by doing bold, by having main points, headings, captions with photographs, for people who want those bites, but you are also delivering the more rich content for the people that do want it.

Back to the language thing, that's what I did for years both as a journalist and as a science communicator. The average American reads at an 8th grade level, and they've done studies where you have the largest subset of people, whether they're handed a printed piece, they're only going to read headlines. There are people who read headlines and captions. So if you've got a picture of a pitcher plant, your caption doesn't just say "pitcher plant." It would say "this pitcher plant is part of an important ecosystem blah blah blah." Use that. And then you have the people who will read the headlines and captions and bullets, so make sure you have bullets

that capture important information. And then you have people that will read every single thing every single time. I have historically been in relationships with them.

And you might have some people that might not have been inclined to read every single word and **the headline captures their attention and then they go read it.**

The **headlines and the captions are the two most important things.** The things that you can bold out and really draw people in, those are so important. If you have a paragraph that's visually taking up this many rows, then bullet. If they see a wall of words, they might turn away.

I noticed the **community connections piece** because it talked about the Kreole area and the Orange Grove area and I was just like, "wow." That's history we can highlight. Because if you think about it most kids don't know that this space is adjacent to these places, like the paper company. They wouldn't even know that was one of the major industries in our city. I think that piece kind of highlights it and it's a special piece. When I saw "culture" I thought okay that's a totally different perspective and it adds in another element when you're talking about heritage and culture. I can see if at a family reunion or whatever it is, "hey grandpa's featured over there. Let's go!" It's another connecting point so that was good.

It is a small space so the way it flows. I do think the way it flows the way it is designed right now, it does flow well. And obviously we talked about how technology has changed. **The interactivity is there but make it a little more interactive.** And maybe the "what we do" piece up front should go in the back corner. Maybe the mission of the NERR is front and center at the main entrance there? It also depends on money. What's the dollar amount you have to play with? How much interactivity can you get? To your point, it still looks great. But is it great to – You know, how do you attract a 5 year old and a 65 year old and keep their interest? Are you going to give them something, maybe if they're really interested or limited on time. We mentioned QR code. Is there something they can download and put on their phone. Maybe they don't have time right now to listen to all their stories.

We were talking about the cultural history part where you could listen to all the stories, that you **can add a QR code and listen to them later,** but also that would be **a way to help with accessibility.** If someone was hearing impaired, there could be a transcript of those interviews, so someone could read it or read it later. That is a relatively easy thing on the exhibit side, and I know there's a lot of work on the back end. But it wouldn't be a big change to physical exhibit to add a QR code.

I didn't know what you guys are envisioning as a new exhibit, but the one you have tells a great story about the environment, the people who have been here. Like I said I'm not really sure why you want to change it. Maybe you guys are bored of looking at it, I don't know. And it can be boring to 6 or 7 year olds, or a group of high school kids that maybe saw the same thing last time.

I saw a couple of things. We were talking about with limited space, is some of the biggest real estate is not being utilized to its maximum potential. So the “who we are” at the very front. It’s a big wall, but there’s not a lot of information on it. And right now there’s a bench and a rocking chair in front of it, so that kind of says “this isn’t important” but it’s the first thing you kind of see when you walk in. And so that might be a space to change up to something that’s really important. And then the back side of that, what is a watershed and all that, is blocked off right now. That also says “this isn’t important, don’t read this.” **Two of your biggest wall spaces aren’t being used to its maximum potential right now.** Same thing with the space when you walk into the door of the solar panel and the green building information. It’s really technical right now. How can you make that more accessible for people to understand, if that’s something you want to emphasize to your visitors. Like “this is a green facility, here are its green features.” That is a big space that isn’t being utilized to its maximum right now. And something else that I noticed, looking at the map. It says “water quality SWMP” right now. If you’re not a NERR person, you’re not going to know what that means? Where are some places you can change the map? You could change the legend so people can understand better.

