

Winter 2014

## Profile - The Wildlife Conservation Society

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### Recommended Citation

Hagy, James; Buchbinder, Lana; and Beau, Barbara, "Profile - The Wildlife Conservation Society" (2014). *Rooftops Project*. 24.

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# THE ROOFTOPS PROJECT

Photo: Julie L. Maher©WCS



## Profiles

### The Wildlife Conservation Society

What might it be like if your not-for-profit was responsible for projects with occupants consisting of humans *plus* some 1,700 other species? How can physical location and the needs of animals and visitors be harmonized through architectural design? Barbara Beau, Lana Buchbinder, and Professor James Hagy of The Rooftops Project interview **Sue Chin** about her work as Chief Architect at the **Wildlife Conservation Society**.

**RTP:** Give us an overview of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

**SUE:** We are a private not-for-profit organization with conservation projects in over 50 different countries around the world, and we operate four zoos and an aquarium on 308.5 acres of New York City parkland, of which 265 are at the Bronx Zoo.

We are focused on wildlife: more than 13,000 animals and 1,700 species, ranging from very tiny to very big, and their needs in the development of the physical plant.

Over four million guests visit our New York parks each year. This gives us an opportunity to educate and inspire those people. It's about making the connection between people and nature and about how they think of resource use and their impact on the world.

The Bronx Zoo is New York City parkland. The Bronx has the greatest percentage of parkland in New York City. We are 265 acres. The [adjacent] New York Botanical Garden is another 250 acres, so together that is over 500 acres, two-thirds the size of Central Park.

The Bronx Zoo is an amazing property, with large, old trees and great rock formations. Yet there are also 144 buildings. Infrastructure is important here at the campus. We opened in 1895, so much of the infrastructure and many of the buildings are over 100 years old. Renovating these buildings involves great challenges.

**RTP:** You worked with the Wildlife Conservation Society even before being an architect. What was your original role, and how did your training as an architect come about as part of your professional development?

**SUE:** I started working here when I was 16, as a summer job. I had grown up coming here, so to me this was home. My whole life, I have always really been fascinated by animals. I love animals, but I was an artist, too. I would paint and draw and engage in other creative activities.

I went to the Bronx High School of Science. At that time, electives were offered for people in their senior year, which now every school does, but at the time nobody did. My two electives were animal behavior and architecture, so to me architecture was always a separate track.

The Zoo recruited at the school at that time. So, when the opportunity to work at the Zoo in the summers came up, it was like, "Yeah, that's great! That would be fantastic. I would love to work in the Zoo!"

I had no idea I was going to be an architect when I took that job. I worked in a couple of different areas within the park, even selling memberships. At that time, it was person-to-person sales. People would come in the gate, and you would walk up to them and say, "Hi, how are you today? Can I interest you in a membership?" It's not what most people want to hear when they first walk in. I was a 16-year-old kid, so it was amazing to be out there working with the public and figuring out for myself how to engage people. To me it was a little triumph whenever I could keep people for a while and sell a membership. It was fun, and I learned customer service and speaking skills.

I went on to do public presentations with animals, educating about conservation, which really got me hooked on the mission of this organization. I could actually say something about the animals and why they are threatened that visitors might listen to, and it might make a difference.

Architecture wasn't part of my professional development here back then. I always joke that I worked here through college because I figured that someday when I graduated I'd have to go get a real job. Well, I haven't. I've never had a "real job." In hindsight, I can see how the work that I did in my early years here informed my development as a professional. But was there any sort of







conscious strategy to it? I wish I could say there was, but there wasn't. The two actually came together at the end, which was very lucky for me.

**RTP:** How much of the work of your team is dedicated to design and installation of exhibits, versus maintenance, repair, and renovation of the underlying assets such as the buildings and infrastructure?

**SUE:** That's a tough question. There are many projects that fall in between those two buckets. First, there's the idea of, "What is the next new exhibit?" Then, there's also, "The sign broke, let's go fix it." In between, there is, "This corner looks a little old, let's spruce it up." It also depends on the amount of time involved.

Right now, we have a new shark project in the Aquarium that is finally in construction. It was due to start right after [Superstorm] Sandy. November 1st [of 2012] was our break-ground date, and Sandy hit on October 29th. We finally broke ground in January 2014, so it's moving along well in construction.

The restoration of the Aquarium is ongoing after the damage it suffered in the storm, too. We are fixing all of the things that got flooded, lots of infrastructure and equipment. We'll be redesigning the exhibits, too.

