

CONSERVATION CONTINUUM

Observation

Appreciation

Interpretation

Conservation

Restoration



CONSERVATION CONTINUUM 

Restoration
How do we reduce the existential threats to this thing?

Conservation
How do we preserve this thing for the future?

Interpretation
What is the uniqueness of this thing?

Appreciation
Where is beauty in this thing?

Observation
What is this thing?





Exercise

- Observe – What do you see? Hear? Smell? Feel? Are there qualities to its presence?
- Appreciate – What is beautiful? Unique? Special? Distinctive? What is the variety of things?
- Interpret – Is there historical, cultural, scientific, or natural significance to this place? Specifically, what are these things? What might we learn or share? Factual or anecdotal? Use Wikipedia, Seek, iNaturalist, etc.
- Conserve – How do we preserve/protect/enhance this location for what it is?
- Restore – What is happening with this location? What opportunity might be missed here?



Example – Great Blue Heron

The first steps of the model are self-centered.

- Observe – What is this bird?
- Appreciate – What is beautiful about this bird?

Proper identification plays a key role in the process. Appreciation is expressed by photo or journaling. Something worthy of recording.

The next steps of the model are education-centered.

- Interpret – What is unique about this bird? What is factual?
- Conserve – How do we preserve/protect this bird?

What about this bird is notable to share? What is its place in the ecology? How does it behave within its habitat? How has man impacted or enhanced essential life and reproductive activities?

Finally, the top step of the model is advocacy.

- Restore – What are the threats to this bird?

Who cares about this bird? What organization? What agency? How do I get involved? What can I do?





Example – City Park

The first steps of the model are self-centered.

- Observe – What is this park?
- Appreciate – What is beautiful/special about this park?

*What are the plants and animals in this public space? How do people use it?
How does the park benefit the city or neighborhood?*

The next steps of the model are education-centered.

- Interpret – Is there historical, cultural, or natural significance to this park?
- Conserve – How do we preserve/protect/enhance this space?

*Why is the park here? How does it change through the seasons? What can be done with it to make people more aware of it and use it more productively?
What about it is worth sharing? In my imagination, what does this park need?*



Finally, the top step of the model is advocacy.

- Restore – What is happening with this park?

What city/county agency manages this park? What needs to be addressed? Are there regular volunteers? How do I get involved? What can I do?



Mustang Island State Park

1. Let's Apply the Conservation Continuum to a natural space.
2. Mustang Island State Park has unique challenges as a nature park.
 - Narrow set of expectations in visitors.
 - ✓ Sun & Fun
 - ✓ Sea & Sand
 - ✓ Shells
 - The natural setting facilitates the predetermined expectation.
 - Visitors are open to natural discussions but not looking for them.
 - ✓ Results in hit or miss successes.
 - ✓ Balance site offerings and roving offerings.
 - Visitors stay weeks, days, mornings or afternoons, overnights.
 - People are spread out.
 - ✓ Promote and advertise at kiosk, bathhouse, beach walkover.
 - ✓ Walk-around invitations.
3. Because there is *only* so much you can do at a beach, discussions and programming are generally welcomed.



Mustang Island State Park

Visitors see the Park as Campground, Parking Lot, Day Beach, and Drive on Beach.

Let's work with that.

Nature seems to be categorized into three ecoregions.

