

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center****Federal Tax ID: 92-0170600****Project Title:****Project Type:** New Construction and Land Acquisition

## **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center - Bear Education Awareness and Research Sanctuary (B.E.A.R.S.)**

**State Funding Requested:** \$400,000

One-Time Need

**House District:** Anchorage Areawide (16-32)**Brief Project Description:**

Bear Viewing Elevated Boardwalks and Platforms at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center as Phase I of the Bear Education Awareness Sanctuary (B.E.A.R.S.) Interpretive Facility

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$400,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2012 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$400,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:*

none.

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Phase I of the overall development of the Bear Awareness and Research Sanctuary Facility (B.E.A.R.S.) which includes an 11,000 sq ft interpretive center and theater concentrated on the topic of Alaskan Bears.

The development of the B.E.A.R.S. facility will strengthen the tourism industry in the Portage Valley and the state of Alaska by offering a more in depth look at North America's largest carnivore and offering the tourists an exciting, memorable and comfortable Alaskan experience.

The development of the elevated boardwalks through the bear enclosures will be an immediate improvement to the tourist experience in the Portage Valley.

**Project Components:**

500 feet of elevated boardwalk through the dynamic brown and black bear enclosures at AWCC.

Two elevated gathering areas for bear viewing and interpretation.

**Project Timeline:**

Planned Phases of Construction beginning with Interpretive Elevated Boardwalks Spring 2011.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

Name: Steve Mendive  
Title: Project and Development  
Address: 6100 N Wolverine  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Phone Number: (907)244-8402  
Email: steve@alaskawildlife.org

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No

*For use by Co-chair Staff Only:*



## BEARS Interpretive Boardwalks Project Overview

A W C C

B D S

Z Architects

**Project: Bear Viewing Elevated Boardwalks and Platforms at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center as Phase I of the Bear Education Awareness Sanctuary (B.E.A.R.S.) Interpretive Facility**

Estimated Cost: \$400,000

Construction: Spring 2011

Phase I of the overall development of the Bear Awareness and Research Sanctuary Facility (B.E.A.R.S.) which includes an 11,000 sq ft interpretive center and theater concentrated on the topic of Alaskan Bears.

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Project Components:

500 feet of elevated boardwalk through the dynamic brown and black bear enclosures at AWCC.

Two elevated gathering areas for bear viewing and interpretation.

# BEARS Boardwalk Construction Update

A W C C

B D S

Z A r c h i t e c t s

May 2011

## **Current Status: Phase one is ready to begin construction.**

- Design and engineering documents are complete for the first phase of boardwalk development.
- Bidding documents are under final review and ready to send out for mid summer proposals by bidders.
- Construction to begin in September and to continue through spring to avoid major impacts to summer visitors.

**This amenity will be a positive addition to the offerings for visitors in Alaska and strengthen the economic power of the Girdwood-Portage tourism industry.**

AWCC shares synergy with many other tourism industry partners in the area including but not limited to Princess Tours, Holland America, The Alyeska Resort, Begich Boggs Visitor Center and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



