



Sheldon Lake Environmental Learning Center is the first Texas Parks and Wildlife Department project to be LEED certified by the U.S. Green Building Council.



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LOCATION Houston, Texas
 COST \$2,600,000
 ARCHITECT Texas Parks & Wildlife
 Department

This outdoor education and recreation facility, located in northeast Harris County, is a study in environmentally sensitive and sustainable construction. Sheldon Lake Environmental Learning Center is a delicate network of boardwalks, pavilions, fishing platforms, and public restrooms, situated over a repurposed fish hatchery in the shallow marsh wetlands along Sheldon Reservoir, part of a 3,000-acre state park and nature preserve on the urbanized outskirts of Houston. The learning center is integrated into crucial protected habitat for native aquatic plants and invertebrates, fish, birds, and alligators. Accordingly, structural design and construction were conceived to thoroughly minimize the impact of building in this fragile setting. Steel framing is reused oil field pipe, cleaned of contaminants and left to oxidize naturally. Boardwalk and pavilion roof decks are sustainably harvested, dense untreated hardwood, eliminating the need for any sealants that might pollute marsh waters. Building foundations are simple, small-diameter concrete piers and helical steel piles to minimize the physical footprints of the buildings.



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