

After vandalism, Juno pier shines

The building that houses the bait/tackle shop and the concession stand, tarnished in April by vandals, got a



Bill DiPaolo

new coat of paint last week courtesy of the Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center.

The building is now yellow and light green with beige trim. Improvements also are planned for inside, say LMC officials.

The gate where fishermen pay \$4 and spectators pay \$1 pass to get onto the 990-foot-long pier was painted white. The entry was moved about 20 feet to the east of the concession stand. LMC officials repainted sections of the pier near the concession stand.

“Moving the gate gives more room to people who just want to get a snack or a soda,” said Tom Longo, senior manager of marketing and communications at LMC, located just north of Donald Ross Road. The nonprofit facility took over management of the pier from Palm Beach County about two years ago.

The surface of the pier, along with the pilings underneath, were defaced by vandals in early April. The image of a young man using red spray paint to deface the pier was filmed about 2 a.m., according to Juno Beach Police Chief Brian Smith. The black-and-white film shows a man with a T-shirt partially covering his face, said Smith.



The bait/tackle shop and concession stand at the Juno Beach Fishing Pier got a new coat of paint. Sections of the pier also were repainted after vandalism. BILL DIPAOLO / THE PALM BEACH POST

No arrests have been made, Smith said.

“We questioned one man. But we determined he was not the person who did the crime,” said Smith.

LMC is planning a major expansion to increase the sea turtle hospital and tanks, and boost the research laboratory at the U.S. 1 facility. More classrooms, a conference room, an auditorium and offices are planned for the second floor, according to the proposal.

More tourists are visiting environmental attractions in Palm Beach County such as LMC, said Glenn Jergensen, executive director of the Palm Beach County Tourist Development Council. More than half of the annual visitors to the 17-acre center are from outside Palm Beach County,

he said.

LMC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit education and ocean conservation center with a veterinary hospital, exhibit hall, outdoor classroom, research lab, and resource center. Veterinarians at the center use state-of-the-art equipment to bring sea turtles back to health that are sick or snagged by fishing hooks and lines.

About 300,000 people visit the center a year, according to LMC officials.

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