What we found was towards the end of the school year, we’d get 2-3 thousand kids and school buses take up the entire parking lot. We’d have volunteers to help and take kids back to the research areas and behind the scenes areas. **You have so much space outside. It is limited inside, but maybe you can emphasize outside.**

That was something we talked about too. Asking about how much the renovation is just the physical interpretive center space or if it goes beyond that. In the interpretive center space for example, **there’s not a big sign that says “go outside to the boardwalk”** and that would be an easy thing to do to say there’s an extension of the interpretative space right outside this door. And what y’all were saying earlier with the signage welcoming visitors, but also extending before you get here to let people know what’s available. So if it’s just the interpretive space proper or if **you can connect the space to other areas and let people know there’s something to do here at Grand Bay.**

It should pique their interest to want to go outside.

And to help them understand the purpose of this place and learn from your research...**getting them to understand what they have in their backyard.** Get them to understand what they do here can affect the bigger picture.

Scavenger hunt and backpack area- great idea, they love it. Maybe edit it for different age levels.

Book section next to the backpack area. To enhance interactivity while also getting feedback- maybe have an area where they can display their art they make here or sticky notes with what they thought of their visit/what they saw- like a bulletin board.

Very wordy- try highlighting info that can be read in 10seconds (because you only have 10-15 seconds of people’s attention when they’re looking at wordy exhibits).

Like the batiks are on display...maybe have something saying what the class is or what inspired that piece of art. If we had something explaining what it was, then maybe we would have outside visitors wanting to join the waitlist rather than have the same people on the list...also it is currently unclear if the art was done here or if we just have it hanging up because it looks cool.

7. What could be improved? (A lot of ideas overlapped. These are arranged by topics that came up and aren't in a particular order.)

There's a picture of the building and pointing out the **green features**, maybe if there was model instead or have something like our light up/push button area- can have it light up the different green aspects of the building or can rotate to different areas that are green (if there was room in the budget).

Green building- display the construction of the building or cost management/what other materials could we build with? Where do you get these materials from? How much does it cost? If others wanted to do the same at their house or place of business, show them these steps.

They have been somewhere with a display for **watersheds** where water was flowing behind the model. Maybe for the activity where we never know where trash may end up in our watershed- have the Pascagoula watershed and kids can drop trash at the top and see where it lands.

Diatoms and phytoplankton area- if there could be a microscope there for kids to actually look at them rather than just seeing a picture (cons- would take some monitoring on our behalf).

Maybe have an area where we collect samples that morning and leave it out for visitors to look at (either with a microscope or just with their eyes). Have nature journaling.

Interactive **SWMP station area**- maybe have pics how it is used, explain what we are monitoring and how it impacts the wildlife in this area. Why are there no buttons to push here? Like something to show people real-time data or something showing parameters shift and why they may be changing (cause and effect). Show them the optimal parameters that allow our waterways to stay healthy. Can also tie this into food webs- something impacts wildlife and can cause the collapse of an ecosystem.

Invasive species- what species are in this region and how did they get here? How are we combating them on the Reserve?

Pitcher plants- have more realistic models. Would be cool to be immersed in nature/various habitats here (i.e., like we would see outside on the boardwalk, there could be a pathway

through various ecosystems we have here- there's a path you stay on and everything is surrounding you).

Walk-through idea- **fire/succession**! Have an area that is overgrown, keep walking and see an area that is burned, and then what the area looks like a few days after the burn.

I feel like the whole **Rx fire** thing could be more dramatically displayed.

The **pictures and graphics that we might update, maybe have an art contest** (i.e., 3D model with nature photos or recycled materials rather than just a painting).

What the area looked like before (100-200 years ago) vs **what it looks like now**- utilize transparency paper or lifting something/pulling it up to compare.

Tobi- the little info card is kind of lost, maybe have a bigger display.

She's seen a neat exhibit at another place- a model of a **sea turtle nest** (i.e., eggs are in nest, then baby is making its way to the water, etc)- maybe can do something similar and **just create more interest in what terrapins are and where they live out in nature**.

