

An aerial architectural rendering of the Atchafalaya Museum Campus. The scene is set in a lush, green landscape with a large body of water in the background. In the foreground, there is a large, modern building with a green, gabled roof and large glass windows. A paved area with a bus and several cars is visible. A winding path leads through the trees towards the building. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Preserving Culture, Growing Opportunity

Heart of the Atchafalaya Museum Campus

Pierre Part • Belle River • Upper Terrebonne Basin

A living campus where visitors hear the culture, meet the people, walk the landscape, paddle the waterways, and discover how Cajun heritage moves into the future.

OUR STORY BEGINS WITH THE WATER

The people's story cannot be told without the swamps, and the swamp's story cannot be told without the people.

Water • Work • Faith • Family • Culture

FROM VISION TO REALITY

2020: Community vision begins • Professional campus concept developed • 2025: Pavilion and historic barn begin campus life
• Museum Contractor Waiting on State Approval

What began as a community vision in 2020 is now becoming a destination visitors will soon be able to experience.



Peter Chermayeff and Bobby Poole, Andover, MA

World-renowned Architecture and design partners. They share strong design interests in transportation, public exhibitions, museum, offices, hotels, and mixed-use development. Have worked with our WWII Museum and Nashville Aquarium.

Mr. Chermayeff is a fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

Mr. Poole is a design instructor at Boston Architectural Center and a thesis advisor for students at MIT.



**Sherry Kafka Wager
LOEB Fellow 1981
San Antonio, Texas**

Nationally renowned urban planner, museum exhibition designer, and author.

Most known as one of the creators of the much-loved San Antonio Riverwalk.



**Tom Geismar, Graphic Designer
New York, NY**

Wildly considered a pioneer of American graphic design. He has designed more than a hundred corporate identity programs such as Xerox, PBS, Mobile Oil, and Rockefeller Center.

He has received worldwide acclaim in graphic design and architecture.



**Joel Kline, Architect
Newbury Port, MA**

25 years experience collaborating on projects worldwide including cultural museum centers.

His work has been published in international design journals and exhibited in Germany, Romania, and throughout the USA.

Our Team of Conceptual Design Consultants

A Community Visitors Will Want to Know

Our greatest attraction is the authenticity of our people.

- ☐ Fishermen
- ☐ Cooks
- ☐ Musicians
- ☐ French Speakers
- ☐ Church Families
- ☐ Business Owners
- ☐ School
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Elders
- ☐ Youth

Visitors will meet a community where traditions are still part of everyday life not a recreated version of Cajun life.





MORE THAN A MUSEUM

A living cultural and environmental campus

Visitors will not stop at the museum doors. They will move from exhibits into the landscape, gathering places, heritage trail, wildlife habitat, and waterways that shaped those stories.

MUSEUM TO TRAIL

See it inside.
Experience it outside.

The Heritage Walking Trail turns
interpretation into experience.

- ☐ Historic slough and wetland landscape
- ☐ Native plants and wildlife
- ☐ 48-acre borrow pond
- ☐ Island bird rookery
- ☐ Nine bilingual listening tour kiosks

*The museum introduces the
story; the trail lets visitors
walk into it.*



LANDSCAPE STORY

A remarkable rookery and levee story

The trail's west portion follows a 48-acre borrow pond.

- ❑ Soil from the pond became part of the Atchafalaya levee
- ❑ The island rookery can host more than 1,000 birds at times
- ❑ A setting for birding, photography, science, and interpretation
- ❑ A natural way to teach flood protection, water movement, and habitat

This one landscape can tell stories of engineering, stewardship, wildlife, and survival.



BTNEP PARTNERSHIP

Nine places where the landscape speaks

9 kiosks • QR access • English and Cajun French Listening Tour

- ☐ Stories matched to what visitors are observing
- ☐ Local French speakers recording Cajun French versions
- ☐ Wildlife, water, plants, occupations, history, and community information
- ☐ Environmental education through local voices

Each BTNEP-funded kiosk will let visitors hear the landscape explained through the voices of people who know it best, preserving environmental knowledge and authentic language.



LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

A new home for Cajun French

French immersion is no longer available in our local schools after more than 30 years.

- ❑ Conversation programs for all ages
- ❑ Elders speaking with children and families
- ❑ French music and storytelling
- ❑ Bilingual oral histories and kiosks
- ❑ Authentic local pronunciation and expressions
- ❑ Codofil partnership

A language survives when people have a place to hear it, speak it, and pass it forward



NATURAL ESTUARY WATERS

Paddle into the Heart of the Basin from Bayou Pierre Part

Seven bird-named paddle trails • 62 miles of natural estuary waters

- ❑ Paddling and outdoor recreation
- ❑ Birding and wildlife viewing
- ❑ Cultural and environmental interpretation
- ❑ Connections to local businesses and lodging
- ❑ A slow, personal way to experience the basin

The museum can explain the basin; the paddle trails let visitors enter it.



