



Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center

As a premier environmental educational center, the Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center integrates building design and function with nature. The center is nestled within Wildwood Park in central Pennsylvania, where the Friends of Wildwood, along with the Dauphin County Department of Parks and Recreation, set out to build an educational nature center with minimal environmental footprint. The site previously was a dumping area, but after the discovery of the rare American Lotus on the park grounds in the 1980s, preservation efforts were fully adopted. Though the nature center was built before the inception of LEED, the project team was committed to designing an environmentally sound building that captured the natural beauty of the wetlands area.

The \$3.2 million project was largely funded by endowments and grants, including an arranged donation (\$60,000 value) of high-efficiency HVAC equipment from York International and funding for a 3 kW photovoltaic array secured by the project team. 7group services, funded by a grant from the Heinz Endowments, included energy modeling, HVAC life cycle costing, daylighting analysis, renewable energy system evaluation, materials consulting and landscape design assistance.

The nature center achieved its goal of preserving the natural beauty of its site while constructing a sustainable building reflecting the natural efficiency of ecological systems. Annual energy consumption cost reductions were modeled at 59%, and water consumption reductions were projected at 39%. Preference was also given to salvaged and recycled materials, reducing the burden of virgin material extraction.

Location

Harrisburg, PA, USA

Project Owner

Dauphin County
Department of Parks
and Recreation

Architect

Crabtree, Rohrbaugh
& Associates

Building Size

12,000 sf

Cost

\$2,141,300

Completed

December 1999