**RTP:** How big is your design team?

**SUE:** It's about 30 people now, including the designers and fabricators. Our exhibit fabrication team is sculptors and fine artists, talented people who sculpt mud banks and rocks and other exhibit elements.

**RTP:** Is it unusual to have an architect as the head of a team like this in your peer group of institutions, or is it normal?

**SUE:** It's unusual to have a group like ours in any institution. There really is no other zoo that has an in-house design group of this scale, except Monterey Bay Aquarium. Many zoos have an in-house graphic designer, or they have a project manager or an architect who serves as project manager, with an outside firm to do the design for them.

**RTP:** How did your unique team come about? Is it the result of history, or chance, or the scale of what you're doing both at the Zoo and across the Wildlife Conversation Society's broader portfolio and mission?







Photo: Julie L. Maher©WCS



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**SUE:** It's history and scale. I think we were the first zoo to have an in-house design department and that was back in the 1960s. There are great benefits to having an in-house design group, and it's important since we have five parks to work on. [The other three zoos WCS manages are the Central Park Zoo, the Prospect Park Zoo, and the Queens Zoo in Flushing Meadows Corona Park.] Obviously, there are operational costs, and you have to weigh those against the benefit. The benefit is that you have one group that has historical continuity and knowledge that can be shared and create efficiencies across all of the five parks in New York, and can also manage a standard of quality throughout all of them.

We've always been involved at the Bronx Zoo and at the Aquarium. We started out smaller, so we've grown over time to meet the needs of the organization. Design has been important to WCS leadership historically and today. The design department really grew under Bill Conway, who was the chief executive officer here for a very long time. When you think about groundbreaking leaders in the field, he always comes to mind. He wanted to be part of the design and construction of these exhibits, and to do that, I think it was very efficient to have an in-house group. You could easily toss ideas back and forth across the table and implement them.

We do the actual design and envisioning of the exhibits. We work with outside consultants and architects to help us document the designs. We say, "Here's our vision, let's make sure the building and landscape work to support this vision," and we work collaboratively.

**RTP:** Elements of your design must be unique to the animal environments that you create. Are there also elements that might translate to not-for-profits of other mission types?

**SUE:** What's unique about us is the animals and the specialty systems around the animals. Other not-for-profits should look at what their specialty issues are. It's worthwhile to invest in that expertise in-house for that institutional history, and for maintaining that high standard of quality, whether through aesthetics or systems or whatever it may be. If you're an art museum, it's not just the curators. Curators are amazing talent, but they don't manage real property. There's a specialty in the translation between the needs of the programmatic staff and how the institution physically supports those needs.

**RTP:** What makes for a successful collaboration with outside architects and designers as the client?

**SUE:** Good communication.

When I'm hiring a firm, I'm looking at qualifications, of course, but interviews are really important, because I believe in chemistry. If you get the wrong vibe immediately, you can tell how well your communication is going to go throughout the project. Honestly, you can look great on paper, but if you're sitting in the meeting and you're telling me everything I need to hear without listening to me, I know up front that it's not going to work because I need to represent an audience that can't necessarily speak for themselves (animals.) I need somebody who is going to listen to our needs. The role we play is translating the needs of our animals, our programmatic people, the curators, the animal caregivers, and our visitors into something a collaborative partner, a collaborative architect, can understand. Without good communication, you're sunk.

**RTP:** You noted that the Bronx Zoo opened in 1898, is 265 acres, and has more than 140 buildings. Tell us about deferred maintenance. There must be things you need to do that you haven't done yet. How do you prioritize budget and time resources?

**SUE:** It's a never-ending list. Anybody who is a homeowner knows that.

The Aquarium probably has the most maintenance. There is so much mechanical equipment: plumbing, pumps, systems for the buildings, and habitats.

At the Bronx Zoo, there are nine-and-a-half miles of pathways, all of which need to be maintained. We are open year-round, in snow or rain. A few years ago, we embarked on a five-park master plan. We had never done that before. It was rolled out across all five institutions, and gave us a sense of what areas are very well developed and which are most natural and pristine, like the green area along the Bronx River.

Part of the master plan process was a facilities assessment. A consultant worked with our staff to take stock of every building and piece of equipment. Some big projects were identified, like roofing projects and boiler projects. The City is a partner particularly in infrastructure because the parks are City property. It's a public-private partnership. It would be really tough to get a donor to pay for a boiler, but it's part of the City of New York's responsibility to help support these parks.