Maybe have an aquarium with some of the animals we may have here. Or show what a habitat may look like/the biodiversity under an oil rig since we have so many out in the GOM.

Living shoreline display- would be nice to see it in action, but the "crunchy" well water reacts to materials in the swash tank.

For those who can't kayak or make it to the **salt panne**, maybe have some **specimens** from there (i.e., pickleweed) for them to see and feel.

I think y'all should consider how much...y'all have the ability to make sure those tech things are maintained. Or if you don't and have things that frequently don't function, you should eliminate that if you don't have maintenance. **People really like interacting with natural artifacts**. I went to the Biscayne Bay interpretive center, and one of the things they did was using a lot of vertical atmospheric space, like mangroves and you were walking into a mangrove canopy. But I thought it was really an effective kind of...pulled you into feeling of being in this place. And it's a small dedication of space. They also had a big box of artifacts on the shelf that they welcomed people to take down and handle and take a closer look at. They had a little stack of stools kids could pull out and bring to a table where they could color on coloring sheets or pull the artifact box. They had things like shells and skeletons.

Maybe have something displayed stating **what events or workshops are coming up soon**. We could have a screen displaying all of those workshops on loop through the day showing we have more to provide outside of the exhibits.

The **little screen tv things with the buttons**. They're just little analog TVs with sound. There's not any info or even guessing what is calling or making noises. It's just the sound.

I love recognizing that there are seasons to the marsh. Even just highlighting the different seasons in the marsh. Winter is still popular here because people are visiting and we're still outdoors. Looking at wildlife in a clear plastic box. Maybe just a pitcher plant on display in an aquarium. Or a ceramic one where kids can get little tweezers and pick up flies and put it in it. It's something they can play with but it really drives home the idea that plants eat bugs, or some plants eat bugs. Think that pitcher plants could be a bigger highlight in your interpretive center.

Thinking about who your target audience is, maybe it's kids. When I was walking through I noticed that ledge and I was thinking if I was a kid, I would want to climb on that and play. And so I don't know if you encourage it or if you don't want them up there, but it looks very tempting. The thing I like about the Charnley house (and it's not a house being used traditionally), is that we allow people to touch basically anything they want in the house. So have some purposeful things they can touch. If you don't want them there, maybe having something there to make it look like it's not climbable.

Maybe have a section where you can play frog calls or birds and have kids match which animal they think is making those calls.

Maybe have **QR code for the historical story section** because it can sometimes get too loud in that area and you miss it. Goal- make it multi-user friendly.

We can partner with schools to have some kids build things and have them involved. Or boy scouts or eagle scouts can help out.

8. If there was one theme or content piece to tell at the NERR, what would it be?

For me it's restoration.

I think it depends on your audience and what you want them to know. Right now your exhibit space is very focused on the natural habitat and the area. And so if you want to keep that emphasis or more emphasis on the NERR and the work that's being done here and how that's connected to restoration? That's not represented at all in the interpretive space because it wasn't a big emphasis when it was originally designed. So that would be something new to bring in; the work being done now. It depends on what you want to emphasize as static exhibits or pieces you can layer in. Cause there's a lot of different directions you can go. You can talk about the NERR as a place and a habitat and why it's unique, the plants and animals that are unique here. You can talk about the NERR and why it's unique and the research that's being done here and the connections to the community and coastal training program and education. You can talk about the history and culture of this part of Mississippi. You can take it in all sorts of directions. There's little pieces of that now and so do you want to keep that balance or do you want to bring something up in this space?

That might be way you can emphasize services you can provide to the community, right? At the water monitoring stations, weather stations. All of that is available now online in a way that it wasn't when this space was originally designed. And you have those fisherman who are really passionate, like "I'm going to check the weather and I'm going to check the water" before I go out. And you might have one of those out of the ten boats at the boat launch. Again, here in the building but are you thinking about other spaces outside. A QR code that says "want to know what's it's like out on the water?" and it connects to that real time data. And again that's something if people know about that and value the NERR as a place where you can get that information, then it's a connection you can give. Cause you're doing it for the research but you're also doing it for the public.

