

THE LEN FOOTE
HIKE INN
AT AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEN FOOTE HIKE INN RECEIVES LEED PLATINUM CERTIFICATION

[July 25, 2019] – The Len Foote Hike Inn, a backcountry lodge located deep in the Chattahoochee National Forest, recently achieved a major sustainability milestone, LEED certification at the Platinum level from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The recertification was upgraded from a LEED Gold certification presented in 2004.

“This new certification demonstrates the Hike Inn’s commitment to sustainability, said David Freeman PE, LEED AP, current Hike Inn Board Member and formerly Chief Engineer for the Georgia DNR and Hike Inn Project Manager and Executive Director of the USGBC Georgia Chapter.

“We have added significantly to the environmentally sustainable systems of the Hike Inn over the years,” said the organization’s Executive Director, Eric Graves. “We have upgraded and augmented our solar systems, operational efficiency and sustainability practices, so it was a good time to apply for recertification.”

Hike Inn staff and board members accepted a LEED Platinum plaque recently from USGBC CEO Mahesh Ramanujam at a ceremony held at Atlanta’s Georgia World Congress Center. Members of [USGBC Georgia Chapter Emerging Professionals](#) were also present as their support managing the certification process was instrumental. The Hike Inn was certified utilizing [Arc](#), a relatively new state-of-the-art digital platform that enables projects to measure improvements and benchmarks against itself and projects around it.

Last January, a group of USGBC Emerging Professionals visited the Hike Inn to collect onsite information and to analyze data in five performance categories including energy, water, waste, transportation and human experience. Ultimately, the facility earned an overall score of 84 points out of a total of 100 points earning Platinum certification, the highest level available.

Since receiving its initial Gold LEED certification, the Hike Inn has added substantially to its solar energy systems. There are now two solar water heating systems, one to service the bathhouse and another to service laundry and staff quarters. Additionally, the Hike Inn added substantially to its solar photovoltaic capacity. During many of the warmer months the system generates an overall energy surplus and now has enough solar-generated electricity annually to provide over half of the inn’s needs. The new photovoltaic system installed in July 2017, was made possible by a grant from [All Points North Foundation](#) and a low-interest loan from [Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs \(ACE\)](#). To improve energy efficiency, the Hike Inn converted its entire pin CFL light fixtures to a more efficient LED bulb system in May 2016.

All the additions and changes to the Hike Inn’s environmentally sustainable systems are in addition to its existing program which includes composting of food waste, recycling for waste diversion, composting

toilets conserving an estimated 200,000 gallons of water annually, a well water/greywater return system and native garden design. The program also includes recovery of rainwater for soil and water conservation, vermicomposting of food and office waste and – when possible – serving locally sourced food items in the dining hall. Hike Inn conservation features go all the way to the kitchen where guests are asked to participate by reusing cups and glasses during their stay and a “clean plate program” to reduce food waste.

“The Hike Inn’s mission statement is ‘Protecting Georgia’s natural resources through education and recreation.’” said Graves. “LEED Platinum designation is recognition of the importance of using sustainable technology to improve the environment while educating our guests.”

Len Foote Hike Inn is located five hiking miles from Amicalola State Park near Dawsonville, GA. Guests hike over hardwood mountain ridges and down through tunnels of rhododendron and laurel on their way to the remote inn. There they are served family-style meals and are given a tour of the facility along with an after-dinner educational program. The Hike Inn is owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources States Parks Division and operated by the nonprofit Len Foote Hike Inn, Inc. It opened in the fall of 1998 and serves about 9,000 guests per year.

For more information, visit www.hike-inn.com , or contact Eric Graves, Hike Inn Executive Director at (404) 693-4453.



November 5, 2004, Len Foote Hike Inn receives Gold Level certification under the LEED for Existing Buildings Pilot Program.



June 13, 2019 - Mahesh Ramanujam, CEO of the U.S. Green Building Council, with USGBC Emerging Professional team, presents Len Foote Hike Inn LEED Platinum plaque at the Georgia World Congress Center. photo credit: Steve Williams

Len Foote Hike Inn achieves LEED Platinum certification. For over 20 years, the Hike Inn has been emphasizing outdoor recreation, environmental education and sustainability.

Protecting Georgia’s Natural Resources through Education and Recreation

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