

PRACTICAL IN NATURE

*Thinking Green for a Sustainable
Hostelling Future*



THINKING GREEN FOR A SUSTAINABLE HOSTELLING FUTURE

Faced with the decline of a beloved, but structurally failing hostel compound in Eastham on Cape Cod, Hostelling International Eastern New England Council (ENEC) decided they could see the forest for the trees. And what a grandly green perspective that is.

Thinking carefully about its mission, acutely about the area's human and natural landscape, and clearly about the pragmatics of continuing to run a non-profit accommodation on the Cape, ENEC has moved forward with a plan to marry the grand vision of its mission to the pragmatic realities of today's travel economy by developing and building the first green hostel building in the US. The Eastham hostel provides access to the Cape experience to over 1,300 young travelers and dozens of youth groups each year and the new hostel will serve them not only as safe, secure low-cost accommodation, but as a dynamic building that teaches itself through its green attributes and that teaches the Cape through the expanded environmental programs that it will anchor.

What does green built mean? Simply put, five design elements radiate out of the central concept of sustainability: water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, sustainable site development and indoor environmental quality. What resonates in this litany are savings, sustainability, efficiency, and quality. Green building is not blue skying; it is a very earthbound belief in solving institutional, architectural, and environmental problems in a practical way that saves resources – natural and financial.

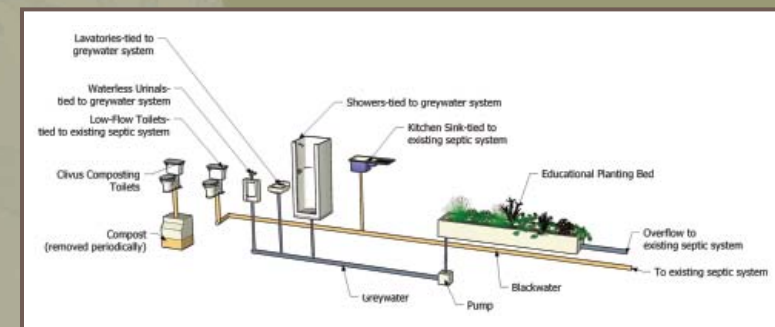


THE EASTHAM PROJECT

Using a \$50,000 planning award from the Kresge Foundation's Green Building Initiative, Hi-ENEC will conduct an ecological site assessment designed to provide information about the character of the Eastham site, its integrative systems and its human history. The study will provide a baseline reference to minimize environmental impact and promote restoration as the project moves forward. Kresge funds will also be used for energy and materials analysis, evaluation of alternative technologies, and LEED certification for the project.

The project's design team includes A+E Architects, a Brewster firm specializing in environmentally sensitive design and construction. Principals Alison Alessi and Robert Evans have a combined ten years experience on Cape Cod. William Reed, a nationally recognized authority in green building and president of Integrative Design Collaborative, will bring a depth of knowledge and a significant deep ecology edge to the project.

The new hostel will be a simple yet sophisticated campus that produces energy as well as using it and will have a model grey water system that could be an example for other large buildings on Cape Cod.



Sustainable design and construction make sense for any project but they harmonize especially well with Cape Cod. The Cape's wealth of coastal and environmental resources, from the world-renowned Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Falmouth to the Cape Cod National Seashore, contribute to the ecological spirit on the Cape. The hostel is located just off the Cape

Cod Rail-Trail and near important Lower Cape institutions, including the Massachusetts Audubon Society Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies and the National Seashore's Salt Pond Visitor Center. ENEC will have an opportunity to partner with these existing environmental institutions by providing lodging to their groups, especially in the spring and fall.

These educational and recreational program offerings will further the ENEC's mission of combining environmental awareness and budget travel. Guests will not only learn about green principles and practices during their stay, but they can also learn about the Cape Cod environment.



WHAT WILL THIS COST?

The Eastham green hostel is budgeted at \$2,000,000. Of course, much of the technology employed in the design saves on energy expense. Though these savings are important in the reasoning behind the new hostel, they should not overshadow the project's educational component inherent in its design and materials and what it will bring in terms of comfort and access, including an expanded season, to the many young travelers who will walk through its door

EASTHAM HOSTEL HISTORY

The Eastham Hostel has been a part of the Eastham community since 1960, providing affordable accommodations in a unique yet increasingly threatened landscape. Situated on 2.5 acres of land owned by the Eastham Conservation Foundation, the



hostel has long been dedicated to sitting lightly on the land. Over Eastham's 45 years, thousands of travelers, young and old, have come to explore the beautiful Cape Cod National Seashore. With over 43,000 acres of beaches, dunes, salt marshes, freshwater ponds and uplands, as well as historic lighthouses and life-saving stations, the National Seashore provides numerous opportunities for experiential education and adventure, just the stimulating environment hostelling founder Richard Schirrmann was looking for when he took his German students to the countryside nearly 100 years ago. The campus includes seven small cabins and a central building that houses the kitchen, dining and gathering areas, and bathrooms. Each year the hostel provides a welcome place to sleep,

play and learn for hundreds of individuals and dozens of school and youth groups, including Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. The hostel has served young travelers well for over 40 years, but its condition continues to deteriorate and, despite the high-level of service from staff, this is a building that cannot continue to be operated at the level necessary for the comfort and safety of guests. The new hostel will not only demolish these problems, but provide travelers with an expanded season.

Hostels bring together people from many countries and backgrounds and are designed to encourage interaction among guests. Here the world comes together to experience the whole and complex human identity – culturally and naturally. The Eastham project serves this concept well by building a strong marriage of organizational mission with a bold green vision.





2007 HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL
