

Program Summary:

A new fully accessible paddle boat launch for a summer camp for children with special needs.

Program Statement:

The Captains' Launch transforms a shaded cove into an accessible waterfront haven for campers facing the greatest barriers to boating. Custom-designed floating ramps and slip bumpers let wheelchair users gently roll aboard pedal boats outfitted with remote-controlled trolling motors—empowering participants to enjoy open water without ever leaving the safety of their own wheelchairs.

By repurposing reclaimed houseboat floats, jet dock modules, and 55-gallon drums, the floating deck adapts to changing water levels and revives a once-inactive portion of the lake. Additionally, an adjacent amphitheater was restored, and a new fishing jetty expands on-site programs.

Drawing inspiration from the humble tugboat, this simple, inviting form features a pointed bow in the floor plan, sloping guardrails that echo a hull's profile, and a gear-storage "bridge" for paddles, life jackets, and supplies. A sturdy steel roof crafted from donated drill stem and rod offers shelter and supports a 1.2 kW solar array that powers evening lighting and recharges boat batteries. Every detail underscores safety and dignity: an expanded-metal ribbon in the deck, paired with a matching linear skylight overhead, marks the moment campers become captains of their own vessels.

Named for the final stanza of William Ernest Henley's "Invictus," The Captains' Launch lives its motto: "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." By offering universal access to the water and celebrating each participant's journey, it invites admiration for both its humble materials and its profound impact.

SP-220.01

Building Area: (sf)
1600 sf

Cost per Square Foot:
\$22/sf

Construction Cost
\$35,200

Date of Completion:
5/23/25

SP-220.02



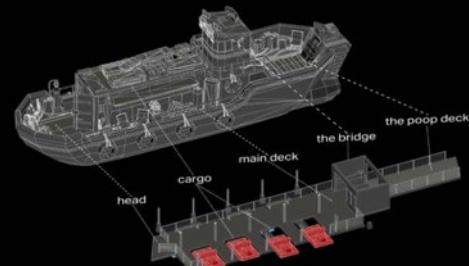
property map



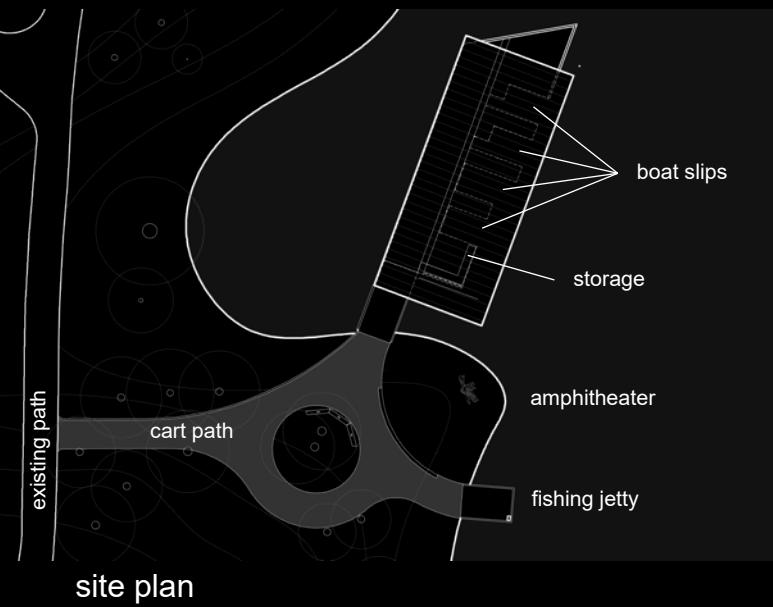
existing site

The Captains' Launch transforms a shaded cove into an accessible waterfront haven for campers facing the greatest barriers to boating.

SP-220.03



ship concept



site plan



proposal rendering

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SP-220.04

The Captains' Launch transforms a shaded cove into an accessible waterfront haven for campers facing the greatest barriers to boating.