YOUR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

The Pierre Part Belle River Water Trails are for canoe and kayak paddlers, as well as recreational boaters. In so many ways, they are for everyone -- residents and Visitors; young and old; bird watchers, nature lovers, photographers, and anyone who seeks peace and tranquility.



For more information, visit www.assumptionveteranspark.com.

In case of emergency:
If you need 911 emergency response on the water trail, report your location relative to the trail (bird) name and closest mile marker. For non-emergencies, call (985) 369-2912.



PIERRE PART BELLE RIVER WATER TRAILS



PADDLE GUIDE

TOURISM MOMENTUM

Tourism interest is already building

The museum campus will turn recognition into a complete visitor experience.

- ☐ More local bed-and-breakfast availability
- ☐ Visitor interest from Troy Landry and Swamp People
- ☐ Authentic demand for swamp and Cajun experiences
- ☐ Opportunities to extend visits into full-day and overnight stays

Television may introduce visitors to the swamp; our community will introduce them to the people and culture behind it.



COMMUNITY NETWORK

The community is building this together

Business • Fire Department • Churches • Veterans Park Recreation

- ❑ Business Group: tourism, entrepreneurship, sponsorship, local spending
- ❑ Volunteer Fire Department: service, safety, preparedness, trust
- ❑ Churches: faith, heritage, resilience, belonging
- ❑ Veterans Park Recreation: families, youth, leadership, gathering

The campus is not standing alone – it grows from a community already working together



COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

We don't wait for opportunity — we build it

Rural strength has always come from people choosing to act together.

- ❑ Without the large industry base or tax structure available to some communities, local people step forward.
- ❑ Residents, businesses, volunteers, donors, and partners turn ideas into projects.
- ❑ The museum campus, water trails, recreation, and community organizations reflect that same local initiative.

We are not waiting for growth to arrive. We are creating reasons for it to happen.



WORKFORCE HOME

More than a workforce. A place to build a future.

Economic development is also about creating the kind of community people choose for their families.

- ❑ A close-knit community where people know and support one another.
- ❑ Rich Cajun traditions, faith, food, fishing, paddling, and outdoor recreation.
- ❑ A place to grow a career, raise a family, and feel connected to something larger than a job.

Our community is not just where you make a living. It can be where you build a future, grow a career, raise a family, and thrive.



STEM LEARNING

The estuary becomes a STEM classroom

Our children are surrounded by science but need hands-on access to it.

- ☐ Biology and wildlife
- ☐ Water quality and estuary health
- ☐ Wetlands and native plants
- ☐ Weather, flooding, and water movement
- ☐ Mapping, monitoring, and data collection
- ☐ Conservation and environmental stewardship

The basin is not only our heritage; it can also become our classroom.



