Texas City Dike

Design Intent

Take those first few steps onto the longest man-made fishing pier, hoping the cool breeze will tame the heat of the Texas sun. Listen to the laughs of the gulls and survey the land, sea, and sky for the colorful critters and cultures along the *Texas City Dike*. Build stunning sandcastles on the beach or swim with sea turtles as they pass by the pier. Cast a line while telling your best fish tale. Slather on the sunblock, gather your flippers and your fishing tackle, and watch the barges coast up and down the channel. Take a deep breath and smile, you can practically taste the salt in the air.

Technology Components

N/A

Mural Features

- Halfmoon Shoal Lighthouse-In 1854, the U. S. Government built the Half Moon Shoal Lighthouse in Galveston Bay, two miles east of Shoal Point. One of several lighthouses erected along the Texas Gulf Coast that year, it used a bell as a fog warning device. The lighthouse was damaged during the Civil War but returned to service in 1868. In 1900, a hurricane drove a freighter into the structure, destroying it. A new light was later established about 150 feet from the original site. Today, a replica stands in Bay Street Park in Texas City.
- SS Highflyer Propeller-The 1947 Texas City disaster was a catastrophic industrial accident at the port of Texas City, Texas. A fire aboard the SS Grandcamp ignited 2,300 tons of ammonium nitrate, triggering massive explosions in nearby ships and storage facilities. The SS Highflyer, docked nearby, also exploded, sending one of its propellers a mile inland. That propeller now resides in a memorial park alongside the anchor of the SS Grandcamp.
- Gull-A gull is a medium-sized seabird known for its white and gray feathers, sharp beak, and loud calls. Gulls are often found near coastlines, lakes, and urban areas. They are opportunistic feeders that scavenge for food both on land and in water. Gulls usually nest in colonies, laying 2 to 3 eggs in shallow nests composed of stones, seaweed, mosses, and feathers.



M**ural Features**

- Pelican-Pelicans are large birds of eight species with short legs, but once in the water, strong swimmers. They are one of the only birds with a pouch under their bill, using it to catch fish and cool off in warm weather. As strong flyers, they travel in flocks and are known to reside along maritime and coastal zones, feeding on fish.
- Common Bottlenose Dolphin-Common bottlenose dolphins are found throughout the world in both offshore and coastal waters. They are highly intelligent and use sound both for communication and to hunt for food. Bottlenose dolphins feed on a variety of prey, such as fish, squid, and crustaceans. They are one of the most studied marine mammals.
- Refinery-A refinery is a facility where raw materials, like crude oil or sugar, are stored (oil depot) and processed to create more valuable and usable products. These plants use various chemical and mechanical processes to purify or convert raw materials. In the United States, oil was first found in 1859 by Edwin Drake near Titusville, Pennsylvania.
- Shrimp Boat-A shrimp boat is a fishing vessel designed specifically for catching shrimp, often seen along the Gulf Coast. It typically features long outriggers that extend nets into the water, dragging them along the seafloor to collect shrimp. These boats also have winches (strong pull cable) and sorting tables to help fishermen process their catch onboard. Shrimping is often done at night or early morning when shrimp are more active and closer to the surface.

Themes to Explore

- Gulf Coast Wildlife Identification and Behavior
- Sink and Float
- Weather and Climate
- Recreational Activities
- Preservation
- Jobs by the Water
- Lighthouses and Landmarks
- Wetlands and Marshes
- Bird Migration
- Sand Exploration

Mounted Animals/Artifacts

- Channel Buoy-A channel buoy is a floating navigational marker used to guide boats safely through a channel. These buoys mark the edges of the channel to help vessels avoid running aground in shallow areas. In the United States, they follow the "red right returning" rule: red buoys are kept on the starboard (right) side when returning from sea, and green buoys are on the port (left) side. Channel buoys may be equipped with lights, numbers, or shapes to further aid navigation, especially at night or in poor visibility.
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- Picnic Shelter (Texas City)-Designed to offer panoramic views of the bay and withstand coastal weather conditions, the Texas City picnic shelters are unique to the area. In the classroom, they can be used as a dramatic play prop, encouraging children to think about recreation on the Gulf Coast.
- Weigh-In Station-Fisherman often use weighing stations on the dock to measure and process their catch, either for sale or as part of weigh-in procedures during fishing tournaments. In the classroom, students can recreate this experience by weighing their pretend “catch” at the weigh-in station. This activity helps children practice number recognition, explore measurement concepts, and compare weights. Integrating clipboards, paper, and play money can further build literacy and math skills.
- Leatherback Sea Turtle (Classroom Table)-Leatherback turtles are named for their shell, which is made of leathery, fatty tissue, rather than a hard shell. They are the largest sea turtle species and among the most migratory, crossing both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The leatherback’s diet primarily consists of jellyfish and salps, and nesting occurs on sandy beaches from late February, peaking in May.

To Find Out More

- World Wildlife Foundation: Educational Resources
- National Geographic Kids
- African Wildlife Foundation