

NYC to Construct Eco Tourist Island

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(Left) A bird's-eye view of the proposed island. (Right) The island could include an aquatic center with a vertical coral reef and marine life.

(PhysOrg.com) -- In 2003, the state and city of New York bought Governor's Island from the federal government for \$1. Once used as a military base by the US Army and Coast Guard, the 172-acre island located half a mile from Lower Manhattan will soon be transformed into an ecological tourist park.

In 2012 - when the project is slated for completion - the island will become a kind of man-made national park, on which visitors will travel by foot or bicycle. (Currently, the northern half is open to the public for picnics, biking, and tours of historic buildings, but the southern half is closed and undergoing demolition work.) The environmentally friendly park is being managed by the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC), and designed by West 8, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and Rogers Marvel Architects.

The architects plan to construct artificial topography, such as man-made

hills and mountains, using recycled materials from current abandoned Coast Guard buildings on the island. Features could include a funicular railway and caves for spelunking. Other attractions may include botanical greenhouses and aquatic centers that could include marine life, a vertical coral reef, and even a floating restaurant, located directly across the harbor from the Statue of Liberty (the island is the closest point on land to the face of the Statue of Liberty). Diners could eat locally caught fish from the nearby harbor.

Around the island visitors will be able to explore walking paths, restaurants, and recreational and educational activities. Tourists would ride wooden bicycles designed by the architects, and bike by various exhibits such as a tidal basin, a 10,000-seat amphitheater, and views of New York City and its landmarks.

"We wanted to give it the attitude of a national park, one with primal nature, robustness, where you don't feel the hand of man," said West 8 partner Jerry van Eyck.

The GIPEC encourages feedback about the new park on their Web site, [http://www.govisland.com/About GIPEC/future_park.asp](http://www.govisland.com/About_GIPEC/future_park.asp).

via: [Inhabitat](#)

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