**RTP:** What is the mix of reactive versus preventative maintenance?

**SUE:** We try to be much more preventative than we are reactive compared to the way we used to be, which was just purely reactive. Now we're trying to catch up.



Photo: Julie Maher©WCS



**RTP:** How you do both repair and renovate with “occupants” in place? That’s something that every organization faces, but your occupants have unique needs.

**SUE:** That’s a challenge we’re facing at the Aquarium right now, because so much was damaged [in Superstorm Sandy]. Sometimes we move the animals to another institution where they can stay until we’re done; sometimes we move them within our institutions to another space.

But there are times when we have to work around them. And we certainly have to work around the public that comes into our parks. We’re conscious about planning for that. If you just paid for your ticket and come in, and you are met by a construction fence, it will detract from your experience.

**RTP:** How has your strategic planning process influenced the approach to your property portfolio?

**SUE:** We finalized a strategic plan last year. It is programmatically driven, so it will influence the overall guest experience, but I don’t think it will have a huge influence on our physical plant.

**RTP:** When you consider, adopt, and implement new technology and innovative materials, what additional steps are required? Do you need to have testing and trials as part of the approval process?

**SUE:** It depends on what it is. If it’s something that’s going into an animal’s space, absolutely. Even the plants that we put into the exhibits have to get a vet and animal staff sign-off. We don’t want to have a sick gorilla because it ate something it shouldn’t have eaten. We’re very conscious of that because we’re always dealing with different species with different needs.

We tend not to go big when we’re trying out new stuff, just because the implications can be huge, whether it’s maintaining it or starting over. Just now, we are looking at rubber mulch, which is recycled tires. It is getting used in a lot of parks. We haven’t used it before, so we’re doing a test and trying it out in a small area that’s part of an exhibit to see how it wears. We’re also putting it in the Children’s Zoo. If it works out, we’ll probably use it in other parts of the park.

**RTP:** Do you have a concern that some innovative materials can be more expensive, too?

**SUE:** Yes, sometimes. If, for instance, there are two companies that make this material, then it’s going to be a different price than if there were 100 companies that make the material or if any contractor can go to Home Depot and buy that product.

**RTP:** In 2012, when you spoke at The Rooftops Conference, you were studying and revisiting the functionality of your cogeneration plant here at the Zoo. Has there been any update in your assessment?

**SUE:** In 1990, we built a cogeneration plant here. The City of New York worked with us, and we built this great plant that serves all of our electrical needs. It sells back electricity to Con Edison, and we use the waste heat from it to heat and cool some of our buildings. It is an amazing piece of infrastructure. However, it is now over 20 years old, so we are working with the City of New York and PlaNYC [a citywide sustainability and resiliency effort] to study the efficiency of the plant. They are working with us to replace the distribution loop, which is failing after all these years.

We aren’t at the construction phase yet, but we’re getting close to completing the design documentation. We have a really challenging site and a lot of ground to cover, and we want to make sure we’re doing it in such a way that makes sense for access. One of the things we’re considering is running some of the piping above ground where we can. It was all buried before and inaccessible. It would make it a lot easier to maintain some of those pipes if they were above ground.

**RTP:** Your properties are also used as revenue-generating spaces for event rentals. How does this affect your approach in design and property operations?

**SUE:** We would love to increase our revenue, but we have to also be respectful of the parks. First and foremost, we need to be a zoo or an aquarium and to serve our visitors and our animals, so we have to be careful about what impact events have. There are only certain hours when events can be held; otherwise, it would mean closing that event space to the public.

We do try to plan revenue opportunities into our designs as much as we can. For instance, in the new shark exhibit at the Aquarium the main viewing hall is perfect for “Dinner with the Sharks.” We’re going to be able to seat 125 people in there, so it will be a nice event venue that we can rent.

At the Lion House, we wanted to preserve the architecture and use the space not just for events, but also for internal meetings. Now it’s caught on, and we have weddings booked every weekend in the summer, which is fantastic.

**RTP:** How do you balance both construction projects and energy conservation goals against the needs of the animals that live in the exhibits?

**SUE:** The Madagascar exhibit [located in the transformed former Lion House at the Bronx Zoo] is an interesting example. Madagascar is a very hot island, and lemurs require high temperatures. In the winter we heat, but the issue is really cooling in the summer, enough to make it comfortable for visitors. We don’t cool the whole space. It may mean that people are hot when they’re





walking through. We just said, “We’re not going to do that,” and, “If you want to see these lemurs, you’re going to have to be a little hot just as you would in Madagascar.”

