A Project of

LOUISIANA OUTDOORS OUTREACH
LOOP NOLA

In Collaboration With

SMALL CENTER

Sponsored by a Generous Grant from

JOHNSON CONTROLS, INC.

Special Thanks to

DASH LUMBER
NEW ORLEANS RTA
HALL SIGNS
During the course of the project, 13 students worked collaboratively to create a space with seating for 50+ people under a shade structure constructed of over 650 yield sign blanks, and surrounded by an earth berm next to the largest of three ropes courses on Scout Island. The project also includes a concrete floor, wood clad benches, and a cut out leading to a path in the woods, which is the space that served as the initial inspiration for the students (seen at right).
# LOOP NOLA PAVILION

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In the Fall of 2013, the Small Center held a design/build studio in collaboration with LOOP NOLA, the Louisiana Outdoors Outreach program. The project aim, located on Scout Island in New Orleans’ City Park, was to provide a shade structure and rest spot for LOOP NOLA to use in conjunction with their ropes course programming, which is located on the island. At the outset of the project, LOOP NOLA had only a few picnic tables located adjacent to one of their three ropes course with no protection from the elements in the hot and humid climate of Louisiana. While the program trains youth in leadership and communication skills, the extreme heat and lack of seating created challenges which interrupted on-site instruction. Several students had suffered from heat stroke on the island in the year preceding the design-build project. The end result was a beautiful space that the children LOOP NOLA serves to sit in the shade, learn about the outdoors, and watch their friends on the ropes course.
PROJECT LOOP

LOUISIANA OUTDOORS OUTREACH PROGRAM (LOOP) INFORMATION
The Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program is an organization created for underserved youth throughout Louisiana. The goal is to provide world class outdoor education to youth in elementary school, middle school, and high school. Currently the program is available to students in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, but the program hopes to reach out to children all around the state. Ultimately, programming aims to enhance self-esteem, encourage mental and physical improvement, and develop the many characteristics associated with civic mindedness.

Three major areas are emphasized in programming:

- **Technical Skills** -- water safety, canoeing, backpacking, wilderness travel, minimum impact camping
- **Soft Skills** -- teamwork, problem solving, conflict resolution, self esteem, perseverance
- **Academic enhancement** -- multidisciplinary, place-based workshops and trips

LOOP NOLA engages small groups (10-25 participants) of children in a series of organized, academically linked, adventure-based activities. They also hire high school aged students to be interns and help with activities with younger children.
Early design investigations explored the combination of many small portable pieces into spatial ideas. This idea of congregating several pieces into a whole carried through the design process and was a strategy used to overcome the challenges of a remote site.
Located in a small mountain town, Yusuhara Machino-eki is a small market and hotel. Yusuhara is widely known as the town facing a main road used by famous political figures. Along the road, there existed a number of greenrooms called “Chad Do” for travelers, which functioned not only as restrooms but also as a kind of cultural salon, serving teas free of charge. As an attempt to respect this history, we used thatch as the material, which is deeply related to “Cha Do,” which worked as a medium to connect the past with the present.

The cola-bow is a public art installation made out of more than 17,000 recycled plastic bottles, which were braided to create a shape inspired by the swings of the Coca-Cola logo. The bottles were collected by a joint initiative of universities around Beijing and Coca-Cola China to give citizens a bottle of Coke for every 10 empty ones brought back to a recycling spot. The amount of collected plastic bottles ended up in an entrance canopy to the Student Beijing Design Exhibition. The installation should also serve as a statement against plastic pollution by turning trash into a shelter. A lot of things which are most convenient to us are made out of plastic. A too small percentage of this plastic waste end up in recycling bins. To make matters worse, plastic is persistent in the environment where it can remain up to 450 years.
Students researched materials and precedents that were derived from the impressions of the project and site of Scout Island in City Park. The objective of fitting the project into its wooded surroundings on the island, using non-traditional materials, and creating a non-planar surface were the ultimate focus of the study.
After interviewing LOOP NOLA to determine their needs, visiting the site, and participating in a short team building workshop led by the LOOP staff, the next phase of the project was to break into teams to create a series of schemes. The schemes were very diverse and responded in various ways to needs communicated by LOOP NOLA, which included a shade structure, place to sit and do programming with the kids, place to “circle up” to do team building activities, and providing a nice, smooth surface for kids to eat lunch. The design phase was organized into two separate reviews - the first showing the initial schemes by the six project teams. Based on this review, some of the needs communicated by the project team were clarified (i.e. the pavilion needed to protect kids from the sun but not necessarily the rain as the community partner would not be on the island if it is raining). This decision was followed with a development by the students of the chosen design and finally culminating in a final review with the community partner to present the final design and get approval to start construction.
Emma and Sarah’s scheme focused on emphasizing the ground plane and roof plane, keeping the “wall” portion of the pavilion open to the surroundings. The roof mimics the dappled light effect of the woods. Ultimately their scheme was chosen for construction.

Dan, John, and Meredith’s design, “Climb Dat” evolved over two iterations to be a steel structure with a roof created out of roofs. The shape of the structure and placement of beams and columns in relation to each other created an interesting shape for the pavilion.

Madison and Maggie’s “Cannoli” design was derived from lamella architecture that created an interesting tunnel effect located at the far end of the ropes course. Their design created an interesting space that was partially covered and had opportunity for seating and storage.

Michelle and Rachel’s design was a wooden structure based on the idea of “circling up” that was emphasized by LOOP during the team building activities they did early on with the students. Their design had a wooden structure with a wooden floor and metal cladding for the roof.

Ellen and Kate took inspiration from the leaf for their design. They developed their schemes over two iterations and focused in their final design on a structure with rebar holding up an undulating roof. Plants grow up the structure and the roof moved up and down at the edges to give users a good view of the ropes course.

Casey and Jose’s design was inspired by the rope research that was done early on in the semester’s precedent research. Ropes were strung all around the walls and the roof of the design and created a whimsical space for students.

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Design Renderings
PROJECT LOOP

PEDAGOGICAL OBJECTIVES / CONSTRUCTION

Between the first and final review with LOOP NOLA, the students spent time developing the scheme. Different tasks such as sequencing, pricing, mock ups, drawing, and renderings were assigned to teams of students. One of the areas of the scheme that was focused on especially by most of the students was the development of the yield sign roof. Connection options were explored and material sources were reviewed by the students leading up to the final presentation review to the community partner. A custom connector was designed and milled by the Tulane School of Architecture Millhaus, the School’s CNC facility.

Other investigations explored by students included design of benches, and discussion of colors and materials in the final design.
The canopy went through many assembly iterations. Full-scale mockups were made to test each option's feasibility. Shown are three early iterations of connectors made from different components. In the end, the project team identified a need for a simple plate that would allow for a thin, controlled space between the signs for light to filter through.
The final connector plate is a hexagon with slits creating six “fingers.” The simple geometry allowed for efficient fabrication through the use of a CNC machine, and the slits allowed for more flexibility in the canopy and less visual presence.
PROJECT LOOP

CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT LOOP

CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT LOOP

FINISHED PROJECT
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) SAM RICHARDS // MAGGIE EASLY // ELLEN HEARLE // MICHELLE CARROLL // SARAH SATTERLEE // JOSE COTTO // CASEY BERMIS // KATE LUXNER // MADISON BAKER // RACHEL CONQUES // JOHN COYLE // MEREDITH ZELENKA // DAN AKERLEY // EMMA JASKINSKI // EMILIE TAYLOR WELTY
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ERIC

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