We already have the habitats broken down and the cultural part is important, too. Ultimately, best to know what our goal is...habitats, management, etc.

- Cultural aspect: adults would appreciate, not so much the kids.
- Social-economic impact- maybe make a bigger theme

Overall theme: this is our coast, take pride in it and preserve it.

Maybe have a bigger area for "what can you do?" in the center instead of having it off to the side.

Exhibits that are intrinsically motivating: are they sparking curiosity? Are they challenging? Do they leave with more knowledge than they came with?

9. Should there be anything that is kept?

The longleaf area—fascinating. Maybe showcase it more and consolidate prescribed burns/move it closer to the pines to help tie it in. Maybe add other examples of other pines they might see to compare to one another.

Keep the pottery section...would be nice if there's some aspect they can find/take home with them (i.e., shell or something).

Keep Tobi (lol), but maybe have a replica of where she might live in the wild, showcase her "relatives" and why we need terrapins.

Interactive map of the area.

Most of the things in the center- can be improved/revamping.

10. What questions should we ask in a survey intended for our email listserv?

First and foremost, are you aware this place exists?

Something that deals with interest with indoor/outdoor. And some indicators if it's kayaking, education, fishing...

Maybe add detailed pics of each exhibit and ask what they liked most about it, what do they think can be improved/added, do they want something more interactive. Basically have something in there to help remind them what they saw.

What was most memorable?

Would you visit again? Would you encourage others to visit or attend our events?

Bonus question just for teachers: How much would you want to use the indoor space vs the outdoor space, given the amount of time you have out here with us?

- If the inside connected to the outside, it would be complementary because you not only have the interactivity from the inside, but also can go outside and tie it all in.
- If you have an exhibit on a certain topic (i.e., invasive species), then create a lesson teachers can take with them before/after to connect more of that knowledge.
- If they have an hour here, maybe spend 15-20 mins max inside and the rest of the time outside, otherwise they would be getting exactly what they would if they were in a classroom setting.
- There can be cool exhibits, but they don't compare to being outside. The center is a great alternative when weather isn't great.

- Maybe have a little sign by our invasive or carnivorous plants saying that, so it can draw their attention. The signs should also be something that can be easily removed when we have fires and whatnot.
- 20% of time inside and the rest outside. Exhibits should tie in directly to what they would see outside.
- ALL: The amount of text can be overwhelming and time consuming, so would be a good idea to condense info.
- Think about accessibility- sometimes we will have special ed students, some people can't see too well/have glasses- keep the different audiences in mind.
- Durability of the exhibits-IMPORTANT! Kids can easily break those pull flaps.
- Would love to see a mobile section (like MMNS)- switch out topics every so often because even if you've been here many times, you will still see or learn something new.
- Love the checkers and tic tac toe area. Maybe add in some nature crafts and journaling (give them a journal and then they can take it home and do it there).
- Can be a bit of quiet time outside.
- Also can be used to have them connect what they learned inside vs what they saw outside.
- Teachers can have them do it as an assignment.
- An activity on perspective that was tied in with nature- students had to pick something they can see out in the distance, draw and write what they see, then move closer and have them repeat until finally they are right on the object.
- Maybe we can have binocular section inside they can use and then go outside and see the object up close.

Questions from focus group participants to us.

1. Do you have a goal of increasing traffic? Is that one of the goals for this project?

A It's not a priority. It's not something that anyone's brought up. I personally love that there's not overwhelming traffic either. And then whenever there are events or school groups, there's not too much going on.

B: I think it's often an assumption that this growth is desirable, but I like that you guys don't necessarily...I think you're more intentional with that.

C: I will say we work with sites all over [the coast] and one of the sites we work at is the Gulf Islands National Seashore visitor center, and we've had a couple of instances where we booked time for the educators to be with our kids and they've had to dip because they are so overwhelmed with people at the visitor center that they have to go work with the public because that is their first mission. I am just naturally of the growth mindset so I'm

always like “why won’t you want more people?” but I think in those instances I think that’s why you don’t want more people. Because then you can’t do your other missions.