In the spiny forest, there is a duct that drops cool air down over the visitors, so they are getting more cooling without impacting the ambient temperature of the animal space. We achieved LEED Gold, so we have good sustainable strategies including energy efficiency.

**RTP:** Does putting animals’ needs first conflict in other ways with the preferences of visitors?

**SUE:** Sometimes. An animal may want to hide, so we create spaces where the animals feel safe, but people can see them, so that we can fulfill our mission of education and connecting people to nature.

This is an important part of exhibit design, which means spending time with curators talking about animal behavior and needs. When you enter the Madagascar exhibit, there’s a fabricated tree with a branch that leans across, and there are a couple of uprights that the lemurs are nearly always on. They just feel comfortable there. Give them a fat branch or put vines in places where it’s easy for them to hang. It’s great because they feel comfortable where visitors can see them, and that’s deliberately designed, not by accident. I think that you can be creative around these issues, but the animals’ needs always have to come first.

In the world of architecture, we learn to design for people: human dimensions and temperature parameters. At WCS, we think about space very differently than typical architects do because we are approaching it from the perspectives of users of space who are very different from us. This drives the design of space, and specifically it also drives things like air conditioning, and other building systems.

**RTP:** Why was LEED certification important for the renovation of the Lion House into the Madagascar exhibit?

**SUE:** We’re a conservation organization, and it is a part of our mission to minimize our environmental impact. We save wildlife and wild places, but part of that is making sure that we’re having the least impact that we can. Lion House was early on in the whole LEED certification world. We opened the project in 2008, but when we were designing it, in 2004 or 2005, there weren’t a lot of LEED-certified buildings around. We wanted to make a statement that supports our mission.

The City of New York, as a partner, wanted us to seek LEED, too. It wasn’t a requirement but a common goal. It’s New York City’s first LEED-certified landmark. We wanted to prove that you could take an old building and do this, to set an example for others. It was also appealing to funders of our organization.

The Lion House at the Zoo originally opened in 1903. The building was considered state of the art at the time, using mesh rather than bars to allow viewing. This is not how we keep animals today; the needs of the animals come first. In 1941, the African plains exhibit opened and the lions moved. The building sat empty for more than 20 years. We wanted to renovate the building, reusing the space in part for exhibits and in part as special event space, which is also a revenue-producer for us. We did this in partnership with the City of New York, which contributed much of the funding.

**RTP:** We’ve been to the Madagascar House just now. Many of your resident animals are both out and active, so your visitors, including us, were excited. Everybody was moving about and around the place.

**SUE:** Madagascar is an important story for WCS, because we have a substantial history of field conservation in that country. We want to tell that story, to show people why Madagascar is such an amazing place and why it’s important. It contains significant biodiversity and if we lose that, we’ve lost a lot.

**RTP:** How did you make this a LEED building?

**SUE:** We were tight on space, so it was all about integration. When you look at all these functions to support the animals and to create the experience for visitors, the square footage necessary to back it up is a lot greater than you would think. All of these animals’ spaces house mechanical systems. Essentially what we did, because it was a landmark building, was to dig underneath the building to gain space. There is no part of the building foundation that is touching the same ground it was on before. To say that demolition was a scary undertaking is an understatement. After one hundred-plus years, taking the building apart was a worrisome experience!

We worked closely with animal curators to determine the animal needs. In the spiny forest exhibit, we needed a column along a beam line, which was in front of the visitor view, so we made the column a tree, and since



Eco-Restroom at the Bronx Zoo

Photo: Sue Chin@WCS



Cogeneration using 8 micro-turbines

Photo: @WCS



we needed this particular tree to lean slightly for the exhibit view, so did the column. The big trees in the back [of the exhibit] are air ducts, disguised within the exhibit to save space. One of the great innovations we used here, which has been around in Europe for 30 years, is an ETFE [ethylene tetrafluoroethylene] roof system. It is tied to the building management system, so it is essentially a pillow. The middle layer moves; if you pump air into the lower part, it pushes the middle layer up. The middle layer and the top layer both have a pattern on them. When pushed together, they create an opaque surface that rejects heat. So in summer it does not allow heat to come into the building, and in winter it opens up to allow heat in. It is an amazing skylight system because it allows UV light through, which is important for plants and animals.

