

The Trustees “LEED” by Example with Doyle Conservation Center

When undertaking the largest capital project in its history, The Trustees designed with sustainability in mind. The result is a “green” building with desks made from sunflower hulls, floors covered in cork and bamboo, and composting toilets, too.

Landscaping with native plants that require no irrigation was just one of the many “green” principles employed when designing the Doyle Conservation Center in Leominster.



This summer marked an important milestone in the history of The Trustees of Reservations: the opening of the Doyle Conservation Center, the largest capital project ever undertaken by the country’s oldest regional land conservation organization. Located in Central Massachusetts near the intersection of Routes 2 and 12 in Leominster, the \$5 million, 18,000-square-foot Doyle Conservation Center is a “green” building designed to reduce its impact on the environment, from the site location and the materials used in construction to its solar panels and composting toilets.

The Doyle Conservation Center has been registered for gold certification with the U.S. Green Building Council through its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, a standard for sustainable building.

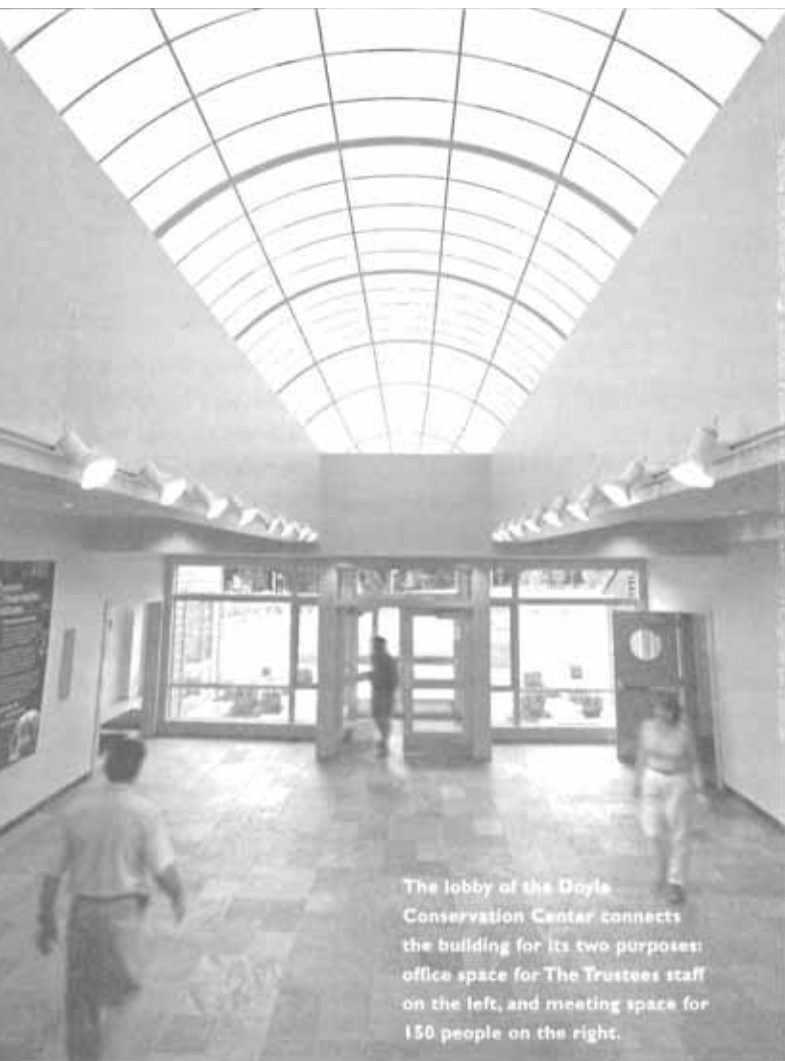
Built in the backyard of The Trustees’ Central Regional Office on the Doyle Reservation, the building was constructed with mostly recycled and renewable products, including desks and shelves made from sunflower hulls; bamboo and cork floors; recycled fabrics used in carpeting and acoustic

tiles; sink counters made from “zero waste” material; and exterior siding formed from the byproduct of hardwood timber harvesting and furniture manufacturing.

An anonymous donor funded the vast majority of the construction cost. A grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative allowed The Trustees to use roof-mounted photovoltaic panels that provide 25% of the building’s electricity. Two 1,500 foot geothermal wells provide heating and cooling without the use of on-site fossil fuels. The wells were drilled as a “gift-in-kind” by a local contractor. Indoor air quality is assured with an intelligent ventilation system and operable windows. Water is conserved by eliminating the need for landscape irrigation and the use of composting toilets, which use 80% less water than conventional toilets.

“When designing this building, we wanted to create a space that would reflect the ethics of the people who would work here everyday,” said Jim Younger, Director of Structural Resources for The Trustees of Reservations.

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The lobby of the Doyle Conservation Center connects the building for its two purposes: office space for The Trustees staff on the left, and meeting space for 150 people on the right.

What Can You Do to be GREEN at Home?

When renovating your home, use sustainable materials, such as certified lumber, cork or bamboo flooring or recycled-fiber carpet.

Because we spend an estimated 90% of our time indoors, air quality is important to your health. Improve the air quality in your home using nature's filters—plants! Experts recommend 15-18 plants in a 1,800 square-foot home for natural air filtration.

Conserve water. The average American family uses 74 gallons of water each day, and nearly one third of it gets flushed. By installing a low-flow toilet you can save up to five gallons of water each time you flush, which saves you money, too!

Did you know that Americans grow and mow 25 million acres of lawn? In addition to the chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides dumped on this grass, 30% of New England's water use is for lawns! Consider planting native grasses and shrubs for your backyard, which can provide habitat for wildlife.

USEFUL LINKS

WOOD-FREE BUILDING MATERIALS: www.environmentalcomposites.com

ZERO-WASTE SOLID SURFACES: www.avonitesurfaces.com/products/recycled.asp

BAMBOO FLOORING: www.avonitesurfaces.com/products/recycled.asp

CORK FLOORING: www.naturalcork.com/main.html

CARPET WITH RECYCLED FIBER: www.ecosolutionq.com/html/home_home.html

BAMBOO BACKGROUND IMAGE: Did you know that bamboo is actually a grass? Because of its extensive underground root system, it can be harvested in a sustainable manner every 3-5 years, as has been done for centuries!

Doyle Conservation Center

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Executive Director Andy Kendall concurred: "We thought it was critically important that the Doyle Conservation Center stand as an expression of The Trustees' mission."

The Doyle Conservation Center is home to The Trustees staff working in the areas of land conservation, ecology, planning and mapping. The building also houses the Putnam Conservation Institute (PCI), a year-old initiative with the goal of increasing the capacity of the conservation community to protect, care for, and interpret natural and cultural resources of Massachusetts.

PCI is using the Doyle Conservation Center's 150-person bamboo-floored meeting space to provide training and discussions for conservationists about land conservation, watershed protection, land use planning, historic preservation, nonprofit management and more. Since the Doyle Conservation Center opened in July, PCI has offered a number of events, starting with a free lecture titled "Rethinking the American Lawn."

In September, PCI co-hosted a conference in Lowell titled "Land Conservation on a Neighborhood Scale: Improving Life in Your City or Town" with the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust and Trust for Public Land. This day-long event was fully-subscribed with 115 registrants from around New England.

The conference goal was to provide information, networking opportunities, and inspiration to people committed to protecting and managing open space in cities and rapidly growing towns. The audience was comprised of professionals from community development corporations, neighborhood associations, EPA, urban forestry programs, parks departments, health departments, and more. Former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis delivered an inspiring keynote address that made for a perfect, motivating ending for the day.

In October, PCI hosted "Managing Land & Visitors: Stewardship Challenges of Natural & Cultural Resources" at the

Doyle Conservation Center. Conceptualized by The Trustees of Reservations' field operations staff and offered for the first time in 2003, this event is intended for people involved in managing natural or historic places that are open to the public. Topics included preventing user conflicts on trails, using archives to guide stewardship, maximizing volunteer effectiveness, applying conservation biology principles, and more. The training and networking day was attended by more than 150 professionals and volunteers.

If you are looking for an inspiring setting to hold a board meeting, training session, retreat, or community event, consider holding it at the Doyle Conservation Center.

To register for PCI events, contact the PCI registrar at 978/840-4446 x1923 or pci@ttor.org. For more information on renting the Center contact DoyleConservationCenter@ttor.org. ■