D: I’ve had a field trip at the same time [another group] is coming in two weeks. You start to end up on top of other people’s programs and that may or may not take away from someone’s experience.

B: I feel like considering the way I’ve thought about our mission, is that you can either touch a whole lot of people, but there’s not the depth of that impact. Or you can impact a fewer number of people but the depth of that impact is greater.

C: Can I ask a question? Do I recall you telling me, or did I make this up in my head, that you don’t really want people out in the larger reserve part? Like you don’t want to cut trails and encourage hikers? Or I might have made that up in my head. I do that.

A: I don’t think I’ve said that.

C: Okay, I feel like somebody said that but...

D: I mean that makes sense being that it’s a research space...

A: I mean, if there’s like a rare pitcher plant or something, you know. We’re not telling people to go find it. That’s about it.

C: Just wondering if it was maybe a USFWS mentality like, not like a national park, you don’t want people on trails all throughout it. Sort of unsupervised fun going on.

E: Well they want people on the designated trails. So there are actually multiple trails but outside of that yeah.

2. Do you have staff on the weekends though to care for live animals?

A: No.

B: So we’re adding fiddler crabs to our exhibit as soon as I can catch them. Because fiddler crabs burrow and so that is an interesting challenge because none of us are well versed in fiddler crab husbandry but we’ve been assured that Zach Darnell- I’ve just hired his grad student so surely she can keep them alive. But we did, we went away from an aquarium space when we rebuilt. I think Tara was with us when we rebuilt the MEC and we talked about what do we want to highlight? What do we want to promote? We know that we don’t want to be a “come and see” facility again because aquaria was so hard to manage, but the value of live animals being out there is important so we’re looking into um, I don’t know if you have to follow IACUC rules or anything like that with your center here, but we have to go through the university system to get animals so I have ambassador animals and working protocols for a king snake, and with inverts we don’t have to have any permission, so we’re adding the fiddler crabs, hopefully some oysters and blue crabs. We think people will be interested in those when they come to us. You know, capitalizing, because you don’t need people to come in on the weekends to keep inverts alive. And then if they don’t make it...it’s the circle of life [group laughter] and we return them to the bayou. And then also having 3D printed in case kids can’t see them they can still use them and hold them. The value of holding it. Like I can’t give you a

fiddler crab to hold. We learned on a couple of field trips that squid actually bite kids and draw blood [group laughter]. That was our lesson for 2023. Squid bites kids. So now we have 3D models and we go "this is what you can hold. You can hold this one and it's not going to bite and cause harm." It was very stressful. Squids bite kids. We made a tshirt of that, and "Team Spartina."

3. Do you have overnight school groups?

A: No. We have pulses of university classes in the dorms but the capacity is 20 people.

B: I don't think [] is the right space for university classes, but this space a great space for the 18-25 year old young adult group.

4. So have y'all identified a target audience for your interpretive space?

A: It's a little bit of everybody.

5. If you are seeing an increase of people stopping by, school groups, stuff like that...are you going to have to pull away from your research and other day jobs to facilitate that or do you have someone dedicated to that? Of course now the foot traffic isn't much that you can dedicate someone or need to. But in the future if this becomes far more than just an activity, do you have someone that's going to deal with that? We couldn't survive at the aquarium without volunteers. And they took care of that.

6. What's the activity like now? What's the goal for people coming in? What do you see?

General Ideas from Focus Group Participants

(ideas that came from discussions rather than directly answering the question that was asked)

One thing for me, driving up, was **signage**. Even if there was a part of the extension of the sign that looks like what the anticipation is when you get to the center? Sometimes when you're at Mount Bluff or something and you get these big pillars, or maybe the rocks or something. And there's this big sign that says "visitor center 2 miles down" or whatever. There could be some consideration for the signage itself that gives indication of "oh man, wow, I can't wait to get there." When you're driving like me of course I'm saying "I've got to be going the wrong way." But the signs help you to continue going in the right direction. "Keep going! You're almost here!" or "We can't wait to see you!" It connects you, so maybe that's some consideration.

