

## Sea Center to improve walkway with Phillips 66 donation

By Erinn Callahan [erinn.callahan@thefacts.com](mailto:erinn.callahan@thefacts.com) | Posted: Monday, June 29, 2015 2:00 am

**LAKE JACKSON** — The wetlands observations area of Sea Center Texas is a haven of sorts for visitors.

Many people flock to the 5-acre marsh for bird watching, or simply to meditate against the backdrop of live nature sounds from the wetlands' animal inhabitants.

"They're enjoyed by a lot of people," director David Abrego said.

Thanks to last week's \$75,000 donation from Phillips 66, visitors will be able to more effectively enjoy the wetlands area. The entire donation will fund improvements to the 600-foot walkway that stretches over the marshy ground below, as well as bringing it into compliance with updated Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

"Because the land has shifted, we need to renovate," Abrego said. "We're going to tear out every piece of board and straighten the concrete.

"Our goal is to make it accessible for everyone, and people with disabilities will be able to access it a lot easier."

In addition to making the walkway more accessible for visitors with disabilities, hatcheries manager Shane Bonnot said he and Abrego sought the grant to better connect the boardwalk with the marsh's 8-acre reservoir.

"It's a really nice resource, and we want to be able to incorporate the walkway into our reservoir," Bonnot said. "We've always had a vision for the walkway, so this is a great opportunity to make an access point for the public to go out there and enjoy the view."

Construction will begin in the winter with a targeted March completion date, Bonnot said.

A renovated walkway would not have been out of reach without the grant, Abrego said, but it would have required piecemeal funding and ultimately taken several years to complete.

"This donation shortens the process considerably," Abrego said. "We get set operational funds, but anything extra is very important."

Like Sea Center Texas, Phillips 66 values environment sustainability and education, which made the center a natural choice for the grant, company officials said. "Sea Center Texas' mission is a great fit with Phillips 66's sustainability program," Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs Karen Tripp said in a news release. "We are delighted to support this new wetlands walkway."



Phillips 66 donates \$75,000 to Sea Center Texas

Children explore the touch tank Friday at Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson.