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Aquarium of the Pacific

Location:

Aquarium of the Pacific
Long Beach, CA

Landscape Architect:

NUVIS

Contractor:

Environmental
Concept, Inc.

Project:

4 Walkways
715 Sq Ft

Solution:

VAST Pro Composite
Landscape Pavers

Completed:

April 2010



VAST Composite Landscape Pavers Create Pathways that Complement the Earth-Friendly, Drought-Tolerant Garden at the Aquarium of the Pacific



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At the Aquarium of the Pacific, *Our Watersheds: Pathway to the Pacific* is an interactive exhibit that tells the story of the relationship of people within the San Pedro Bay drainage basin and their environment. Visitors learn about stormwater management, sustainable water use and what they can do at home to conserve water.

The building is LEED® Platinum certified — the highest nationally accepted benchmark for green design, construction, and operations.

“The exhibit demonstrates sustainable design and water conservation,” said Fahria Qader, project manager, Aquarium of the Pacific.

They decided to apply and showcase these elements in a new earth-friendly, drought-tolerant garden at the entrance to the Aquarium.

There is a large expanse of lawn adjacent to the entrance to the Aquarium. Children run and play on the lawn. The Aquarium hosts concerts and other public events on this space.

“Replacing a section of the lawn with an earth-friendly, drought-tolerant garden would establish a thematic extension of the Watersheds exhibit, demonstrate the practical application of the principles presented in the exhibit, and showcase techniques and products that visitors can use to save water in their own landscapes,” said Qader.

A total of 5,000 square feet was carved out from the lawn to create the garden, which curves to form a border between the lawn area and the front sidewalk and entrance plaza.



The Aquarium had several specific requirements for walkway pavers:

- A green paver product that can be installed with a permeable design
- Strength and durability because the walkways are heavily trafficked
- A refined, elegant finished appearance
- Complementary color choices
- Availability to homeowners for residential applications

"The goal is to show that drought-tolerant gardens are easy, functional and beautiful," said Linda Forde, LEED AP, NUVIS Landscape Architecture & Planning, designer of the garden.

Funding from the Bureau of Land Reclamation and a partnership with the Long Beach Water Department supported building the garden as an inspiring addition to the Aquarium.

The garden has a subsurface drip irrigation system connected to a weather-based controller. Drip irrigation is comprised of tubes releasing water at a slow constant drip at set intervals. Drip irrigation uses half the water compared to conventional sprinkler systems. The controller provides data to compare actual water usage to the amount of water that would be used if the new garden area was still grass, and the information is used for education.

The design of the garden includes four walkways. They provide multiple access points to the event lawn area and enable visitors to walk through the garden and get a closer look at the plants.

Doing a Web search, Qader found VAST Composite Pavers. VAST 4x8-inch pavers, a VAST Pro Composite Paver product, were specified and ordered from Claddagh Paving, VAST's distributor for Southern California *"We had not used VAST Composite Pavers before,"* said Tania Gybels, owner, Environmental Concept, Inc., the contractor on the project. *"My first impression was that these pavers were very well-suited for this high-visibility public area project. The Waterwheel color chosen for the walkways*

complements the blue colors prominent in architectural features at the front of the Aquarium and the blue hues that will emerge in the garden as the plants grow and mature."

According to Gybels, her two-man crew took three days to complete the VAST installation. Using concrete pavers would have doubled the installation time. *"Time is the most costly part of any hardscape job,"* she said. *"VAST cuts with a Skil Saw, and the grids make it easy for a regular crew without specific expertise in masonry to do the job."*

"When we introduced the new garden on Earth Day, our staff and the public were all very pleased with the results, and the Aquarium will use VAST Composite Pavers in future projects," said Qadar.

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Manufactured in a composite blend of up to 95 percent recycled car tires and plastic containers, VAST Composite Pavers are cradle-to-cradle green and help projects earn more LEED® certification credits than any other paver. The VAST manufacturing process starts with post-consumer recycled rubber and plastics, uses no water, consumes 82 percent less energy and releases 89 percent less carbon dioxide than concrete product manufacture, generates no volatile organic compounds, yields zero scrap, and creates products that are 100 percent recyclable.



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