



Plant Center Building Completed Exhibits, Landscaping Next *South Padre Island Joins as Contributing Plant Center Partner*

South Padre Island, TX – May 30, 2015 - Ocean Trust nears completion of the Native Plant Center Visitor building on South Padre Island, Texas as the first phase of a plant restoration and public garden center dedicated to protecting the native plant ecosystems in the Lower Laguna Madre.



“With the visitor center building complete we can focus on exhibits and landscaping that will feature native coastal plants of South Padre Island,” said Thor Lassen, project manager. “We are especially pleased to announce and recognize the City of South Padre Island as a contributing partner in the plant center project.”



South Padre Island Joins Partnership

The City of South Padre Island recently approved funding to construct a pedestrian walkway from Sea Turtle Inc. to the Convention Center. The walkway will extend across the front of the Native Plant Center providing greater public access for all venues along the walk.

“We, like all venues along the walk, appreciate the City’s support,” continued Lassen. “The sidewalk construction is a \$30,500 contribution that we want to recognize as a starting point in what we hope will be a long-term partnership to support the city’s dune restoration projects.”

The Native Plant Center will provide a local source of plants used for the dune stabilization and habitat restoration for both City and Cameron County projects. The Visitor Center will feature public exhibits on plant ecosystems from sargassum in the Gulf of Mexico, dune and wetland plants, and bay grasses all of which play an important role in the stability of coastal regions and fish, birds and wildlife that use plant ecosystems as feeding or nursery habitat. An outdoor native plant public garden and education pavilion are also planned.

South Texas Border Master Naturalists Volunteer Day

Work on the grounds of the Native Plant Center began May 30 when volunteers from the newly formed **South Texas Border Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists** harvested plants from the plant center site for the outdoor garden in preparation of

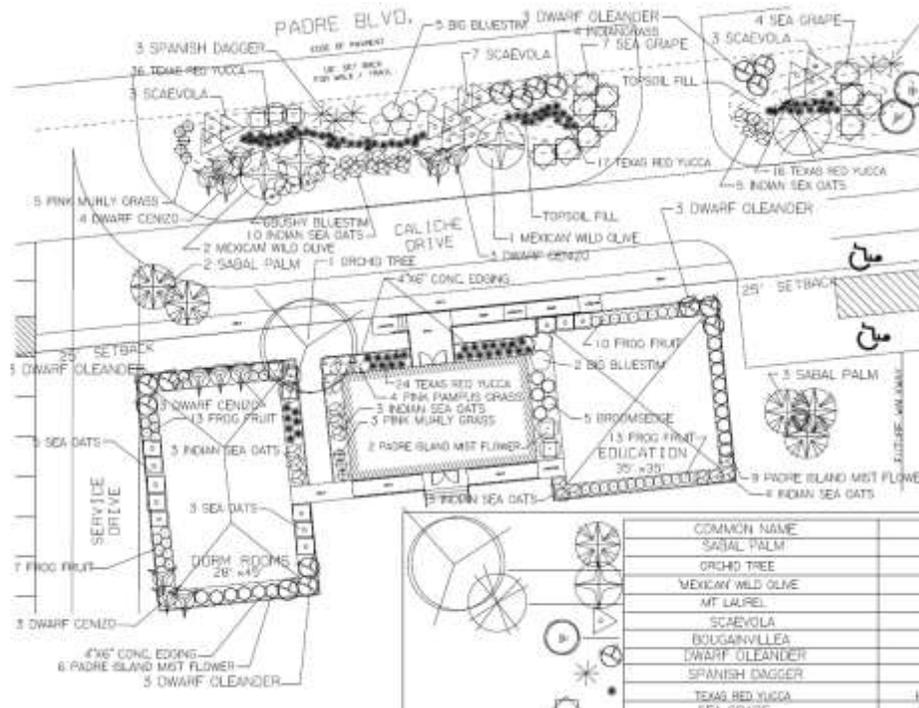


site development. The volunteers also cleaned and primed two sides of plant center building. Becky Jones organized the volunteer day and hosted a cook out following the work day. The next task is landscaping of the front entrance.



Native Plant Landscaping Plan

The Texas Department of Transportation has prepared a landscaping plan for the front entrance of the plant center which includes two planned additional buildings: an intern housing and an education center on each side of the visitor center. Some plant substitutions will be made so the front entrance display is focused on native plants.



Please Join Our Partnership: Funding Needs/Sponsorship Opportunities

Initial funding support of \$185,000 from the Cameron County Coastal Impact Assistance Program is limited to building construction and will not cover costs for plant exhibits, inventory, restoration equipment, water recycling, site and public garden landscaping, and propagation tables. Please consider joining our community-based partnership to protect the coastal resources that support this region. For more information visit www.gomnaturecenter.org.



Sponsorship Needs: Plant Exhibits, Public Garden/Site Landscaping, Plant /Gilt Shop Inventory, Equipment

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