



Proposed Community Conservation and Education Center at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to construct a new Community Conservation Education Center (CCEC) at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The existing 30-year old visitor center has significant structural and mechanical deficiencies, in addition to being too small to adequately serve an increasing level of visitation (80,000 visitors per year). Demand from local schools for environmental education programs is 2-3 times the capacity of the current facility and daily visitation surpasses 600 people per day during winter and early spring.



The proposed CCEC (8,100 SF) would include a large exhibit area, multipurpose meeting room and retail space (to be operated by the Refuge Friends group), staff offices, a state-of-the-art environmental education building, and outdoor facilities (e.g., children's nature-based play area and an outdoor classroom).

These new facilities would be LEED certified by the U.S. Green Building Council, showcasing environmentally sustainable design.

A restored wetland adjacent the building would provide close-up wildlife viewing opportunities.



The proposed CCEC would serve as the transit hub for Merritt Island NWR, providing multi-modal support and access to visitors.

The proposed CCEC would be a local hub for the proposed Space Coast Trail portion of Florida's Coast-to-Coast Trail, which connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean through Merritt Island NWR and Canaveral National Seashore.

The proposed CCEC would also serve as the hub for wildlife tours and a potential future wildlife viewing tram system.