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## **Sustainable Shelter Exhibit Begins National Tour at The North Carolina Arboretum**

**ASHEVILLE, NC** – Shelter is a universal human need—a need we share with other living things. A new exhibit coming to The North Carolina Arboretum introduces visitors to the functions of shelters, and how animals and humans have adapted to different environments through a diversity of structures. Opening September 24, *Sustainable Shelter* explores biodiversity, human and animal architecture, ecosystems, and energy and water conservation, all from the perspective of the “home.”

Just as birds select and gather materials from their local environments to fashion safe and nurturing nests, humans build homes that use natural resources to meet a vast array of our needs and desires. *Sustainable Shelter* investigates the ways that human dwellings extract, use, and discard energy, water, and other precious natural resources. The exhibit reveals innovative new building technologies and strategies that can help restore the health and viability of natural cycles.

More than 15 interactive components uncover how we can learn from nature to make our dwellings more sustainable parts of the earth’s natural systems. Graphics, cartoons and interactive computer games explore how daily actions are part of the earth’s carbon and water cycles. Visitors can test ways to make homes more sustainable with hands-on exhibits. Scale models show how the size and environmental impact of American homes have changed over time. Visitors can then build a model of a home that incorporates many of the environmental features presented in the exhibition.

To broaden the visitor experience, an exhibit called *Home Green Home* will be featured in the Baker Exhibit Center Greenhouse. Designed and produced by Arboretum staff, the exhibit includes a variety of animal shelters, insect hives, and nests native to our area. Visitors will be introduced to xeric landscaping examples, and local green home building products will be on display, courtesy of Mosaic Community Lifestyle Realty.

The North Carolina Arboretum is the first facility to host *Sustainable Shelter* as a traveling exhibit. The exhibit is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Energy, and was developed by the Center for Sustainable Building Research, and the Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota. Support is provided locally by Community Partners of The North Carolina Arboretum: Smoky Mountain Living, Mosaic Community Lifestyle Realty, WNC Green Building Council, and Mathews Architecture, P.A.

*Sustainable Shelter* will be on display at The North Carolina Arboretum through January 2, 2012. The exhibition will be open to the public during regular Baker Exhibit Center hours: 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. daily. Exhibit admission is in addition to the standard parking fee (\$8 per personal vehicle), and is \$3 for adults and \$2 for students age 18 and under. Admission and parking is always free for Arboretum Society members.

For information, call (828) 665-2492 or visit [www.ncarboretum.org](http://www.ncarboretum.org). The central mission of The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate institution of the 17-campus University of North Carolina system, is to cultivate connections between people and plants.

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*The NC Arboretum is located next to the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Visit [www.ncarboretum.org/plan-a-visit](http://www.ncarboretum.org/plan-a-visit) for parking fees, property hours and building hours. For general information call (828) 665-2492 or visit [www.ncarboretum.org](http://www.ncarboretum.org).*