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Valerie Amore  
Drawing Conclusions LLC  
1041 SW 17 Street  
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Dear Valerie,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the controversy over the removal of the Rain Tree. Like you, we greatly value preserving treasures like Champion trees that represent the heritage of an area and have significant historical, horticultural, and aesthetic value. Conservation is important and protecting natural spaces matters, which is why LEED rewards projects for preserving and protecting our natural resources. The Sustainable Sites credit: Site Development – Protect or Restore Habitat has been a part of all previous LEED rating systems (except Commercial Interiors). In the newly approved LEED v4 rating system, we specifically require that a percentage of onsite native vegetation be protected. Habitat protection is a very important issue, and we are taking steps to strengthen the ways in which LEED can address preservation and conservation efforts.

LEED also has impact categories that speak directly to the vital importance of buildings reducing contribution to global climate change and protecting the biodiversity and ecosystems. These priorities are a major component of LEED 2009 as well as LEED v4, which sets an even higher bar for leadership in green building. USGBC has also been actively partnering with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, a number of environmental non-governmental organizations, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation on the creation of an alternative compliance path to be introduced to LEED's Pilot Credit Library on September 1st to encourage project teams to work with a conservation organization to protect offsite habitat.

Rewarding and incentivizing projects to preserve natural resources is at the heart of the LEED and our goals for market transformation. However, LEED also allows project teams to determine the sustainable development strategies they will pursue, because not every credit is appropriate, applicable, or even possible for any given project. LEED takes a holistic approach that tries to balance every aspect of development, and because buildings are complex and interdependent system of systems, trade-offs have to be considered.

I encourage you to continue working with your local chapter and to take the opportunity to educate elected leaders and decision-makers about the all opportunities available in LEED to support leadership action around greener buildings and resource conservation.

Regards,

S. Richard Fedrizzi  
President, CEO & Founding Chairman

AUG 20, 2013  
PROVIDED BY  
VALERIE AMOR

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