We incorporated a geothermal well system. We had to go down 1,500 feet through solid bedrock to get to the well. This system was a challenge. We also have a fuel cell, in partnership with NYPA [the New York Power Authority]. One of the lessons learned here was that, when you adopted new technology, you need to plan more time in the schedule to work it out.

Our new headquarters for the Center for Global Conservation was a bit simpler, because the primary occupants were human beings. [laughter] This is a LEED Gold building. Funding from the Starr Foundation helped us leverage federal funding for the project.

One of the goals of this project was to make sure that this building came out of the Park—that is, that it was integrated into the landscape. The building bends to accommodate big trees on the site. Another asset was the rock on the site, lots of bedrock, which was beneficial in some cases and not so much in others. We studied ways the building should be oriented to take advantage of daylight, aligning the building along an east-west axis to take advantage of a southern exposure.

**RTP:** You have an eco-bathroom that has been built to be a learning experience for visitors. Do you have plans to integrate this idea in other areas of the park?

**SUE:** Not right now. The reason that came about was because there was no sewer down at that end of the park. Most of the park is connected to the city sewer system, which is infrastructure that's already available. The reason that Eco Restroom came about is that it's so far away from an existing sewer.

**RTP:** Has the design of the restroom caused people to take longer? Do they linger to read the information inside or take pictures?

**SUE:** We do timing and tracking on some of our exhibits, but not on this one (it would a bit creepy!), so I don't know if that's the case. Anecdotally, I would say probably they do. When the restroom opened, I'd get feedback from the bathroom attendant there, who would tell me, "People love this; they read all the signs".

**RTP:** In the original construction of the Wildlife Conservation Society headquarters offices here on the campus, you incorporated a test area for bird-safe glass. Based on that experience, do you have any thought to substitute in this material in more of the building over time?

**SUE:** The American Bird Conservancy is working with us on a research project that is studying this issue. In addition to the bird safe glass, we are testing different types of applied films. The glass is very expensive, and I don't think it's coming down in price that much, so we're also looking at films because they're a lot cheaper and maybe an easier solution. I'm not sure that I would replace everything in the building with the glass, but I might put film on everything because results are showing that it is working.

**RTP:** What are the typical steps, and important considerations, in designing an exhibit?

**SUE:** Important considerations are the needs of the animals, the needs of the visitors, and the needs of the people taking care of the animals.

We also consider our mission and ask, "What do we want to say to our visitors? What is the visitor experience that will inspire people to care about wildlife and advance the mission of conservation?"

Gorillas are an easy example. Obviously, we wanted to be able to create an experience that would inspire people to participate somehow in the conservation of gorillas and the central African rainforest. That experience is centered around educating people about the fact that their visit is in and of itself an act of conservation because their admission to that exhibit will go directly to conservation work.



Photo: ©WCS



Photo: Julie L. Maher©WCS





The tough part is that it can't just be about writing a check. What are the other things we can do? Unfortunately they're not always easy to sort out. We have a campaign called "96 Elephants." It is about stopping trade in ivory and stopping the killing of elephants. It has taken off because we have brought in other zoos and other organizations as partners and made this something that everybody can really get behind. It's unbelievable how many elephants are being killed for their ivory. It's frightening.

A part of our strategy is changing legislation. President Obama signed legislation that limits the selling and trading of ivory in the United States, except for certain exemptions. That's a huge step because, quite frankly, there's a lot of trade here in New York City. It is not just trade in Asia. Ivory sales have now been banned in New York and New Jersey.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife burned seven tons of ivory in their stocks that had been confiscated, to make a point that this material shouldn't be traded. A month or so later, the Chinese crushed or burned several tons of ivory. Honestly, this was a huge step for the Chinese to do that. It gives me hope that these things that we're doing have an impact.

**RTP:** Are most of the exhibits primarily long-term, or do you have temporary exhibits as well? Are the considerations different with temporary exhibits?

**SUE:** Totally different. Most of what we do is long-term. If you look at museums, it's comparatively easy for them to move their collections around. They're objects that you can pack up; they're displays that you can pack up. That's not so easy here when you're creating animal habitats. Temporary exhibits don't lend themselves as well to zoos and aquariums as they do to science museums or art museums.

We're still evolving in our thinking about temporary exhibits. We had a temporary dinosaur exhibit this year and last. We used a large area as a drive-through, and visitors saw animatronic dinosaurs. Eventually, we would like to have temporary exhibit space that is enclosed to allow us more flexibility.