And [] was mentioning the **changing exhibits**? Those things are crazy expensive and are designed for big spaces, so I don't think it would necessarily be something you'd want to pursue. There might be smaller elements that could change out or one of the things that we planned for in our redesign is like some modularity, so we can pull things we can pull out of cabinets. We've incorporated cabinets into our graphic panels and so we can pull things out and put things in really small scale, artifacts. We have the ability to change things out and people can see different things when they come, but then there's a little bit of debate about the value of that versus deciding on what your priorities are for your materials to present. And having that available for visitors to come through at any time. Kind of trying to balance those things.

I agree that **shapeshifting a space** is important when you have little space. And whether that's the actual interpretive center. For the [], we have the art gallery that's also the meeting space that's also the educational space, so I'm just looking in this room here, and if you need to extend an interpretive space all of this could be rotating photography contests of just Grand Bay NERR from the public, community involvement, and also somewhat of a changing exhibit.

And it's something you can choose to change every two months, or every six months, you know. You can choose how much work you want to put into it. We recently just decided to scale back on the amount of artists we bring in because we've run into a space where an artist had to cancel on us, we are now switching to an 'evergreen' art exhibit, which is really just...[] has a stash of professional photos, which is really just professional photos of [animals] we specifically want to highlight that we are getting printed and framed, and that will just be an optional exhibit that could be up when we don't have another artist.

One of the things that I like about the Walter Anderson Museum is that they change regularly enough and that every time I go, and I go there repeatedly, I see something different. **Though I was going to say about changing, is that live animals and live exhibits will do**

that themselves. You can come in and watch live animals and they're always doing something different and observing different behavior.

We have had a legless lizard for as long as I've been there and that legless lizard has shown its face possibly twenty times. And so to think that you need something you need something live that is exciting does not have to be the case. It can be something that's always hidden that can be used as an educational moment. We used to have multiple fish tanks with these tiny little fish and sometimes I didn't know what they were, sometimes the public didn't know what they were. It didn't matter because they just loved watching the little fish. And **I think being a natural space/space in nature, sometimes having that opportunity for people to just sit and watch any sort of wildlife up close and personal, whether they know about it or not, can bring peace and serenity and whatever that they might be looking for when they come to a space like this.**

So if you're looking to trying to appeal to a broad range of ages and audiences, **you might assume that the youngest aren't getting a whole lot of educational messaging, but they love to watch animals.**

When you think about the time that you want people to spend time in a space...people usually don't spend more than 10-20 minutes inside our interpretive center, which is fine. We have a movie playing for people that aren't interested in walking around but they can still sit and watch and listen. They can sit and watch bits and pieces of it and not the whole 45 minutes, but the live animals give them an opportunity to stay a little bit longer and zone out on watching them, waiting for it to pop out.

When you think about going somewhere with kids, I sometimes look for **additional self-guided activities besides just the interpretive center and walking.** So it would be really cool if there was a space here, maybe if there was a bucket of dipnets and some information on things you might be able to catch. With the large homeschool population in Jackson County and along the coast, even in Mobile, AL, I wonder what could be done interpretively to allow possibly field trip groups to come here and just have a self guided field trips.

And the **self-guided thing might be something that's helpful on weekends when it's not staffed.** Maybe the building is closed but the trail is open and there is some other self-guided thing you can do on weekends that you don't need staff for.

I don't know if cycling is something you can do here, but there are **cycling groups** you could include to get them out here.

Maybe if you're thinking about **connections between inside and outside**, like from within the interpretive center. Something like, I don't know if you could encourage bugs or bats or insects to nest under the eaves where you can see them from the windows. Something you can actually see. Wild animals through the interpretive space.