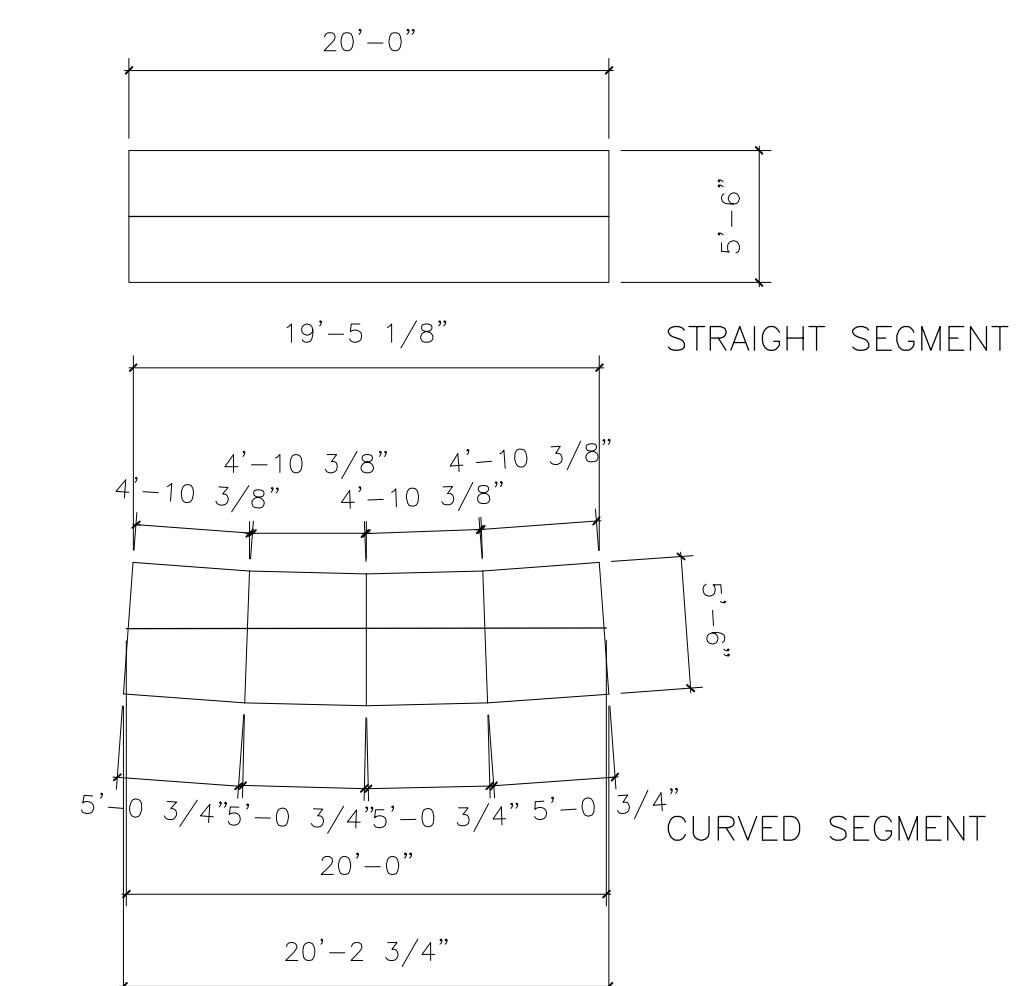
### **Design Narrative Excerpt:**

The BEARS Boardwalk entry will be near the existing Musk ox enclosure. A set of landscaped ramps will rise up toward a bridge across the tidal slough. At the top of the ramps, a covered kiosk will orient visitors to the BEARS Boardwalk Experience before visitors cross the slough into the bear enclosure. The boardwalk travels over the bear enclosures offering exciting views into the black and brown bear enclosures as well as panoramic views to the Turnagain Arm landscape. Interesting bear facts and interpretive information will be displayed on panels along the boardwalk railing. Near the Brown Bear Pond, a larger gathering platform will have additional interpretive information and dramatic views into the Brown Bear Enclosure. The ramp down from the gathering platform leads to a viewing patio and amphitheater. The amphitheater provides space for classroom type activities and special talks on bear behavior. The amphitheater is covered by a series of roofs stepping down toward the main building entry; these roofs collect the rainwater and form a cascading fountain that flows into the entry water feature. These elements are tied directly to the BEARS facility future phases. The future phases of BEARS facility will include interactive interpretive galleries, classroom space, gift shop, bear food preparation, and a theater.



**BOARDWALK SEGMENTS**

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**BEARS ELEVATED WALKWAYS**  
PORTAGE, ALASKA

SUBMITTAL: 05.21.11  
DRAWN BY: KMZ  
CHECKED BY:  
REVISIONS:

