

[From Spring 2005]

Environmental Ed. Partners Make a Difference

CNHA has been the refuge's most consistent and generous partner when it comes to funding visitor services initiatives at CNWR. As part of its unrelenting commitment to environmental education, CNHA recently purchased a 30'x30', screened-in pavilion that will be used as an outdoor classroom.

CNHA funded the acquisition of the structure to provide students and teachers with shelter, as well as a place to engage in hands-on, investigative studies of the refuge's flora and fauna. The pavilion will be placed at the entrance of the existing environmental education trail, located in Lighthouse Meadow, just in time for the commencement of the busy educational programming season. The pavilion will be erected by the Spring Elderhostel and will include benches and lockup storage for equipment.

"We are totally excited about this new edition to the refuge's program," said Alison Penn, Environmental Education Specialist. "I cannot count the number of times that we have been caught by inclement weather, buzzed off the trail by mosquitoes, or just had a need to further study what we have discovered on the trail."

Penn also noted that the CNHA funded the development of two, eight-minute audiovisual programs that will serve as an orientation and as a promotional piece, respectively, for the refuge's environmental education program. According to Penn, when the compact disc is completed, it will be distributed, free of charge, to area schools. "We want to showcase the limitless opportunities to engage in environmental education at the refuge to teachers as well as orient students to the four habitats found on the refuge," said Penn. "This CD will do both."