Wye Oak Building achieves LEED Silver certification

The Wye Oak Building, which houses units of the Department of Building and Landscape Maintenance recently achieved LEED Silver certification. Wye Oak also achieved a rating of Three Green Globes from the Green Building Initiative (GBI) rating system. It is the first building on campus to receive dual recognition from both LEED and Green Globes. These ratings reflect the efforts throughout the design and construction process and beyond to make this building sustainable.

“We are honored to be the first building on campus to have received both LEED and Green Globes recognition,” said Harry Teabout, Executive Director, Building and Landscape Maintenance. “This means a lot for the department as well as the university. We are very thankful to the Design and Construction group for designing such a sustainable building.”

The building completed construction in January 2014. Because of its location behind and above the Xfinity Center, many on campus might not pass it on a regular basis or ever get the chance to see it. Other campus landmarks located nearby include Terrapin Trail Garage and the Research Greenhouse Complex. Once you do make the trek up the hill to see Wye Oak, it is quite an impressive sight to see.

You are immediately greeted by a mini-waterfall and pond provided by Premiere Pond, Inc. that was featured as a part of the reality show Pond Stars. There is also additional landscaping located on the side of the building featuring both native and non-invasive exotic plants which reflect the interests and backgrounds of the staff including edible landscaping as diverse as native serviceberry and tropical bananas.
“The pond and recirculating waterfall features both fish and aquatic plants such as hardy water lilies,” said Karen Petroff, Assistant Director, Arboretum and Horticultural Services. “It is wonderful to see the smiles on the faces of staff members as they search for and find the colorful fish darting below the surface of the water.”

Inside, the two floor structure features state of the art energy savings technology and offers incredible views of the surrounding woods thanks to natural daylight in most regularly occupied spaces.

But perhaps one of the coolest features of the building is the recent addition of recycled artwork from artist and University of Maryland graduate student Zac Benson. Zac originally approached the B&LM staff asking to re-use some materials that were bound for recycling, and the partnership has been rewarding on both sides. Benson donated his art pieces titled: “Shredded,” “Abundant States,” and “Opportunity Awaits,” to the walls of Wye Oak. All three works are made entirely of University of Maryland recyclable materials. The installation of the artwork provided the perfect opportunity for the building staff to further their commitment to sustainability while also providing Benson with a great opportunity to display his artwork publically.
“We’re just thrilled that Zac has donated his art to be displayed in our building,” said Sandy Dykes, Associate Director, Building & Landscape Maintenance. “This is a great example of a ‘closed loop’ system that drives sustainability: the building that houses our campus recycling staff is displaying art made by a UMD student from materials we collected in our recycling bins. And even better – now I feel like I work in an art gallery!”

You can see more of Zac’s artwork by visiting his website.

To learn more about the green features of the Wye Oak Building, including statistics on stormwater management, construction waste management, recycled content materials, and energy performance, you can review the official LEED scorecard.

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Contact: Andrew Muir, Communications Coordinator, Office of Sustainability, 301-405-7068