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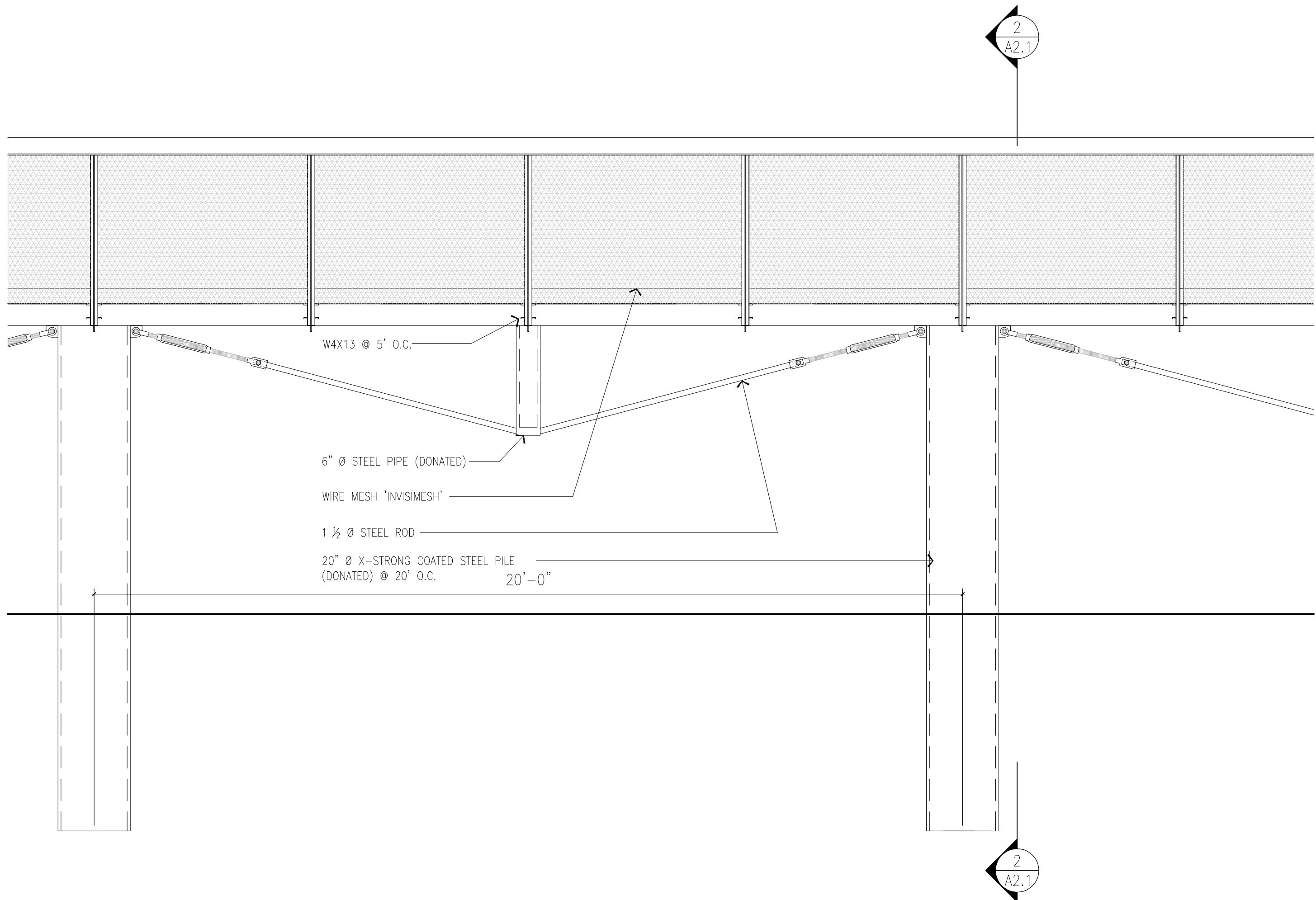
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**Z** ARCHITECTS

