



The Greater Bridgeport Regional Maritime Education Center Concept

Prepared by Capt. Chris German, Executive Director, December 3, 2010

Introduction: In 2007, Connecticut Community Boating, Inc. was founded with a mission to educate every man, woman and child in the Greater Bridgeport area about the region's most important natural resource, Long Island Sound. Along with this mission, it was our aim to improve the quality of life for children in the Park City and surrounding communities by using the many benefits the sports of boating and sailing can offer. Now in 2010, we provided more than 3000 children and more than 400 adults with a chance to explore our greatest natural resource in our fleet of more than 50 boats.

We have made many strides in three short years and are now at critical mass to become Connecticut's only public-access fleet that serves a region with more than 1.6 Million Residents.

Despite being the wealthiest and one of the largest populated areas in the United States, the metropolitan centers of the area including Bridgeport and New Haven have some of the greatest challenges in terms of poverty, quality of health and crime in the entire country. Connecticut Community Boating, Inc was founded to address these challenging problems as well as promote maritime recreation and environmental awareness.

The following conceptual description of a public regional facility is created in an effort to address the infrastructural challenges that the many public maritime-based community organizations face in the Park City with an eye to addressing the many cultural and social challenges faced by the residents we serve.

The Facility: We have implemented a multi-phased plan at no cost to the tax payers of Bridgeport at Seaside Park in the former landfill. Our facility consists of a dock, mobile classroom, two storage containers and a fleet of 50 various sized boats. To build this facility, we were forced to pick up more than 5000 bags of trash, compete with a host of disease carrying vermin, endure a tide of sewage washing ashore weekly, generate our own electric and water supplies and manage a constant threat of violence and theft. Despite the many challenges and poor conditions we have overcome, we are now forced to pay a fee to the City of Bridgeport to enter the facility we created. It is because of these issues and because we have outgrown the capabilities offered by our existing infrastructure as well as the fact that we wish to better serve our community, that we seek to move to a more prominent and well suited location in Bridgeport Harbor.

Phase 1: The first phase in operation at Seaside Park in Bridgeport was completed in 2008. At that time we hosted our fleet of Hunter 140's launching them from a fenced in area and daily moving the fleet more than a ¼ mile each way to access the water. For classroom facilities we operated out of a storage container and on picnic tables on the shore by the boat ramp. (COMPLETED)

Phase 2: In this second phase, we created a mobile classroom facility powered by solar and wind generated electricity. It is a small classroom, fitting no more than 12 students at a time with an administrative office, so that we could have a base of operation and classroom space as well as a shelter for personal belongings, educational materials and

other items. The Eco-classroom as it became know was donated by a family in Ashford, CT and moved by flat bad to it's current location in November 2009. It is outfitted with deep cycle batteries, solar panels and an inverter for power. We also have a boat hull turned water tank that is filled with rain water for boat and equipment washing powered by a 12-volt wash down pump. (COMPLETED)

Phase 3: The third and final phase will represent the completion of this effort. In this phase we will build or purchase a floating facility that will be moored or docked in Bridgeport Harbor. Here we will be able to offer our full complement of courses including our junior program, afterschool program, keel boat, small boat and kayak classes as well as create a disabled sailors program, crew program and many more services for the public. We will also be able to host a full time sea scout ship, boy and girl scouting program as well as offer meeting space for any number of other organizations such as DEP Safe Boating, Power Squadron, US Coast Guard Auxiliary and meeting space for a variety of other organizations.

Modeled after The Newport Seabase in California and Battleship Cove in Fall River, this facility could serve to bring hundreds of Sea Scouts and boy scouts to the area each year as well as offer groups a chance for seaside education and meeting space. It will also house all CCB operations including our junior and adult programs and may also be used for any number of other purposes such as environmental protection, maritime research or homeland security. We believe it will bring area residents back to the City of Bridgeport and enhance tourism for the area and will very neatly fit into the Bridgeport Redevelopment plan. It can be part of a very public reinvestment in the city's waterfront and help frame the new face of Bridgeport in the 21st Century with little in the way of cost to the City and much benefit



This vessel, located in Northern Florida is an ideal candidate for the type of floating facility we hope to create. For more information please follow this link to the advertisement <http://www.maritimesales.com/ALB10.htm>

The Building/Vessel may be procured in any number of fashions including purchase or transfer of US property through the General Services Administration office. We also have looked at plans to build a float for the facility using concrete and Styrofoam billets. The base upon which it is built is largely irrelevant as we could adapt our plan to match the facility. What is important is the following key components:

- The facility will be completely self sustaining except for sanitary facilities where we will need the support of a pump out boat or onshore sanitation facility
- The facility could be completely off-grid with the use of renewable energy using solar and wind power with the potential for tidal technology as well. It is our hope to be an example for the future of Bridgeport which we believe has the potential to be the Green Technology Capital. We also hope that our facility will serve to educate future generations about the need to conserve and use environmentally sound practices and be a testing ground for innovations to come.
- Our docks could be doubly used as upwelling docks or aquaculture facilities to improve and reinvigorate the economic yield of Connecticut's Shell Fishing Industry.

The Financing: Conservative estimates for the cost of such a facility lie somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to construct a floating platform. Procurement of a vessel for the same purpose could run from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on size, location and type of vessel. Accommodation Barges, container vessels, passenger ferries and research vessels may all be located for various costs if purchased and if procurement from government surplus is possible, a facility may be procured for \$100,000 or less depending on location and shipping fees.

Partnership with the US Coast Guard and The US Navy may all make this not only possible but very reasonable. There is also a chance that a contractor with relationship to local businesses, Derecktor Ship Yard, may be able to assist in location and procurement as well as refitting of the facility.

It is our intention to solicit donations, private, state and federal grants for the facility and given the numerous benefactors of such a facility, we believe this to be very possible. Certainly, Connecticut Community Boating would work to raise such funds, but we believe the public support for such a project coupled with potential partners in the Boy Scouts, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club and any number of other organizations we are currently attempting to partner with may well make this even more probable for funding success. We also believe that by partnering with the City we can help answer the public demand for waterfront access facilities.

The ideal solution to funding this project, with the above displayed vessel, would be to find an individual with a passion for the water and Bridgeport who is interested in creating the John Doe Maritime Exploration Center in Bridgeport, CT. This individual will endow CCB with the capital to purchase and maintain the vessel and will also be asked to take part in sailing the vessel to it's new homeport in Bridgeport, CT and will be asked to attend a dedication ceremony when the facility is set to open. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for an individual to leave a lasting mark on the waterfront of Bridgeport that will benefit the community as a whole and improve the quality of life for thousands of children every year for many years to come.

The Conclusion: The development of CCB over the last four years has been done with this culmination in mind. All things have lead to this final phase. From the temporary nature of our facilities to the development of off-grid energy strategies, this has been the desired outcome for CCB all along. We are now in a position to make this a reality and it is a desirable time to do so.

Market prices for materials are at an all time low, there is an abundant inventory of vessels on the market at recession prices and the waterscape of Bridgeport Harbor is is ready to accept such a project. We have developed relationships with a host of individuals who might be in a position to assist in developing this project and created the legal frame work to make this possible.

CCB has reached critical mass and is now in need a permanent home and a touch stone about which to create a financially stable organization with staying power. Our brand is strong and community support for the program at an all-time high. In 2011, we are set to rebrand CCB with a new website, newly developed fundraising strategy and a newly acquired 501c3 recognition. It is time to begin our campaign to create this facility.