

Press Information

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THE
WILD
CENTER

The Wild Center is First New York Museum to Achieve Benchmark Green Building Certification

Museum receives LEED Silver Certification from US Green Building Council

TUPPER LAKE, New York (February 8, 2008) - The Wild Center/Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, a new museum complex in Tupper Lake, New York, has earned distinction as the first LEED certified museum in the State of New York. There are fewer than a dozen Silver Certified projects in the entire state. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) system is the recognized international benchmark in green building design and construction.

Through a series of integrated sustainable strategies that are expected to save between 20 percent and 30 percent of its normal operating costs, The Wild Center exceeded the base LEED certification to earn a Silver distinction. The LEED system provides a roadmap for measuring and documenting sustainability across six categories: sustainable site including construction activity pollution prevention; water efficiency; energy and atmosphere; materials and resources; indoor environmental quality; and innovation and design process.

"We looked really hard at every choice that LEED defined," said Wild Center Executive Director Stephanie Ratcliffe. "It became clear to our team that through every choice, we could get more by using less. That means that we can spend more of our future budget on building the museum experience and less on the museum building itself."

"Green buildings are essential to reducing the demand for energy, conserving natural resources, improving air quality and slashing greenhouse gas emissions. Governor Spitzer and First Lady Silda Wall Spitzer have made green building construction a priority for the state. The Spitzer Administration applauds the pioneering work of the Wild Center - our first, and hopefully not our last, green museum in the state. Once again, the Wild Center is blazing a trail that integrates sustainability into the day to day work of the museum. The museum has set the bar high and we applaud their environmental leadership," said Judith Enck, Deputy Secretary for the Environment.

The Wild Center collaborated with the architectural firm HOK to address many of the LEED criteria in the museum's original main building and campus design. While planning its new solar-powered BioBuilding, which houses administrative offices, the museum employed the same LEED priorities with assistance from HOK, the Office of Charles P. Reay, and Phinney Design Group.

The Wild Center also represents the first LEED certified project in the entire 6-million-acre Adirondack

Park. Larger than the state of Massachusetts, the park is unique in its bio-diverse ecological composition, epic natural events, glacial formations, and as a sociopolitical model that showcases how humans and nature can coexist.

"The Adirondacks are a great model for how people can live with the natural world, and it's exciting to see the future of sustainable building breaking new ground in the Adirondacks," Radcliffe said.

"The U.S. Green Building Council and the New York Upstate Chapter congratulate the Wild Center for their dedication, vision and leadership in achieving LEED Silver certification," said Tracie Hall, Executive Director for the USGBC New York Upstate Chapter. "LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. The Wild Center has the distinction of being the first museum in New York to receive this designation. The project team addressed many challenges including the rural location, special considerations of the Adirondack region, and the unique aspects of creating the museum. The New York Upstate Chapter celebrates this accomplishment and the sustainable initiatives represented in the building, operations, and educational opportunities this amazing facility represents."

Visitors to the 54,000-square-foot museum experience the building through a journey that alternates seamlessly between the indoor and outdoor environment as they proceed through a well-choreographed progression of engaging spaces.

Donated by Tupper Lake school district voters, the 31-acre site had previously consisted of an open cut sand quarry, enabling the team to minimize disturbance of the existing natural habitat.

A three-acre pond provides a backdrop to the building and creates an indigenous wetland that attracts birds, amphibians, small mammals and insects that can be viewed within close range. The pond also manages the site's stormwater and exhibit water discharge.

Around 10 percent of the museum's power comes from a 40kW photovoltaic array on the roof of the Bio Building. The rest of the electrical power is generated by Niagara Falls.

The museum's design and orientation maximizes the use of year-round natural light. Energy-efficient lighting and controls combine with a well-insulated building envelope contribute to create a highly energy-efficient building. A building management system allows for constant monitoring and improvements.

Stormwater from the roof is collected and channeled into the pond next to the building. Composting toilets help reduce water consumption.

A well-insulated building envelope, low VOC materials, efficient air filtration, air quality monitoring, staff and visitor surveys and a digitally controlled building management system combine to create a productive, healthy indoor environment.

The museum is designed in an indigenous Adirondacks style with locally available materials. White pine exterior siding was harvested and milled in Tupper Lake; Red Garnet and Champlain stone come from quarries in the park. The metal roofing, concrete and structural steel were supplied and fabricated in local plants. GreenSeal certified finish materials provide a healthy indoor environment.

The Museum is developing exhibit-style labels to help visitors see all the different ways the Museum is green. The new displays will be in operation this coming summer. The Wild Center will also present a special day for building professionals in the upstate region to see the LEED aspects of the building and grounds first hand. Experts in LEED will present a number of current technologies at the all-day event scheduled for the summer of 2008. Contractors and local building administrators will be invited to the event.

For additional information on The Wild Center you can visit the website at www.wildcenter.org or call (518) 359-7800.

For additional information on the U.S. Green Building Council and the LEED certification process, visit www.usgbc.org.

Images of The Wild Center are available <http://www.wildcenter.org/index.php?sub=29>