Monterey Bay Aquarium does amazing temporary exhibits. Temporary may mean two years or three years, but temporary. They have gallery space allocated for this, and they switch in and switch out every other year. I would love to do that at our Aquarium and here at the Bronx Zoo.

**RTP:** Is your love for that idea connected to mission, or as a way to drive repeat visitor traffic?

**SUE:** It ends up being both, doesn't it? There's potential revenue to this, because visitors may come once a year and want to see something new and different. But it also affords us new opportunities to tell cool conservation and science stories, and a larger audience has a greater impact in terms of mission and adding value to our visitor experience.

**RTP:** What has been your favorite exhibit to design, and why?

**SUE:** The three that stand out in my mind are (1) Congo, because I was still a young designer and I learned so much from that project—every project I've learned something from, but that one was such a big one; (2) Madagascar, because of the architectural implications and the restoration of a historic landmark as well as the complexities of making it LEED certified and a "green" building; and (3) the "Ocean Wonders: Sharks!" project, because it is so

complex. Architecture generally doesn't really have any sort of iconic nature to it in zoos. It's usually hidden in the landscape, which is fine. That's the way it needs to be because we're not here to celebrate architecture; we're here to celebrate nature. The Aquarium project was an opportunity to really develop a piece of architecture with a capital "A," so that it was iconic and it would have impact beyond the experience of understanding nature and sharks, creating something that could potentially contribute to that community. This is part of the economic redevelopment of Coney Island. The idea that a cultural institution like the Aquarium and this new project could help reinvigorate that whole community is powerful. I think that there's something really rewarding about working on something that you think is potentially going to have those kinds of impacts.

**RTP:** Whether it's looking here at the New York headquarters or at the atoll in Belize, you have an eye as well for the placement of the building from day one, in terms of both its visibility and impact on the site and using the breezes for natural cooling. Talk to us for a second about looking at a site you're redeveloping as a clean canvas.

**SUE:** It's never a clean canvas. Basically, I'm trained as an architect, and in school I had only one class about landscape design, which didn't teach me a lot except about site drainage and surveying. Working here, I've learned a lot about landscape design and about shaping the experience through the integration of landscape design, architecture, and graphic design.

When you look at a new project, you're always looking at constraints and opportunities. You look at the site, the topography, where the sun is, prevailing winds. We look at the existing natural features. All of these things are part of basic site analysis to help you shape how you're going to use that site for a specific project. You want to take advantage of what is already there, but if it's a flat site and you really need hills, then you will have to make the hills. You look at what doesn't work and then determine how you are going to make that happen. Like animal containment: how do you keep the animals in without it looking like a wall? Is it a moat? Is it a series of mud banks? Fences? A combination of all of those things?

If you know that there's a sunny patch on the south side of a holding building where an animal is going to want to sit because it's sunny and it's warm, then you have to use that to your advantage because they're going to be sitting there whether people can see them or not, right?

**RTP:** Presumably there is also an element about keeping visitors out and keeping animals in?

**SUE:** Absolutely, safety is a prime concern in all of our work.

**RTP:** Your enthusiasm for your job and this cause is obvious. What still excites you each day after being at the Wildlife Conservation Society for many years?

**SUE:** Seeing people use the exhibits tells you everything about whether or not you're succeeding. Can I walk by an exhibit and see an animal and a person making some sort of connection? If I see a little kid saying, "Mommy, look at what that cool monkey is doing," then we've done it. And if we can get people to appreciate nature and care about it, then they might actually do something more proactive about saving nature. That's my job satisfaction in a nutshell.





# THE ROOFTOPS PROJECT

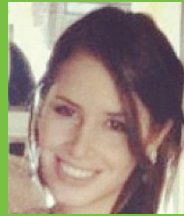
## Profiles

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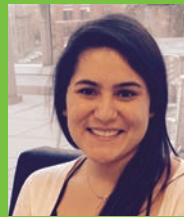


### More about LEED

LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, an independent certification framework developed by the U.S. Green Building Council ("USGBC") and now administered by the Green Building Certification Institute ("GBCI"). LEED-NC is the certification standard used in new construction projects (there is also a certification standard for existing buildings). The process requires project registration, planning, data collection, reporting through an application process, and independent review and verification leading to conferral of LEED certification. LEED also has programs monitoring the operating performance of completed projects. You can find out much more about LEED at the U.S. Green Building Council's Web site at [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).



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