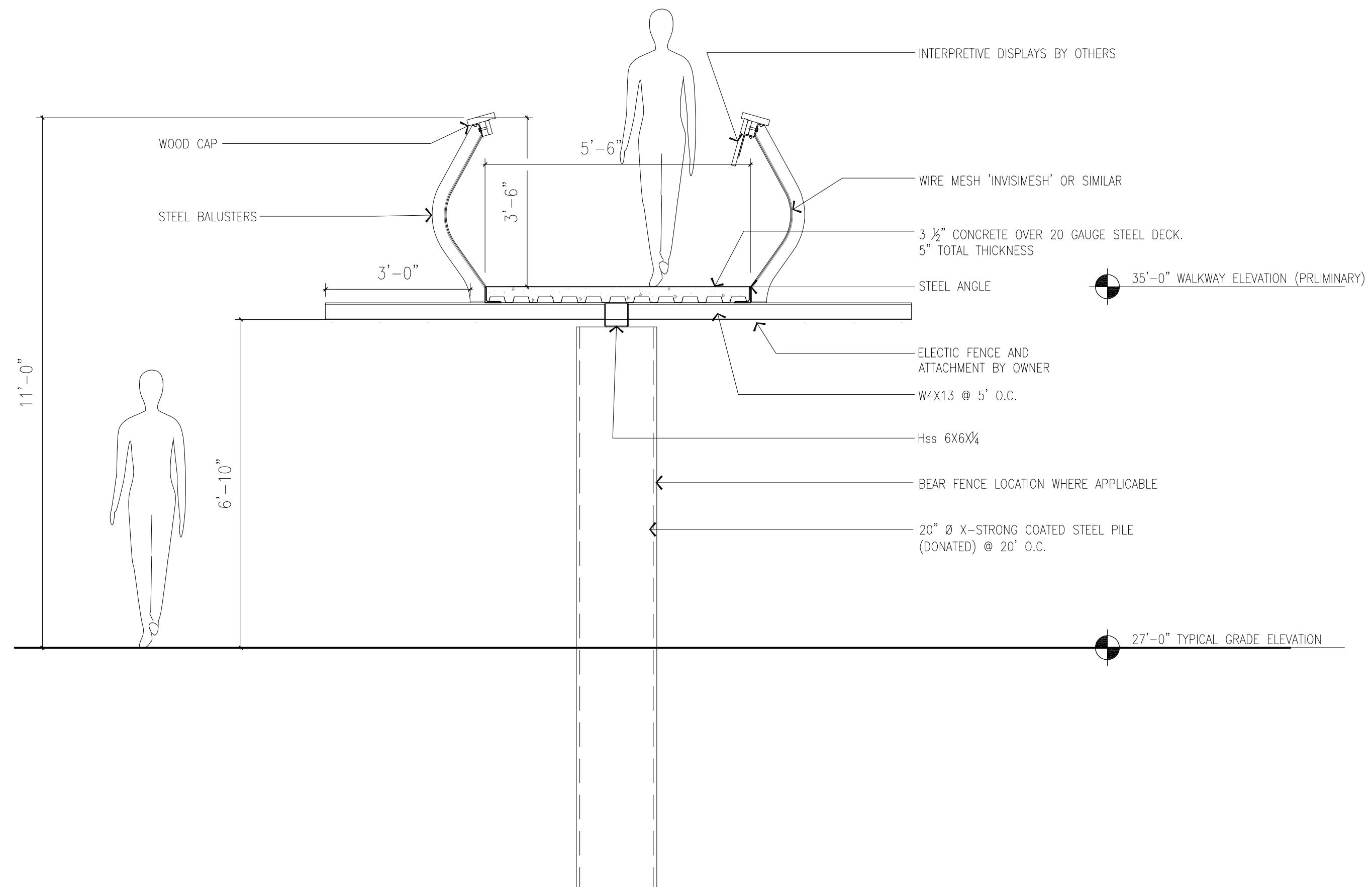
**BDS**

ELEVATED WALKWAY PLAN



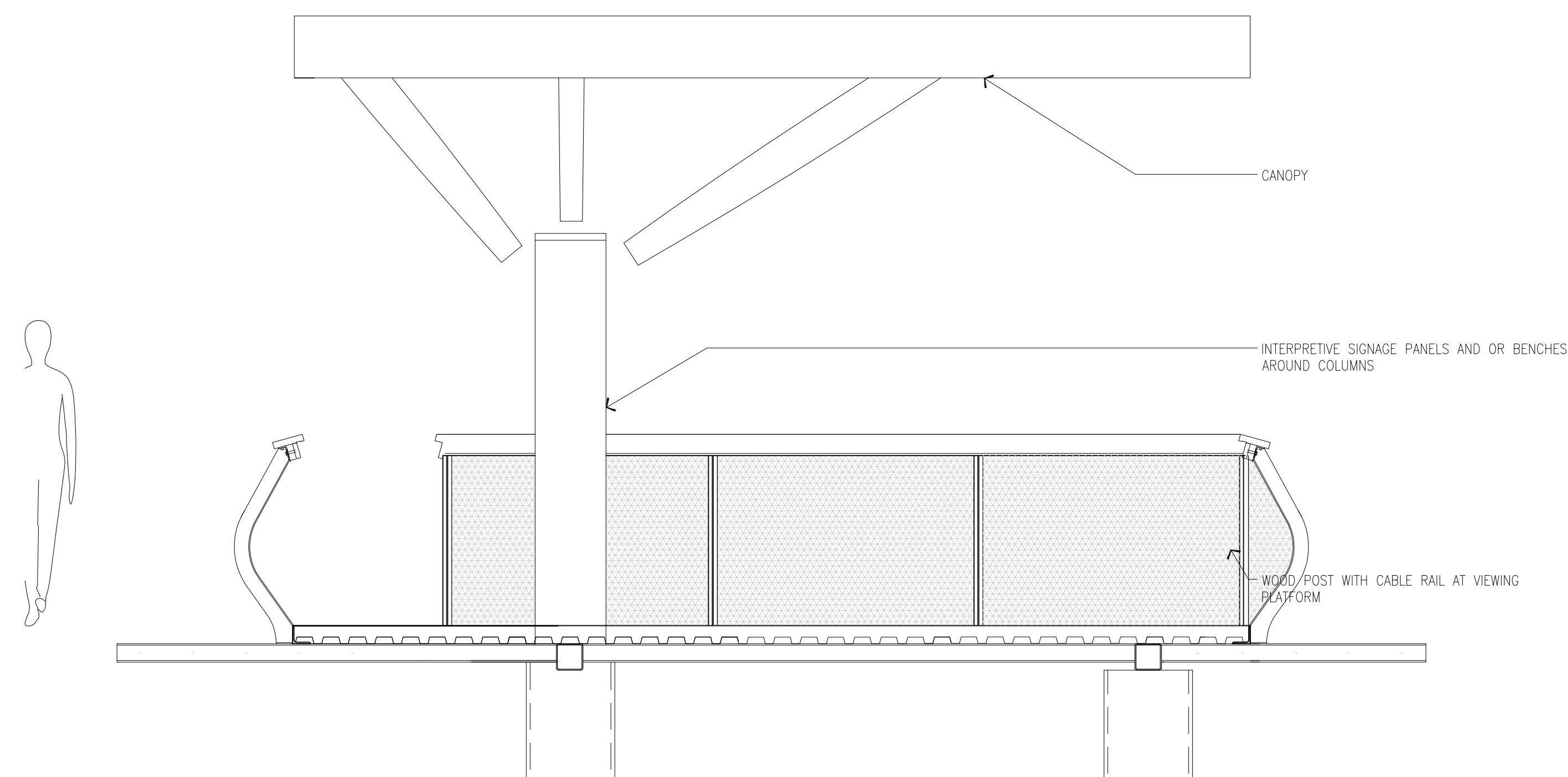
**1 TYPICAL ELEVATION**

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



**2 TYPICAL SECTION**

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



**3 BROWN BEAR BOARDWALK NODE**

SCALE: N.T.S.

BEARS ELEVATED WALKWAYS  
PORTAGE, ALASKA

SUBMITTAL: 05.21.11  
DRAWN BY: KZ/MZ  
CHECKED BY:  
REVISIONS:

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**A4.1**



Marco A. Zaccaro  
No. 10531

REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT

**Z**  
ARCHITECTS

**BDS**

**BOARDWALK ELEVATIONS AND SECTIONS**

# BEARS Interpretive Facility Project Overview

A W C C

B D S

Z A r c h i t e c t s

## Project: Bear Education Awareness and Research Sanctuary (B.E.A.R.S.)

B.E.A.R.S. will be a 12,000 sq. ft. interpretive and educational facility focused on Alaska's 3 bear species. The facility includes interpretive galleries, classroom space, theater, indoor and outdoor bear viewing experiences, and elevated interpretive walkways within the bear enclosures.

Estimated Cost: \$7,000,000

Planned Phases of Construction beginning with Interpretive Elevated Boardwalks Spring 2011

Facility Design near completion.

## Why Alaska Needs B.E.A.R.S.

Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center is the most visited developed attraction in the State of Alaska according to the Alaska Travel Industry Association. Furthermore, surveys of potential visitors to Alaska have shown that people desire to see glaciers, mountains and wildlife when visiting the state.

The development of the B.E.A.R.S. facility will strengthen the tourism industry in the Portage Valley and the state of Alaska by offering a more in depth look at North America's largest carnivore and offering the tourists an exciting, memorable and accessible Alaskan experience.