If you incorporated something to the outside, whether that's these birdhouses that are clear on one side you can affix to a window, or bees or whatever. That effectively expands your physical space too. You have a small interpretive center but if you can draw people's attention to what's going on what's outside while they're inside the interpretive space, it kind of expands that.

I wonder if you can do a greenhouse like that where you can do indoor/outdoor.

[Biofacts vs Bone Clones]

A: nowadays you can get bone clones

B: you can get casts of things

C: it's true, but I'm suggesting you can use the real things and really look at the real things.

A: the fake thing looks so much like the real thing and they make it like that so people can handle it for a long time.

B: We went to visit my family and we went to an environmental learning center in Alaska and they had pelts and a set up of the early homestead days and like the fur trade was a big deal.

C: Even if it seems really common to you. Every time you walk outside you might just kind of overlook it for that reason. Grass seed heads, cicada molds, you know. Different things like that that are easy to replace. You don't care if a kid crushes it because it's easy to replace. Bring it inside and give them a magnifier or loupe.

A: feathers are easy

D: I mean my mine are still blown the last time I was here for a field trip I learned what the male pine cones are. I'm 53 years old and had never known.

A: and the big ones are female.

E: putting interpretation with that object that is so commonplace. Leaves are all over the ground right now but you can start thinking more intentionally.

When we bring kids to PRAC about nature center jobs, [] literally **put them to work**. We were there with the native plant sale and she had the put seedlings into the pots. I could easily see how your idea of using materials that are replaceable, **this could be an activity that kids could do with a basket and some instructions and bring them back in for you to keep them replenished**.

I've done this on rainy days, but it's really easy to have a **laminated sheet and take up close pictures of whatever it is, and see if they can find that item/object inside the interpretive center closely**. It's interactive and will get them looking at the center in a different way.

If you're thinking about shapeshifting spaces, I love the people and their pictures and you press the buttons. Would love to see **more interviews with more people**. Maybe it's on an ipad and you find more interviews from people. It could be different generations. I saw one lady that was born in 1923, so what about interviewing someone who was born in like the 50s and then interviewing them on what their environment was like in the 50s vs now and what they notice now. There's things like the climate change panel, but you could connect some of these concepts with stories. It could be brought in or brought out [ipad idea]; it doesn't have to take the place of what's already out there.

Maybe it's rotated out where you could have different people for different months.

There are ways you can make that easy instead of having to...if you think about it from the design stage to make it easier to update. Make sure it's something you can maintain in house, maybe update digitally so you don't have to worry about physical space.

Kind of an odd thing to think about, but, **bringing interpretation into the bathroom stalls** is a great way to put information out there, whether it's advertising in bathroom stalls.

In Nashville, that was a big advertising company.

I know the Hattiesburg Zoo has a section, one of their bathrooms at the zoo, they have a live animal in there. It's right next to the sink while you're washing your hands. So even just any interpretation.

Oh my gosh the Jacksonville Zoo had animal poop in their bathrooms! They have different kinds of animal poops.

So just capitalizing on stuff like that in the appropriate space. Like one of the exhibits where you open the doors in your interpretive center where it's like "how you can help your environment," I thought take each of those blurbs and spread it out through your entire property. The one blurb

inside of the door that says something about your computers. Take that blurb and tack it onto the back of the computer at the front desk. The blurb about the lights, take that off and put that above all the light features.

One thing we've noticed with our website, is that **page headings we have closely matches what people's web searches are**. Trying to have your heading be that. Those are the pages that get the most traffic or drive the traffic to other pages. For example, "What's a pine savanna?" If that pops up as the header in the SEO, people might find it faster than "This is a pine savanna." I think that's a way to draw people in. Having a question that they might already have in mind.

I don't know how much traffic is out here on the boat ramp. I've been when the parking has been full, but one of the drawbacks in my situation is if you increase the traffic and increase awareness, you're going to have more boaters out there. And that's **one of the things I love about being out there is that I don't see anybody**.