

What if a
building could
make the
world better?

ALABAMA'S
**GULF
STATE PARK**



Interpretive Center
at Gulf State Park
22250-A East Beach Blvd.
Gulf Shores, AL 36542

To schedule a tour, plan an event,
or reserve the classroom contact:
info@learningcampusgsp.com
251.923.3101



A very special building for a very special place.



The Interpretive Center (IC) at Gulf State Park helps create a better future for people because it's built from the best traditions of our past.

As Alabama's most environmentally-friendly building, the IC is built to achieve LEED Platinum and full **Living Building Challenge (LBC)** certifications.

The Living Building Challenge guidelines reimagine how we can construct our buildings—they cover water and energy usage, eliminating harmful toxins, rethinking waste, connecting people to nature, and much more.

By combining new technologies with timeless know-how, LBC makes it possible to create buildings—like the Interpretive Center—that give more than they take.



THE BEACH IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.
Learning is fun, engaging, and everywhere you look at the Interpretive Center.

With access to the Park's extensive trail network and engaging interpretive exhibits, the IC is the perfect place to launch your Gulf State Park adventure.

The IC's exhibits will help you discover all the Park has to offer and connect you to the innovative Living Building Challenge systems that make the IC such a special—and sustainable—building. The IC's onsite classroom is the perfect meeting space for your eco-tourism, nature, or sustainability organization.

We hope the IC inspires you to explore Gulf State Park's 6,150 acres and nine ecosystems.

We also hope it inspires you to imagine a world where buildings can make it a better place.



The seven Living Building Challenge principles put people and place first.

The Living Building Challenge guidelines include seven principles—or petals. The guidelines create a path for building in ways that are in harmony with—and *can even restore*—the environment.

These seven principles inspired and challenged our design, materials, construction, and operations decisions.

When designing the IC, we made a building from nearby materials that take advantage of the sun's warmth and the cool Gulf breeze—a place that lives in harmony with the things around it.

Our staff sustains and supports the IC's systems by using earth-friendly cleaners, monitoring water treatment, harvesting nutrient-rich compost from the toilets, and keeping waste out of the Gulf and landfills through extensive recycling and composting efforts.



ENERGY

We have sunshine in abundance at Gulf State Park.

The Energy Petal challenges buildings to harness that energy along with other renewable sources to create 105% of the electricity it needs.

51 = 1: The IC's 51 solar panels are positioned at the perfect angle and as one large panel to soak up as much sun as possible.



Saved For Later: During a power outage, the IC's two batteries can keep things running for up to a week during an outage.



HEALTH + HAPPINESS

This Petal aims to create spaces that optimize human well-being through access to daylight, clean air, and connections to nature.

Biophilic Environment: Humans have an inherent need to connect with nature. The IC nurtures this by incorporating nature into the design and connecting visitors to the Park.



Breezy Does It: The IC's windows allow Gulf breezes inside to cool the space naturally. Outside, cypress wood slats create a screen to protect you from the sun and strong winds while allowing air to flow.



WATER

Fresh, clean drinking water isn't always easy to find.

For the Water Petal, the IC must collect, store, and clean more water than it needs without upsetting the natural flow of this precious resource.

200,000 Gallons Collected: Each year, the IC's water systems will harvest and clean about 200,000 gallons of rainwater.

Pipes and Filters: The water-cleansing system's filters and UV treatment cleans about 150 gallons per day for visitors to enjoy.





EQUITY

Everyone deserves to be able to enjoy Gulf State Park. The Equity Petal strives to build an inclusive sense of community that welcomes people from all walks of life with equal access and fair treatment.

Ups and Downs: The IC's wide, gracious ramps lead up to the exhibits and down to the sand play area, making fun and learning easier for everyone to access and enjoy.



Making Connections: Two pedestrian bridges span the highway, connecting the entire park and making it accessible to everyone!



PLACE

A building should enhance, honor, and respect how it fits into the life around it—the people, environment, and surrounding community, including the sea oats, beach mice, ospreys, and more.



Dune System Preservation, Restoration and Education.

The IC does not disturb the site's fragile dune systems and encourages conservation and understanding through storytelling and friendly learning.



Human-Powered Living: The IC is built for bikes. You can safely park your bike and even borrow one to explore the Park's trail network.



MATERIALS

The Materials Petal focuses on constructing buildings that do no harm to people or the environment—today, tomorrow, and forever!

The IC was built by recycling as much as possible, wasting as little as possible, and using sustainable, non-toxic materials from as nearby as possible.

Waste Not: The construction of the IC didn't create waste, and by repurposing and recycling materials, it actually took waste out of the waste stream.

Local Lumber: All the wood used in the Interpretive Center came from places less than 650 miles from the Park.



BEAUTY

The Beauty Petal requirements are Beauty + Spirit and Inspiration + Education.

Beauty means that a building's design should strive to elevate our spirits and inspire us to care for the place.

Learning just Happens: It is woven into the design of the IC's systems and exhibits.

A Porch on the Beach: The views of the IC's surrounding landscape are beautiful and timeless. The IC's porch offers lots of places to take them in.

