

USFWS Opens Multi-Million Dollar Visitor's Complex in South Texas.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service dedicated the Texas Chenier Plains Visitor's Center and Administration building last Thursday completing an important item on the agency's wish list for over 20 years.

The Complex, built on 37 acres of forest only ¼ mile from Lake Anahuac in Texas will unite the administration and visitor's services for four national wildlife refuges (NWR) near the Gulf Coast in Texas; Anahuac NWR, Moody NWR, McFaddin NWR and Texas Point NWR. In addition, the building will replace the obsolete, 46-year-old Anahuac NWR headquarters located in downtown Anahuac, Texas. The land for the project was donated by Chambers County, the County in which it sits, and the project was funded by the Recovery Act of 2009.

At \$ 4.125 million, the project was the most expensive, and arguably most important of the nearly 100 Recovery Act projects in the four-state Southwest Region, which is comprised of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona. Its location, about an hour from downtown Houston, will make the new visitor's center one of the most visited in the United States.

The building will be LEED-(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver Certified, meaning its construction rating on a points system, by the U.S. Green Building Council, exceeds mandated guidelines for efficient and energy saving design, construction, and post-construction commissioning. Some of its green features are a 10k photovoltaic solar generator, and a rain-water recycling system.

Features expected to draw the public include the Object Theatre, a 12-seat screening room with special effects designed to mimic riding an airboat on Lake Anahuac, and alligator discovery cove, a bookstore provided by the friends of Anahuac, and a boardwalk behind the building that winds from the refuge to the lake.

Below is a video documenting the construction and features of the Texas Chenier Plains Visitor's Center and Administration Building.