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PROPOSED AQUARIUM SEEN AS FULFILLING RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL ROLE, INTERIOR STUDIES SHOW

Washington's National Fisheries Center and Aquarium "will emerge as one of the world's foremost aquatic biological research centers as well as providing a self-supporting visitor attraction combining entertainment and education," Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said today.

Secretary Udall's remarks followed several weeks of advance planning and consultation out of which a preliminary picture of the Center is beginning to emerge.

The Interior Secretary emphasized that 18 months of engineering and architectural planning will be required even after initial funds have been appropriated for the project authorized by the 87th Congress under a measure authored by Rep. Michael J. Kirwan of Ohio.

Authorized cost of the project is $10 million, to be amortized over a 30 year period by modest admission charges.

Among those who are enthusiastically predicting the Center will become an outstanding success, both financially as well as educationally, is Athelstan Spilhaus, who was U. S. Commissioner in charge of the Science Pavilion at the Seattle World's Fair.

Dr. Spilhaus, who has met with Secretary Udall, Under Secretary James K. Carr, Dr. Roger Revelle, the Department's science advisor, and other Interior officials in discussions on the Center's exhibit content, said the success of the Science Pavilion at Seattle "conclusively shows that science can be teamed up with entertainment to provide a superlative educational attraction."

The Science Pavilion at Seattle is to be continued under a private science foundation charging admission.

Here are highlights of some suggestions which will be presented to the Center's advisory board, required by the Congressional authorization:

1. The Center would display more than 1,000 species of fish, amphibians, and invertebrates in natural surroundings such as huge indoor and outdoor pools providing viewing from different levels, including an undersea panorama. Included in preliminary discussions are provisions for providing a trout stream, discharging into a bayou accommodating bass, as well as outside facilities for seals, sea lions, walrus, sea elephants, and sea otter. Other specially-designed facilities would be provided for tropical fish.

2. The Fisheries Center will provide unequalled facilities and specimens for aquatic research, which would include studies on genetics and selective breeding, nutrition, marine diseases, experimental ecology, behavior of aquatic organisms, antibiotics produced by marine animals, and new food sources from the sea, all designed to complement research activities of the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service.

Other areas of research will be provided for graduate students in marine subjects.

"The National Fisheries Center and Aquarium can become the most important U. S. center for aquatic biology research," Secretary Udall said, pointing out that it is conveniently located near the National Institutes of Health, Army and Navy Medical Research centers and other medical research centers.

3. Other facilities now in discussion stage include provisions for educational motion pictures and seminar rooms to be made available to the public as well as for fisheries groups and meetings.

The Center, which probably will be located on Hains Point in East Potomac Park, will not only provide easy access but also ample parking.

Secretary Udall said following the 18 months of planning, an estimated two years will be required for construction.

He said naming of a planning advisory board required by the Kirwan Bill, will be completed within the next 30 days.

Secretary Udall said he was hopeful that the actual architectural design would be determined by requirements for exhibits, research facilities, traffic patterns, etc.

"Dr. Spilhaus and other advisors have been most emphatic on the point that rather than design a building and then fit the exhibits and other facilities into it, the reverse procedure should be utilized for maximum efficiency," he said.

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