

Federal Energy and Water Management AWARDS 2013



Sustainable features inside and out provide education for visitors of all ages.



Ric Alesch, Jill Jones, Meghan Kish Forrest McNabb, Lisa Soghor U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Thousand Oaks, California

The National Park Service (NPS) designed and constructed a certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum-rated visitor center for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA). The new facility is the first grid-tied net-zero visitor center completed in the National Park System and the first NPS facility designed with all light emitting diode (LED) electronics for all exterior and interior lighting fixtures. Extensive natural lighting and the high-efficiency LED lighting with a daylight dimming system keeps electricity use at a minimal level.

The 7000 square foot building is heated and cooled by a highly efficient ground and water source heat pump system using an existing artificial pond as the primary heating and cooling source. A 94-kilowatt photovoltaic system provides all the energy needs for the facility. In fact, the PV system produced 310 billion Btu in the first year, or about 2.5 times net-zero. Surplus energy from the system helps to offset the carbon footprint from other NRA facilities. The facility was developed in partnership with California State Parks and a local park agency, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.