

**July 7, 2020**

## **Provincetown Kicks Off Conceptual Design Phase for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center**

*Provincetown, MA* The Town of Provincetown, Center for Coastal Studies, and NOAA's [Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary](#) are pleased to announce the hiring of Oudens Ello Architecture to develop a conceptual design for a proposed Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center in Provincetown, MA.

In the coming months, the community will have a number of opportunities to provide input on the uses and design of the visitor center and master plan for the property.

“The visitor center will feature interactive exhibits describing the sanctuary’s diverse wildlife, natural value, human uses, challenges, and the public’s involvement in resource protection,” explains Anne-Marie Runfola, Program Coordinator for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

“Provincetown will be featured as an historic gateway to the sanctuary. Everything from fishing to the birth of East Coast whale watching to present day marine research and education is tied to Stellwagen Bank,” adds Rich Delaney, President and CEO, Center for Coastal Studies. “The visitor center could also include a multi-purpose space, visitor amenities, such as restrooms and retail, and back of house administrative space. Inviting public input again during this phase of the project will be key in making programmatic and design decisions.”

The conceptual design phase for the visitor center is part of a multi-step planning process that started with a feasibility study completed in 2017. The project partners hired ConsultEcon, Inc. to perform the study and convened a Citizen Steering Committee and other local stakeholders in a highly collaborative process to identify potential sites and programs, or uses, for the visitor center. Through the study, stakeholders identified a preferred location along the Municipal Parking Lot near MacMillan Pier. The study also details potential programming and a preliminary operating plan for the space. After the study, the project partners worked to raise funds for the conceptual design phase and recently, the Town of Provincetown and NOAA secured the final funds to move forward to the next phase of the project. The final conceptual design documents will be used to fundraise for later design and construction phases of the project.

Acting Town Manager, David Gardner points out that the proposed visitor center can provide substantial benefits to all participating partners as well as to the Provincetown community and to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary itself: “The project will educate visitors about environmental and conservation issues related to Stellwagen Bank and the regional marine environment; it will support a number of businesses that provide access to the marine resources; and it can be a focal point of downtown Provincetown and a new reason to visit or extend a stay in the town. The proposed visitor center will also provide a venue for community events and programs, particularly before and after the busy tourism high season.”

[Oudens Ello Architecture](#) was chosen in a competitive process through the Town of Provincetown. The Boston-based, architecture and urban design office specializes in academic, cultural and institutional

projects. Principals Matthew Oudens, and Conrad Ello, bring a research-based approach to their projects yielding thoughtful, well-reasoned solutions that respond to their unique physical and cultural contexts and reflect a close collaborative relationship with each client. Recently completed works include the Martha's Vineyard Museum, in Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts, and the Eastham Public Library, a net-zero energy facility on the Outer Cape and winner of a 2018 AIA-ALA Library Building Award. Active projects include new visitor centers for Woodlawn Museum, Gardens & Park in Ellsworth, Maine and the Pioneer Village Living History Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Consultant firms working with Oudens Ello Architecture on the project include Main Street Design of Cambridge for interpretive exhibits and experiences and ConsultEcon, Inc., for ongoing marketing and business strategy support tied to their work on the 2017 feasibility study.

Oudens and Ello add: "We believe that the Visitor Center has great potential to become an important new interactive gateway to Provincetown, the Outer Cape and Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary itself, benefitting from tremendous visibility, accessibility and proximity to the water and providing great potential for engagement with the Sanctuary. Having practiced architecture in historic settings throughout our careers, we know that, in its best form, the new Visitor Center will stand out as a dynamic educational resource and eco-tourism destination, while simultaneously fitting in as a respectful new building block with the history, culture and architecture of Provincetown. We're very honored to be a collaborator in this exciting process."

"We are thrilled to hire Oudens Ello Architecture to join us for this important project, which will feature the national marine sanctuary, offer other amenities for the community, and re-envision the area's connectivity and flow to the waterfront, transportation hub, and business and tourist districts," shares David Gardner.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent, Pete DeCola, seconds that motion: "We felt Oudens Ello Architecture understood our needs, and Provincetown's unique character, very well. We were impressed with their creative designs and community focus. Their past achievements and passion for the project shined through and we know they will help us produce an excellent design for the visitor center

The conceptual design phase will take approximately five months, with planning meetings and the reconvening of the Citizen Steering Committee in July 2020, followed by public input and draft designs in an iterative process through November 2020. The end result will be a conceptual design for the property and the building that we can share with potential project funders. The team will use a variety of local media outlets to invite the public to provide input.

For more information, please contact [Anne-Marie Runfola](#) (SBNMS) at [781-546-6023](tel:781-546-6023) or [917-743-7352](tel:917-743-7352) or [Rich Delaney](#) (CCS) at 508-487-3622 x 111.