Alaska has been documented as one of the top five places where people reported being involved with wildlife viewing. Wildlife viewing is one of Alaska's strongest assets and is something that sets us apart from the rest of the country as a visitor destination.

The number of Bear vs. Human conflicts has increased and will continue to increase until the public is educated on proper behavior in bear country. The B.E.A.R.S. facility will help educate tourists and residents on how to safely co-exist with bears and other wildlife.

This new facility will expose students to biological facts, ecological concepts and instill a responsible attitude towards all living things. Children will come away with a memorable wildlife learning experience and foundation for the teaching of many established educational standards.

# BEARS Design Schedule Overview

A W C C

B D S

Z A r c h i t e c t s

updated January 2011

Spring 2010

## ***Research, Programming, and Workshop Preparation***

Programming

Preliminary conceptual design, space planning and Diagrams

Summer 2010

## ***Workshop and Message Development***

Concept Plan Options Developed

Interpretive Concept Plan Developed

Mechanical, Electrical, Structural concepts

Concept Plan selected by AWCC

Incorporation of workshop comments

Collaboration with Interpretive team integrated into design.

Fall 2010

## ***Concept Plan***

Concept Plan Developed to 35% Design level

Preliminary Materials Selections

Winter 2010

## ***Phasing Plan***

Implementation Plan to focus design and construction funds available.

- Phase I- Interpretive Boardwalks and Site development
- Phase II- Visitor Center development of Interpretive galleries
- Phase III – Visitor enhancements of theater and special function support space. Additional animal research and care facilities.

Spring 2011

## ***Design Development Phase I***

Design Developed of the outdoor interpretive boardwalks and Site improvements to bid level documents.

Summer 2011

## ***Interpretive Boardwalk Construction***

Summer 2011

## ***Design Development Phase II***

Integration of all Subconsultants and Disciplines

Coordination with Interpretive design development

Fall/Winter 2011

## ***Construction Documents Phase II***

Document Production

Coordination of all Disciplines

Coordination with Interpretive design construction documents

Final Development and coordination of Specifications

Spring 2012 or 2013

## ***Bid Phase II for Summer Construction Start***

Beyond 2012

## ***Development and Construction of Phase III***

May 25, 2011

Dear Governor Parnell,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. As an ecologist, bear specialist, and TV host I feel passionately about sharing the wonders of the wild with people all over the world. I have spent a lot of time in Alaska, including much of the last two years while filming our three-part series for PBS Nature. The place, the people, and the bears have resonated with me ever since my first trip to your incredible state in 1991.

I support the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center's endeavor to build the BEARS exhibit - a monument if you will for bears of Alaska. It is a celebration that merits recognition and support from Alaskan residents-natives and those who have come to make this last frontier their home.

There is no better way to conserve our natural heritage than to educate and enlighten people about a wide-ranging species whose habitat alone serves as a home for so many polar and circumpolar species. I cannot imagine an Alaska without bears. I cannot imagine the disappearance of polar bears (which may happen sooner than later) or the Kodiak archipelago void of the world's largest land carnivore; and the perception of black bear in the Lower 48 can be one of great contempt.

The BEARS center will celebrate part of the world's natural history that brings visitors from near and far. Wearing my other hat as an educator, I know how critical it is to reach out to the masses. Alaska needs this center to serve as a hub for education and research. I live not far from the few grizzlies left in Washington State. I cherish them and wonder what could have been done if we had only educated people about these charismatic species earlier last century.

Please contribute to bear conservation by supporting this endeavor. It will make Alaska proud and an even more popular destination. From the perspective of the bear-human interface, Alaska offers tremendous bear viewing and Alaska shares in the conflict found wherever bears compete with humans for resources.

This center will celebrate an important part of your culture both social and biological. We can save bears if we can make a concerted effort to truly educate people about them.

Again, I compliment the staff at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center for their passion and vision. They take conservation seriously; their heart is in the right place and their plans for the Bear, Education, Awareness, Research, Sanctuary (BEARS) is right on.

Sincerely,



Chris Morgan, MS  
Scientist and Conservationist  
Executive Director, Wildlife Media  
Co-Director, Grizzly Bear Outreach Project  
Host and Co-Creator, PBS Nature 'Bears of the Last Frontier'