SP-220.05



Custom-designed floating ramps and slip bumpers let wheelchair users gently roll aboard pedal boats outfitted with remote-controlled trolling motors—empowering participants to enjoy open water without ever leaving the safety of their own wheelchairs.

SP-220.06



By repurposing reclaimed houseboat floats, jet dock modules, and 55-gallon drums, the floating deck adapts to changing water levels and revives a once-inactive portion of the lake.

Additionally, an adjacent amphitheater was restored, and a new fishing jetty expands on-site programs.

SP-220.07



A sturdy steel roof crafted from donated drill stem and rod offers shelter and supports a 1.2 kW solar array that powers evening lighting and recharges boat batteries.



SP-220.08

Every detail underscores safety and dignity: an expanded-metal ribbon in the deck, paired with a matching linear skylight overhead, marks the moment campers become captains of their own vessels.

SP-220.09

Sustainability is core to the design: the roof's playful form is oriented north for extended shading and is fabricated entirely from reclaimed steel from local natural gas drilling operations.



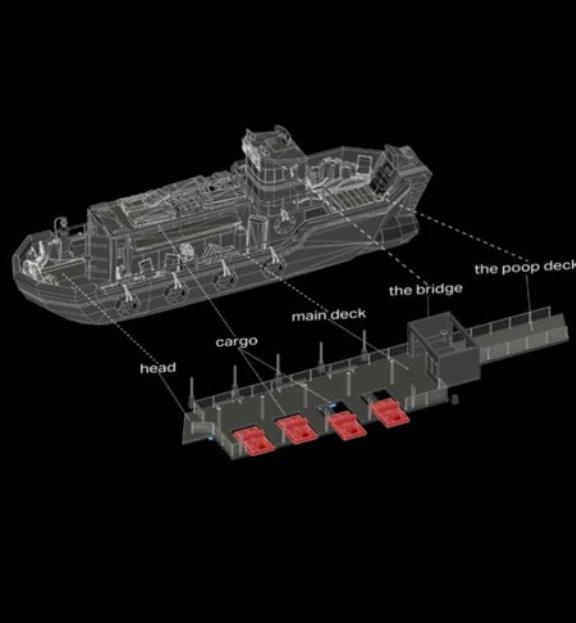
SP-220.10



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SP-220.11

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SP-220.12

The project has transformed the accessibility, comfort, and excitement around boating for its special needs users. Pro bono design services, educational labor, and abundant community support kept costs remarkably low for the non-profit client.



SP-220.13

At night, the gentle glow of solar powered lights reminds campers of their time here, adding to the magic and memory of this special place.



Project Name:
Captains' Launch

Project Location:
Choudrant, Louisiana

Owner/Client:
MedCamps of Louisiana

Architect(s) of Record:
Brad Deal
Louisiana Tech University School of Design
P.O. Box 3147
Ruston, Louisiana 71272

Project Team:
Brad Deal, Kendell Webb and the 2025 ARCH 335 class
from Louisiana Tech University :

Blane Buras
Juan Colorado
Emily Deshotel
Cooper Dewitt
Kaitlyn Edwards
Lauren Ellzey
Ellie Falcon
Connor Fonseca
Lorraine Freeman
Nyaleima Gbondo
Alexander Gibson
Travis Heard
Mitchell Jones
Grace Julius
Kyle Kieronski
Emma Lee
Macy Mclean
Kingston Nicholas
Travis Oehlert
Jacob Rodrigue
Wanda Ryba
Gavin Savois
Ashton Schlotterbeck
Elliott Scott
Phillip Stephens
Rian Woods.

Landscape Architect:
N/A

Consultants:
N/A

General Contractor:
Brad Deal, Kendell Webb and the 2025 ARCH 335
class from Louisiana Tech University

Photographer(s):
Henry McCoy Photography, Ruston, Louisiana
Emerald McIntyre, Louisiana Tech Communications
Brad Deal, Louisiana Tech University
John McFarland, Med Camps Staff Photographer