

Issue Date: Northwest Meetings and Events
Spring 09

Eco Spots



There's a lot of talk about sustainability in the meetings and events industry, but with so much green-washing going on, it can be hard to separate the facilities with true environmental credentials from those still trying to get there. Here are a few lesser-known venues that are truly walking the talk.

Ecotrust Event Spaces

Portland, Oregon

Ecotrust's new Center for Architecture is available on weekends for events with up to 100 guests. Originally a stable, it has an open floor plan, exposed wood beams and plenty of natural light. The Center is seeking Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification at the platinum level and has committed to being carbon neutral by the year 2030.

A second Ecotrust venue in Portland, the Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center (NCC), has public areas suitable for receptions and exhibit space, as well as the Billy

Frank, Jr. Conference Center, which can accommodate up to 180 people. A former industrial warehouse, the NCC was the first restoration of a historic building to receive LEED gold certification. New solar panels on the roof will further improve energy conservation.

Ecotrust contracts with sustainable caterers and has eliminated the use of plastic water bottles. "All of those features kind of wrap together to create a really inspiring venue for meetings and events," says Sydney Meade, director of events and NCC programs manager.

Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa

Harrison Hot Spring, British Columbia

Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa offers 337 guestrooms and more than 24,000 square feet of flexible meeting space. The resort is registered under the ISO 14001 standard, which sets stringent requirements for environmental compliance and management. "We get audited at least once a year to ensure that we're living up to the standards," explains Ian Maw, director of sales and marketing. Harrison's parent company, Delaware North, has created an award-winning environmental management system called GreenPath to guide its corporate culture and on-the-ground operations.

Hot Springs Resort is also exploring ways in which water from the natural hot springs might be used to heat buildings.

Pike's Waterfront Lodge

Fairbanks, Alaska

With 208 guest rooms and a variety of meeting space, Pike's Waterfront Lodge offers a versatile venue for an event up north. Located along the Chena River, the lodge has adopted numerous measures to reduce its environmental impact, including installing rooftop solar panels and recycling vegetable cooking oil for use as biofuel. Facilities include 28 freestanding cabins built entirely from fire-killed trees. The lodge is anticipating certification under the Alaska Green Star program, which recognizes businesses and organizations that voluntarily meet and exceed Green Star's high standard of environmental responsibility.



Together with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Future Farmers of America, Pike's Waterfront Lodge grows its own produce using hydroponic methods. Alaska State Representative Jay Ramras and his team are working with the community of Barrow, Alaska to replicate the hydroponics program there.

Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat

Leavenworth, Washington

Located on 67 acres along the Icicle Creek in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat can comfortably accommodate groups of 160 or more in event spaces designed to promote a connection with nature. Sleeping Lady was built using sustainable methods including recycled materials and energy-efficient design. Key features include flooring made from salvaged wood beams, decking made from recycled plastic grocery bags and wood chips, and bar counters and tables made from recycled plate glass. Being sustainable "is part of our mission, vision and values. It's something that we consider in every decision we make," says Lori Vandenbrink, director of sales and marketing.

Sleeping Lady is currently applying for certification under the LEED Existing Buildings program, with a targeted gold level rating.

Get Connected:

EcoTrust Event Spaces // 503.467.0767 / www.ecotrust.org

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Pike's Waterfront Lodge // 877.774.2400 / www.pikeslodge.com

Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat // 800.574.2123 / www.sleepinglady.com