



EcoManor

One family's continued dedication to the environment and recent changes in national building practices make EcoManor a reality.

Eco-awareness has been a way of life for Laura and Rutherford Seydel. Years of earth-friendly living and community involvement have fueled the inspiration for their EcoManor residence. Inspiration was not one specific item or event, but more a continuation of their current lifestyle and a promise to their family that they would always do their part to be green. Recent changes and organized support toward residential green building practices have now made building "EcoManor" a reality and will help Laura and Rutherford to further their commitment.

Growing up, Laura Turner Seydel was more aware of environmental issues than most children. As daughter of CNN founder and philanthropist Ted Turner, she was exposed at an early age to how very ecologically desperate some areas of the world were. Rutherford was awakened to alarming environmental issues within Atlanta when he joined the Ecology Club at Lovett High School, which backs up to the eastern bank of the struggling Chattahoochee River. Recognizing the potential for her efforts, she began her commitment toward working to improve the environment in every way she could.

Together, Laura and Rutherford have established themselves as ecological activists, committed to making a difference in their own back yard. Laura and Rutherford are co-founders of the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund and are both active on the boards of many other local and national groups including: Earth Share Georgia; The Nature Conservancy of Georgia; the North Georgia Water Planning District Board and the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. Currently, Laura serves as chairman of the Captain Planet Foundation, a partner program to the highly successful environmentally focused Saturday morning cartoon, *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*. The Captain Planet Foundation acts as a national educational conduit to place funds in the hands of groups conducting environmental projects with elementary, middle, and high school students.

But living "green" and promoting the ecology through various programs was not enough for the Seydels. While they did what they could to "walk the talk" by using recycled or biodegradable products and monitoring their energy and utility bills, the rising costs of fuel and various energy and water shortages kept them questioning, *"What more can we do for our home?"*

The single biggest inspiration for EcoManor occurred during a 1994 vacation to Colorado and trip to the Rocky Mountain Institute; a non-profit organization guided by core principles of energy, buildings and land, businesses; climate transportation and water. Amazed at the Institute's energy efficiencies and the documented impact green building could make to the environment, Laura and Rutherford began to research building options for their own eco-home.

The formation of The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1993 and program introductions by the Council have made the Seydel's green residence vision a reality. The USGBC is the nation's leading nonprofit coalition for advancing buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Green Building Rating Systems™ for New Construction is one of the Council's many programs.

LEED certification is reserved only for those projects and builders who adhere to the ultimate standards of environmental responsibility. The certification is based on a checklist of environmental factors in six categories including: sustainable sites; energy and atmosphere; water efficiency; materials and resources; indoor environmental quality; and innovation and design process. LEED for Homes program is a rating system established to define "green building" and ultimately transform mainstream residential building towards more eco-friendly practices. The program offers a much-needed tool for homebuilders, homeowners, vendors, and local governments for building environmentally sound, healthy, and resource-efficient places to live.

"Besides being a super efficient and healthy home, a green home can be aesthetically pleasing beyond your imagination," states Laura. "Your home can also be affordable. With the rising costs of fuel, a green home makes sense."

Working in tandem with SouthFace Institute, DR Construction, DES-SYN, Ed Castro Landscaping, and Harrison Design Architects, plans were drawn and ground broken for EcoManor.

"Ultimately, our goal is a livable world for future generations," added Rutherford. "EcoManor is an example of how green living can be possible."

Laura and Rutherford Seydel hope that by building EcoManor, the home can be used as a tool to illustrate the opportunities and benefits of earth-friendly, energy-efficient homes. The home will serve as a showcase to demonstrate life in a green, eco-friendly way through the use of eco-friendly products, energy efficient products, and environmental options. More importantly, EcoManor will serve as an educational tool to builders, architects, designers, vendors, landscapers, educators and homeowners in an effort to promote green living, conservation options and improved residential building practices.

For more information about EcoManor visit: www.ecomanor.com.

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