



"A creative representation of the inherent capability of structural steel to express the lightness of framing. It's a very light structure - it almost disappears. Whoever engineered this project knew exactly what they were doing. A courageous use of slender members."
Jury Comment, American Institute of Steel Construction IDEAS² Merit Awards



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LOCATION Helotes, Texas
 AREA 4,240 sf
 COST \$2,000,000
 ARCHITECT Lake Flato Architects

Making the most of simple materials and technologies traditionally employed by cattle ranchers in livestock pens and fencing, the Visitors' Center is a fitting and sustainable gateway to the 8,600-acre Government Canyon State Natural Area. Guided by "green" building principles, the design team chose structural materials and systems according to paramount considerations of durability, maintainance, and regional reliance. The primary structure consists of recycled steel pipe, exposed and allowed to rust. Natural oxidation preserves the internal integrity of the steel and eliminates the need for paint. Likewise, native stone, locally harvested red cedar, and high fly ash concrete are exposed as architectural finishes, providing long life with little maintenance. Rugged assemblies of these materials are put together in an innovative, modern way, and the result is an extraordinary, airy and light-filled, contemporary building. In 2007, the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment recognized Government Canyon Visitors' Center as a national "Top Ten Green Project."



parks

Government Canyon Visitors' Center