

The Nature of It All

August 25, 2016

Image not found or type unknown



YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (Aug. 25, 2016) – Online gaming or using social media apps – kids often live in virtual environments. But kids in Yellowstone National Park will soon have a new *living* environment to explore, with help from Toyota.

Today the automaker presented a \$1 million donation to the Yellowstone Park Foundation to support development of a new Yellowstone Youth Campus. The new campus will be a home for immersive youth programming in the park, creating a place of learning for future generations of conservationists and a pretty cool hang-out to share experiences.

Designed by Hennebery Eddy Architects of Portland, Ore., the new Yellowstone Youth Campus aims to be the first buildings in a national park to achieve Living Building Challenge Certification. One of the most rigorous environmental building certifications in the world, the Living Building Challenge integrates ecological relationship, cultural heritage, stewardship, sustainability and leadership into all aspects of design, construction and operation. The result is a “Living Lab” for all who enter.

“The new Yellowstone Youth Campus is an opportunity to support the conservation principles of the National Park Service while reinforcing Toyota’s commitment to the environment,” said Toyota Motor North America Environmental General Manager Kevin Butt. “We hope this environmental learning center will inspire and empower future leaders in building a more culturally aware, ecologically responsible and regenerative future.”

While the campus expands, the environmental footprint is expected to shrink with pursuit of the Living Building Challenge. The buildings are designed to significantly reduce energy use through high-performance insulation and windows, natural ventilation, and other passive measures. Planned photovoltaic arrays on-site will provide more than 100 percent of campus energy needs, creating excess energy for the grid. One hundred percent of water used on campus will be locally sourced and all wastewater will be treated on-site for reuse. The design prioritizes a healthy indoor environment by using only non-toxic and low VOC building materials and furnishings. Once complete, the campus will serve as a new benchmark for National Park Service projects.

It also will serve as the home of two youth programs, each with a national reach – Expedition Yellowstone and the Youth Conservation Corps. Expedition Yellowstone provides week-long residential experiences for grade school-aged children with a focus on disadvantaged populations, while the Youth Conservation Corps offers a one-month immersive summer program for high-school students. Replacing the existing Youth Conservation Corps campus, the new youth campus will be able to serve twice the current student capacity with the addition of four classrooms, residential buildings and staff housing on-site.

This isn’t Toyota’s first footprint in the park. In 2015, Toyota introduced a unique, renewable distributed energy system at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch. By combining solar power with re-used Camry Hybrid battery packs, the system provides reliable, sustainable, zero emission power to the ranger station and education center for the first time since it was founded in 1907.

And when Yellowstone designed the new Old Faithful Visitor Education Center (OFVEC), Toyota engineers shared knowledge gained during construction of its Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified office complex in Torrance, Calif. The automaker also provided a \$1 million gift to the foundation for construction of the Center, which opened in 2010.