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DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

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ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FOR NATIONAL FISHERIES CENTER AND AQUARIUM IN  
WASHINGTON, D.C., ANNOUNCED BY DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

An approved achitectural design for the \$10 million National Fisheries Center and Aquarium in Washington, D.C., has been unveiled by the Department of the Interior.

Architects for the building are Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, who based the design on a program concept developed by Charles Eames.

The design has been endorsed by the Commission of Fine Arts as a "deeply imaginative approach and eminently workable result."

"As a Federal project, the National Aquarium will have to fulfill a different set of expectations than do other similar institutions," Eames said. "It must demonstrate a responsibility deeper than that of entertainment."

The Aquarium, which is planned as a major research facility, will have, in addition to collections of living aquatic animals, a series of ecological systems. The largest of these, a section of the Florida Everglades, will be based in a large glass enclosure.

The designers said that uppermost in their minds was the problem of relating this structure to the original plan of the city and the major monuments.

"It was not our intention, however, to create a monument but rather to establish an entirely new type of institution," Roche said.

The solution to these problems is simple and dramatic, the Department points out.

The main building, with an area of 187,930 square feet, rests on a square 432-foot concrete deck that is raised 6 feet above the surrounding land. The ceiling, which actually is an entrance terrace for the Aquarium, is on 20-foot-high columns spaced on a 40-foot grid which allows complete flexibility for the planning of exhibits.

The National Aquarium site is in East Potomac Park, across the Washington Channel from the main section of the city. Access will be by bridge from the 10th Street Mall Overlook, where parking for 3,000 cars will be provided.

A bridge will lead directly onto the garden-like terrace and a wide stairway will lead from the terrace down into the main exhibit halls. Inside the building, visitors will see exhibits, displays, and demonstrations that provide a varied and meaningful experience. Two 500-seat orientation theatres are planned.

The National Fisheries Center and Aquarium, which will pay for its construction and operation through admission fees, is expected to have 3 million visitors annually. Organized youth groups will be admitted free.

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