LA TANCADA SALT FIELDS: THE BIRDS' SALTY SANCTUARY
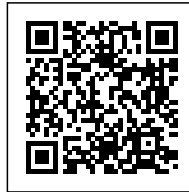
Posted on March 27, 2018 by editorship

Categories: EMF, Energy and sustainability, Low Density, Project, Territory and mobility, Urban Paradigms

Tags: Agrarian Landscape, Agriculture, Animals, Architecture&nature, Built landscape, Catalonia, Delta de l'Ebre, Diversity, Ecological agencies, Ecological researches, Energetic Approach, Framing landscape urbanism, Nature, Project, Renewal, Territorial Approach, Urban Paradigms, Water

After the salt field's bankrupt and its consequent disuse, this project gave to the site a second bloom. It multiplied the habitat conditions and transformed the salt fields into a sanctuary for the animals and a liquid landscape for the tourists.

Site & precedents

The 'La Tancada' project site is located at the southern tip of the delta formed by the Ebre River, the Iberian Peninsula's most important river. The delta is a crucial stop along bird migration routes through Western Europe. Over the last century, the site has undergone numerous transformations. Originally, it was a salty intertidal lagoon. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was transformed

into productive salt fields. In the 1980s it was turned into a sh far. The business subsequently collapsed and the site became the property of Catalunya Caixa Bank.

Promoters

In 2009, the Catalunya Caixa Bank nature foundation + the Spanish Ministry of the Environment + Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park + IRTA (Institute of Agricultural Research) succeeded in getting funding from the EU LIFE program to restore this site and other nearby natural areas.

Mission & data

This is a 2 in 1 project commissioned by the Caixa Bank nature foundation: a LIFE Delta lagoon restoration project (23 ha · 547,000 € · 2.38 €/m2) and the creation of an Interpretation Centre on delta salty landscapes, culture + nature (3 ha · 376,600 € · 12.5 €/m2).

The scientists in charge of the mission highlighted the need to diversify the land-water ecotone in order to multiply habitat conditions. Thus, by redistributing the sand of the dikes, the project implements four distinct cross-section types with diverse lagoon depths, regimes of flooding and slopes.

The Delta Lagoon life project aims to provide a habitat for targeted protected fauna and flora species: for example, the *Aphanius iberis*, among the EU's most endangered species, has a sanctuary in this artificially created habitat.

Mediterranean salt steppes with Limonium; there are three EU-listed species found on the site
Feeding and nesting island for populations of waders & terns

Feeding habitat for Flamingo

The concept for the interpretation centre was to transform the extremely exposed existing esplanade into a liquid landscape, built as an archipelago of four islands/peninsulas containing and sequencing the proposed interpretative program. Since the water table was only 50 cm below the surface, this was an extremely effective and low-cost tactic to organize visits and to create some drama when crossing to the islands, as well as substituting fencing with water canals. Above all, it celebrates the salty liquid landscape and sets up a magnificent interplay with the light cycle.
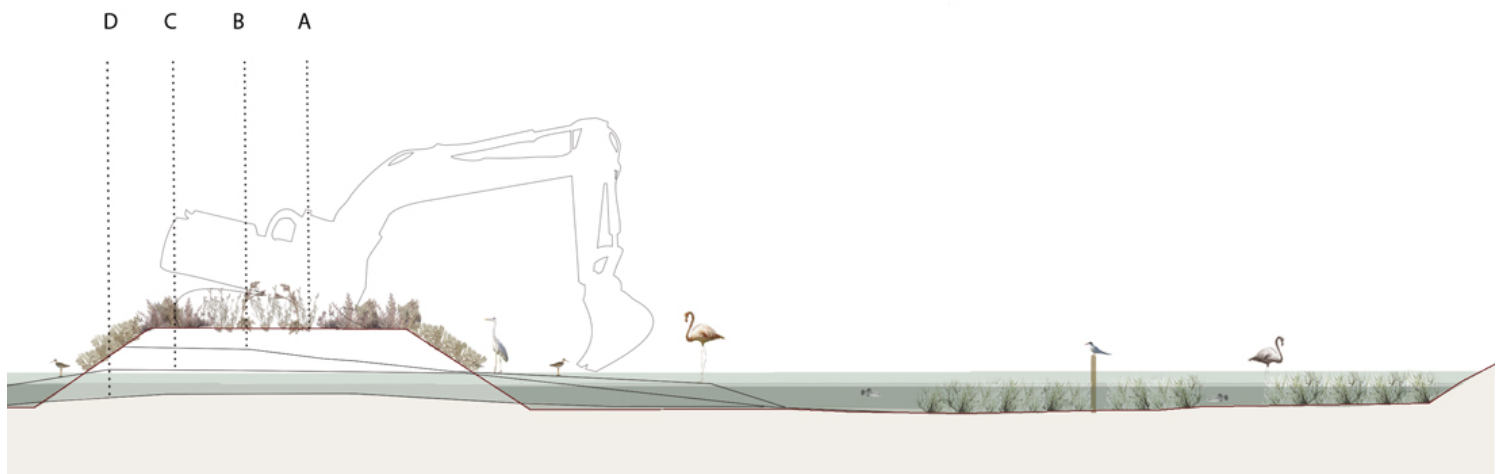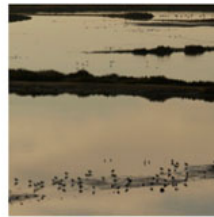
Section A. Initial state. Habitat code 1510. Mediterranean salt steppes

Section C. Habitat code 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide

Section B. Habitat code 1420. Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs

Section D. Habitat code 1150 Coastal lagoons

Project Statement

Through necessarily low-cost actions, the design skilfully constructs a hybrid of nature and culture that celebrates the site's characteristics, both in terms of a manmade performative ecosystem for endangered species and as an attractive landscape for tourism. It proposes ways to choreograph on-site visits through a narrative that invites visitors to explore what is unique to this peculiar landscape: intertidal lagoons, salt fields and crystallisations, flamingos, terns, etc.