

August 3, 2026



Monmouth County Park System

EXHIBIT FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION FOR THE MANASQUAN RESERVOIR ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, HOWELL, NJ

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project involves the fabrication and installation of new exhibits in the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center. This overhaul includes the front lobby, three pavilions, bird viewing area, and continuous exhibits through the serpentine hallway.

REASON FOR PROJECT: The Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center (MREC) was constructed in 1999 with interpretive exhibits completed in 2001. These displays had exceeded their planned display cycle and were overdue for reinterpretation; in 2020, an internal MREC exhibit subcommittee was formed to begin thematic planning for the new exhibits.

In 2020, a nationally recognized exhibit planning and design firm, Hilferty & Associates, was hired through a fair & open request for proposal to provide a Professional Exhibit Improvements Plan for the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center. Following this planning study, Hilferty & Assoc. was awarded the contract to Provide Exhibit Design Services for the Manasquan Environmental Center in late 2022, to prepare final design and bid ready construction documents for the fabrication and installation phase of work.

The building closed to the public during the exhibit design phase in 2024 to address numerous structural issues in preparation of the new exhibits including:

- Demolition of Existing Exhibits
- Electrical Upgrades
- Roof Repair
- HVAC Upgrades
- Floor Refinishing and Carpet Installation
- New Window Installation
- Mold Remediation
- Building Repairs and Repainting

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS: The focus of these new exhibits seeks to help the public understand their place in the Manasquan Watershed and gain a better understanding of the ecology of the park. New interior animal habitats will provide visitors with an up-close encounter with the wildlife of the reservoir.

The design seeks to meet visitors at many different levels, with hands on activities and tactile elements for our youngest visitors, through our “Neighborhood Naturalist” investigatory track for school aged children, and thought provoking research concepts for high school and beyond. The new design brings color and fun into the rustic charm of the environmental center building. This highly anticipated design concept will provide the public with a regional destination for all ages to enjoy for years to come.

PROJECT STATUS: The design phase is complete, and this project is in Bid Specification Review at the county level in preparation to award the Exhibit Fabrication and Installation for the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center. Project completion is expected in 2027. Once advertised and awarded, a more targeted completion date will be added to this project information sheet.

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Design Concept for Lobby/Environmental Center Entrance



Exhibit Concept for Serpentine Hallway and Investigation Stations



Encounter Pavilion Concept with New Habitats and Large Central Feature Tank