Greenbuild and Friends: Our Bioregional Partners

Published on **14 Sep 2012** | Written by **Mara Baum** | Posted in **Greenbuild**

Pacific Cannery Lofts. Architect: David Baker + Partners. Photo credit Brian Rose

The forward-thinking attitudes that thrive here in the Bay Area are alive and well in the non-profit sector, and we boast some of the most active green building organizations in the world. A few dozen of them are actively partnering with Greenbuild this year to create a richer and more exciting event. Each year, these "bioregional partners" mirror the green building and sustainability culture of Greenbuild's host cities, and San Francisco's partner group is no different.

While many of this year's bioregional partners are local chapters of national organizations such as ASHRAE or the Urban Land Institute (ULI), others are homegrown groups that have developed organically with the rise of the green building movement and are representative of the Bay Area's early and deep engagement in sustainable design.

The Center for the Built Environment (CBE), a building science think tank located at UC Berkeley, is one such organization. CBE has contributed to some of our most influential research on indoor environmental quality over its 15+ year history. In the LEED world it is most famous for developing an online post-occupant engagement survey that can be used to achieve the thermal comfort verification credit, and for its research report showing that green buildings typically provide higher levels of occupant satisfaction for indoor environmental quality than non-green facilities.

The Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening Coalition is another local force to be reckoned with. They support "a holistic approach to gardening and landscaping that works in harmony with the natural conditions of the San Francisco Bay Watershed" through a wide range of programs including home gardener education, landscape professional trainings, and management of the Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes program, a third-party verified rating system for sustainable landscape design.

"In the Bay Area, the commitment of landscape professionals to sustainability continues to grow," said Gretchen Schubeck, Executive Director of the Bay-Friendly Coalition. "More than 850 people have completed the Bay-Friendly Qualified Landscape Professional training program, and our training courses are typically filled to their maximum capacity."

What the Bay-Friendly Coalition is to landscape design, Build it Green is to residential design. It sponsors a tremendously diverse set of resources that includes a residential green building program, guilds and coalitions, green building policy tools, construction guides, and more. Its residential third party system "Green Point Rated," with over 13,000 projects, started up in 2006 and complements LEED for Homes; many projects seek both certifications. Build it Green also "incubates" green building ideas here in the Bay Area and then exports them state-wide; California now enjoys some of the greenest policies in the US.

These organizations represent a small taste of the green building flavor that the Bay Area will bring to this year's Greenbuild. David Lehrer at CBE summarized this well: "California and the Bay Area have been leaders in energy efficiency and green building legislation, practice and research. We are excited to share our experience, our knowledge and our exemplary projects, in hopes that this will inspire and inform Greenbuild participants from other states and nations."

Browse through the slideshow photos for a glimpse of a few Bay Friendly Landscapes and GreenPoint Rated projects. You can see more of these projects for yourself on the upcoming Greenbuild tour "Green Buildings Within Reach: The forerunners of Affordable Housing and Neighborhood Revival."

Stay tuned for more of San Francisco's local flavor in blog posts leading up to Greenbuild.

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