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Tennessee Aquarium Expansion Chattanooga, Tennessee



The Tennessee Aquarium's established river journey from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi Delta is being extended into the marine waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The expansion provides an ocean immersion experience of a coral garden habitat found off the coast of Texas. Through large acrylic windows from descending ramps, at upper levels of the habitat, pelagic sharks, rays and schools of fishes swim in open water. A grotto at the bottom takes visitors inside and underneath, close to more territorial fishes within the reef, with the pelagic species seen above. At the top of the building, under a glass roof, an "exploration garden" offers hands-on informal learning based on marine and terrestrial life, including butterflies. A transparent access gallery at the west side of the building offers visitors an expansive view of the river. Three large flexible galleries provide space for jewel tanks and changing exhibits.

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