



THE GREEN LIFE



Sign up for our email newsletter and get a new green tip every day!

Ideas for living well and doing good from *Sierra* magazine

- ▶ Better BBQs
- ▶ Building Trends
- ▶ Gas-Saving Tips
- ▶ Green Weddings
- ▶ Office Tips

[About](#)
[Home Page](#)
[Archives](#)

NEW: [Sign up for your daily green tip](#)

[Subscribe to this blog's feed](#)

Powered by [TypePad](#)

Categories

- 🎨 Art
- 💰 Business / Money
- 👕 Fashion
- 🍷 Food and Drink
- 🗣️ Grapevine / The Buzz
- 🏥 Health
- 🏠 Home and Design
- 🎧 Media Lounge
- 🚫 No Goods
- 🌟 Pop Corner
- ♻️ Recycling
- 💡 Tips
- ➡️ Transportation
- 🚗 Travel

Regulars

- Fast Facts (Tidbits)
- Good Eats (Recipes)
- Hey Mr. Green (Advice)

Advertisement

[« Be Wise About Water](#) | [Main](#) | [One Ticket for Farmer](#)
[John, Please](#) »

Trendsetter

Rob Moody
 Owner and President
 The EcoBuilders, Inc.



Rob Moody has deep roots in North Carolina. His ancestors came to the Asheville area around the turn of the last century, and Moody grew up in the home where his grandfather was born, one of three "Arts and Crafts-style, a little bit Queen Anne, a little bit shingle-style" houses his great-great-grandfather had built for the family in downtown Waynesville.

How did you get into the green-building business?

I studied biology and environmental science at UNC-Asheville, but I also grew up loving old houses because of the ones in my family. About five or six years ago, I bought the house I lived in as a child, and it needed work. I ended up doing those renovations while teaching environmental science, and the two meshed very well. I just fell in love with the whole remodeling process and I came up with the basic philosophy for [the EcoBuilders](#) during that time: a marriage of aesthetics, green building, and urban infill. In 2003, I started building my first new construction. It was the first house in North Carolina certified by the [state standards for green building](#), which had started up the year before.

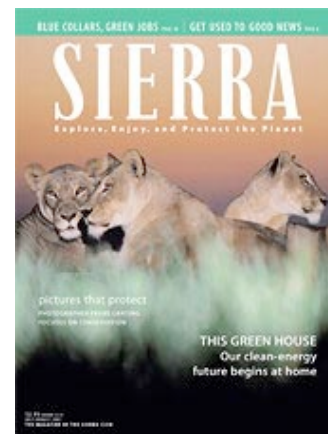
Do you do green building exclusively?

Yes, everything that we do is green. We certify every new house with [Energy Star](#) for efficiency and [NC HealthyBuilt Homes](#), which covers site conditions, resource conservation, and indoor air quality.

What appeals to people about green building?

Energy saving, healthier living, and doing the right thing are all important to folks; it's a very timely business right now. The market is excellent in Asheville. People have always come here for what we have to offer in terms of outdoor recreation and

Search The Green Life:



Upcoming.org Events

August 18

SolFest at Solar Living Institute

August 27

Burning Man at Black Rock City

September 14

Dwell on design at San Francisco Concourse Exhibition Centre

September 20

West Coast Green at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium

October 6

Green Festival 2007 at Washington DC Convention Center

[More of thegreenlife's events](#)

Others Livin' La Vida Verde

Trendsetter (Interviews)

Recent Posts

Tapping Into Water Trends

Daily Tip : July 16, 2007

Quick Tip: Recycle Your Car Battery

Daily Tip : July 13, 2007

Going to Bat for the Environment

Daily Tip : July 12, 2007

Ban the Bulb

Daily Tip : July 11, 2007

Shop and Save

The Green Life Daily Tip : July 10, 2007

Archives

July 2007

June 2007

May 2007

April 2007

March 2007

February 2007





January 2007

December 2006

November 2006

October 2006

Recent Comments

Jay on Daily Tip : July 16, 2007 mary ann on Daily Tip : July 16, 2007 Lee Steigele on What to Watch... Catherine Doran on Daily Tip : July 13, 2007 Laura on Daily Tip : July 13, 2007 Judy Lockwood on Daily Tip : July 13, 2007 Katherine Piana on Daily Tip : July 12, 2007 

environmental resources, and those same things make it a [green-building mecca](#). There's a huge market for green spec homes in Asheville too, and not enough stock to keep up with it.

What's harder to sell people on?

The guts of the house take a little more explanation. We put together a really unique system within the walls--the "lungs" of the house--with an HVAC [heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and cooling] system that works together to create a cohesive organism, really. That's where my biology training comes in! We do a fresh-air induction system, a filter system that has to work with the bath fans and the insulation, and a high-perm housewrap. You can spend more if you want to go solar, or install a greywater system, but you can build green on any budget, and in the same timeframe as other houses too.

How do you keep costs and environmental impacts down?

We emphasize tight site management: erosion control and minimizing the footprint. One way to do that is to build on piers, which can also save money on the foundation. We protect trees during construction and use native species in landscaping, and none of that costs anymore than doing it the typical way. Sometimes it can cost less.