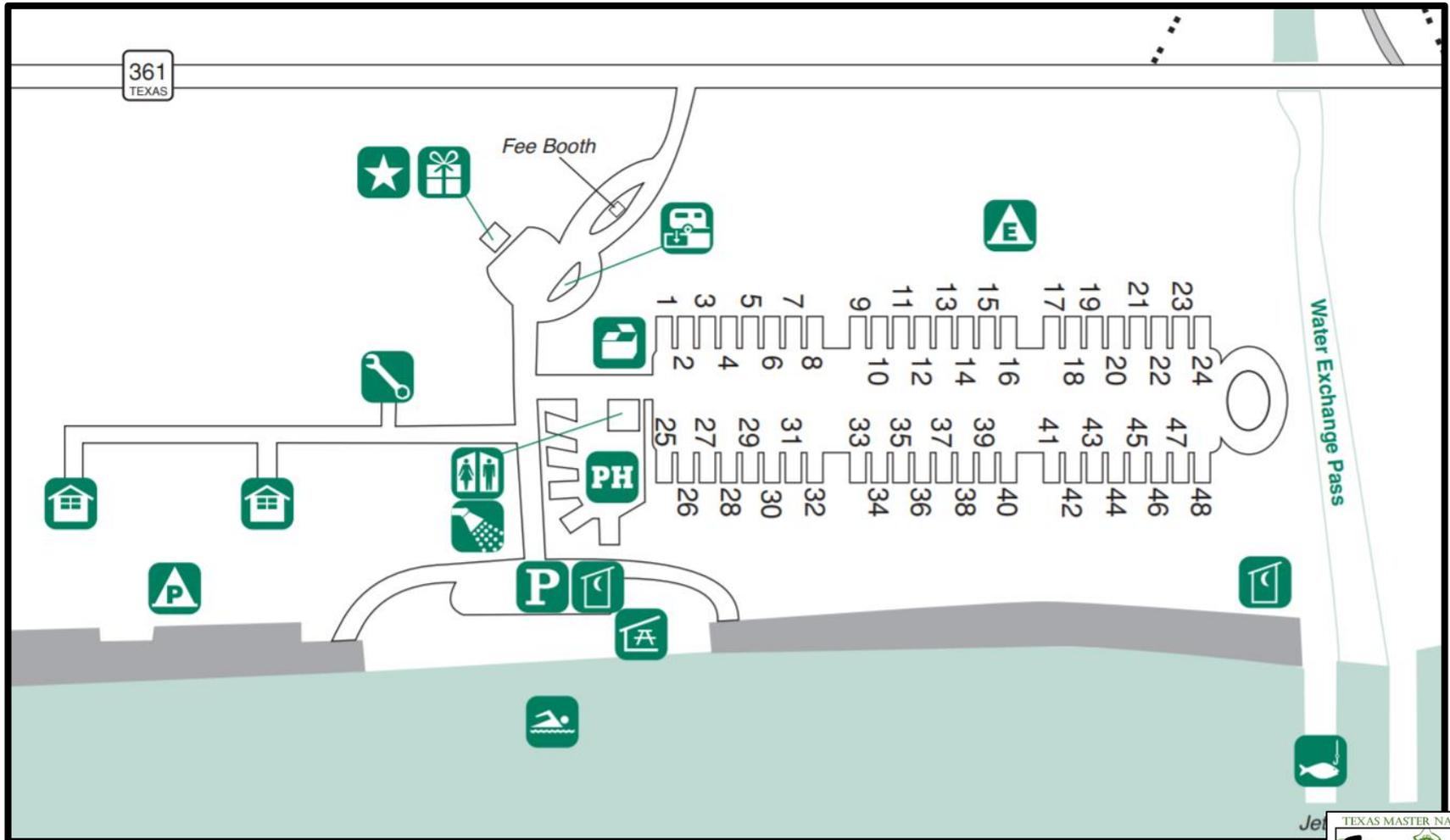
- Vegetated Flats & Brackish Ponds
- Behind the Dunes Ridge & Swale
- Fore Island Dune and Beach

Working as teams, as if preparing to guide a nature walk, find a spot or path and apply the continuum as a revealing guide.

Share perspectives through the questions.

A trainer is available to help you “see” where to start.

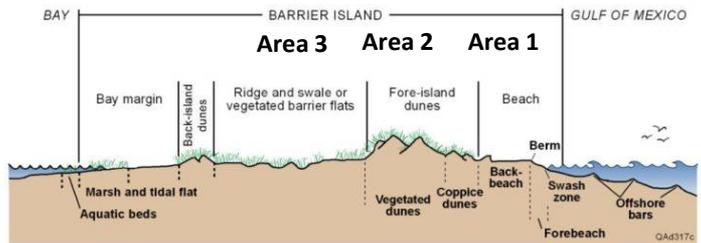
Mustang Island State Park as a Visitor Sees it.



TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

**learn.
explore.
serve.**

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER



Could a Naturalist lead a discussion about the uniqueness of these three areas?

Vegetated flats & brackish ponds

Area 3

Ridge & Swale
(Older Dunes)

Area 2

Fore Island Dunes & Beach

Area 1

Mustang Island State Park as a Naturalist Sees it.