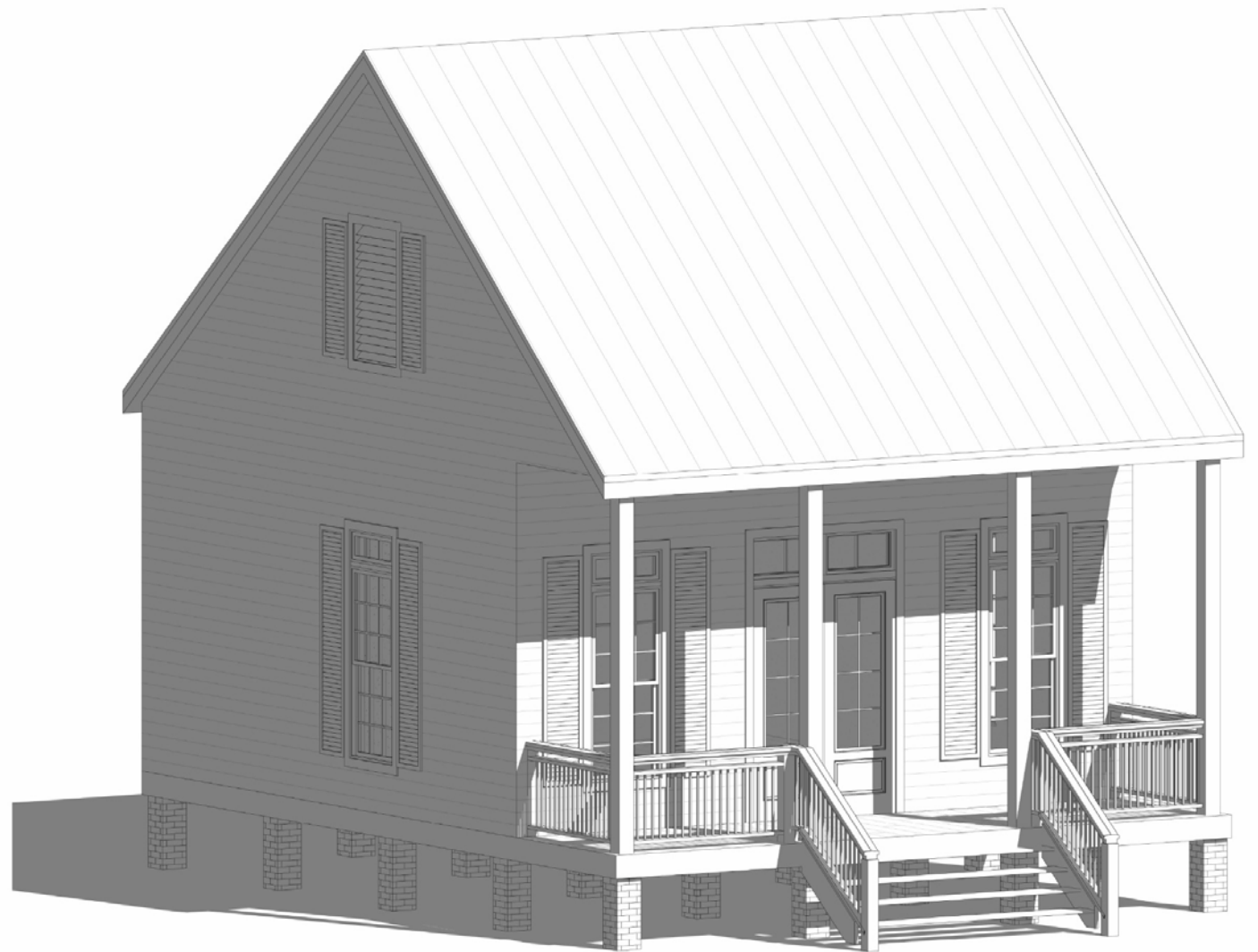
DISCOVERY CABIN

Learning opportunities we do not have today

The Discovery Cabin will bring hands-on opportunities into our community that our students currently have to travel elsewhere to find or may never experience at all.

- ☐ Student field experiences
- ☐ Water and wildlife investigations
- ☐ Visiting scientists and educators
- ☐ University and industry partnerships
- ☐ Demonstrations, experiments, and career exposure
- ☐ Family and lifelong learning programs

The estuary becomes the classroom, and the Discovery Cabin becomes the learning lab.



FUTURE CAREERS

From local knowledge to future careers

Traditional skills can become pathways into education, training, and workforce.

- ❑ Traditional knowledge: fishing, boating, weather, wildlife, construction, emergency response
- ❑ STEM skills: observation, measurement, engineering, mapping, safety, problem-solving
- ❑ Careers: science, biology, restoration, marine, petrochemical, skilled trades, industry, tourism

We want our youth to see that knowledge of home has value — and that they can build a career without giving up the community they call home.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Culture is economic development

Every longer visit creates opportunity for local families and businesses.

- ❑ Restaurants and food businesses
- ❑ Bed-and-breakfasts and hospitality
- ❑ Kayak rentals, guides, and outfitters
- ❑ Artists, musicians, and craftspeople
- ❑ Festivals, events, retail, and fuel
- ❑ Student programs and group tours

Our culture is not separate from our economy – it can be one of its strongest assets



QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is economic development

What we offer goes deeper than population counts, tax numbers, or job statistics.

- ❑ World-class fishing, 62 miles of paddle trails, wetlands, wildlife, and outdoor recreation.
- ❑ A food culture shaped by generations of craftsmanship and knowledge.
- ❑ A museum campus that turns heritage, education, tourism, and community pride into reasons to stay longer — and to belong.

Life moves with purpose here. That sense of place is one of our strongest assets for tourism, investment, and workforce growth.



PARTNERSHIPS

Why partnership matters

Culture + Estuary Education + Cajun French + Tourism + Youth Opportunity

- ☐ Public understanding of the estuary
- ☐ Bilingual environmental interpretation
- ☐ Wildlife and water education
- ☐ Youth stewardship and STEM learning
- ☐ Regional tourism connections

Partnership turns separate good ideas into one powerful regional story.



Come experience Heart of the Atchafalaya

Hear our language

Meet our people

Walk our landscape

Paddle our waterways

Help us carry the culture forward

The Heart of the Atchafalaya Museum will preserve the relationship between the people and the swamp — and turn that heritage into education, tourism, opportunity, and pride for the generations ahead.