To use resources more wisely, we frame our houses using the least amount of wood to achieve maximum stability and use 20 percent fewer studs than the traditional method. Achieving the same structural capacity while minimizing the lumber used saves money too. We also produce a fraction of the waste of a typical construction project. The key is educating our crew; it doesn't require a lot of fancy tools.

We get insulation behind every cavity, behind the tubs, and everywhere else, so we're saving [the buyer] energy on heating and cooling. Indoor air quality is major. We minimize our use of high-VOC paints and try to use water-based polys as much as possible.

What's the most difficult aspect of building green?

For us, it's easier. We've done it from the beginning, so it would be harder *not* to build green. Educating homeowners and subcontractors is our biggest challenge, along with procuring materials. Lots of stuff is developed on the West Coast and is not as readily available back East, but that's changing. To do a remodel really green can be more invasive, especially if the house is lacking insulation in its walls. But we're doing a second green renovation right now, and we've done it on a pretty low budget both times.

Tell me about a challenging project you've worked on recently.

We work hard to find infill lots so we're not expanding infrastructure and contributing to sprawl, but Asheville had a huge boom 100 years ago and as one of the city officials put it: if there's a lot left in the city and there's nothing built on it,

A Little Greener

The Alternative Consumer Compass

Earth 911

Eco-Chick

eco child's play

ecoFabulous

EcoTalk Radio

Great Green Goods

The Green Guide

Green as a Thistle

GreenHomeGuide

green is sexy

green LA girl

Haute*Nature

Have Fun * Do Good

I Heart Farms

Ideal Bite

Lime

Sierra Club Radio


the green guy

Treehugger


Worldchanging

Get my blog as
a widget from
 widgetbox

ADD THIS BLOG TO MY
 Technorati FAVORITES

jeannette on Daily Tip : July 13, 2007 

Meri on Daily Tip : July 13, 2007 

Anne Thornhill on Daily Tip : July 13, 2007 

there's a reason why. It's going to be marginal in some way.

This one lot that we worked on in the historic district was a steep site, so we chose to do pier and steel-girder construction to minimize our footprint. The parking was on a concrete suspended slab, which created space below. We didn't have to bring in fill or excavate, which we want to minimize. E.O. Wilson said that when people move more earth more than ants do, that's a problem, and humans are doing that now.

We designed the house so it sits nicely and sensitively on the site. We eliminated the crawl space and basement space, pulling the whole house up to road level, which eliminates a lot of moisture issues that affect indoor air quality. We used a very efficient heat pump with natural-gas backup and employed fresh-air induction. We built a very tight [well-insulated] house, but also used a mechanical system to make sure that fresh air could get in a very measured way.

What's the one thing you wish every prospective client--or even everyone in the world--would understand about green building? Is there one decision that has the biggest impact?

It's really holistic. It's an approach, an entire philosophy. Really being open to this as a concept is the big thing, and most people are. It's a healthier house that costs less money to operate and lasts longer, so it's an easy sell. And technology is improving all the time. Solar is there and getting better, and we're seeing more and more tax benefits from going with alternative-energy use. As more and larger corporations go green--and we're really seeing a national movement in that direction--it'll just get even better.

* * *

Want to learn more about green building? Look for an interview with [another green builder](#) next week and check out the latest issue of *Sierra* magazine for [remodeling tips](#) and author Bill McKibben's account of building his [ecofriendly dream home](#). Rob Moody also recommends visiting the websites of the [U.S. Green Building Council](#) and the [National Association of Home Builders](#), which he says has "incorporated a fair amount of green-building standards over the last couple of years."

June 22, 2007 in [Home and Design](#), [Trendsetter](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Tell a Friend](#) | [Digg](#) | [Del.icio.us](#) | [Stumble it](#)

TrackBack

TrackBack URL for this entry:

<http://www.typepad.com/t/trackback/885695/19504014>

Listed below are links to weblogs that reference [Trendsetter](#)



Comments

I only hope more people take this green approach to building.
Thank you.

Posted by: [Beth](#) | [June 22, 2007 at 05:59 PM](#)

Post a comment

If you have a TypeKey or TypePad account, please [Sign In](#)

Name:

Email Address: (Not displayed with comment.)

URL:

Remember personal info?

Comments:

Email jennifer.hattam@sierraclub.org with story ideas and general questions about the Green Life.

User comments or postings reflect the opinions of the responsible contributor only, and do not reflect the viewpoint of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club does not endorse or guarantee the accuracy of any posting. The Sierra Club accepts no obligation to review every posting, but reserves the right (but not the obligation) to delete postings that may be considered offensive, illegal or inappropriate.

Sierra Club® and "Explore, enjoy and protect the planet"® are registered trademarks of the Sierra Club. © 2005 Sierra Club. The Sierra Club Seal is a registered copyright, service mark, and trademark of the Sierra Club. Content © Copyright Sierra Club

[PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [Terms and Conditions of Use](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Navigation Guide](#) | [Contact Us](#)