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## Wolfe's Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment Expands Campus with Opening of The Smith Center for Education & Research, a New Community Facility

*The Smith Center for Education and Research will enable Wolfe's Neck Center to convene people of all ages and backgrounds, year-round, to take part in its work of transforming relationships with farming and food for a healthier planet.*

**Freeport, ME** - Wolfe's Neck Center announced the opening of its new Smith Center for Education & Research. The organization broke ground on The Smith Center in 2022 as part of a multi-year capital investment to build the infrastructure needed to support its growing scope of work in demonstrating regenerative agriculture's important role in addressing the climate crisis, locally, regionally, and nationally. The Smith Center for Education and Research is the centerpiece of Wolfe's Neck Center's reimagined campus, representing its transformation from a Farm to a Center.

Every aspect of this new Center, including the design, layout, and furnishing enhances Wolfe's Neck Center's ability to significantly grow its programmatic offerings and impact. This \$5M investment has been made possible by the private philanthropic contributions of the Wolfe's Neck Center community, [Bath Savings](#), and a [Community Facilities Direct Loan](#) from the Rural Development program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provides affordable long-term funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas.

"This new facility will enable Wolfe's Neck Center's beloved programming to grow and evolve, while also allowing our role as a leader and convener to expand," said David Herring, Executive Director. "From Farm Camp to gatherings of our global collaborative, OpenTEAM, this space will allow climate change solutions to emerge and deepen people's connection to the food system."

The Smith Center has been built to Passive House standards, is entirely fossil fuel free, and will produce more energy than it will consume, reflecting Wolfe's Neck Center's commitment to clean energy and protecting the environment. The building was designed by Belfast, Maine-based architect, [Opal](#), and built by Freeport, Maine contractor [Zachau Construction](#). The Smith Center has two classroom-style rooms to accommodate group sizes from 5 to 50, a large conference room and dining area for 150, and a commercial teaching kitchen. Situated at the center of the campus, all key outdoor spaces, including trails, Wishcamper Livestock Education Barn, Dairy Barn, and gardens, are easily accessible from the Smith Center.

Honoring both the history of the 600 acres where Wolfe's Neck Center operates and its innovative and entrepreneurial approach to work being done at the intersection of agriculture and climate, features of this new space that reflect Wolfe's Neck Center's mission include:

- A strong connection between the interior space and the natural landscape of Maine's coast, including sight lines through the entire building;
- The ability to host a variety of groups in multiple spaces, including businesses, nonprofits, schools, as well as other community partners;
- Entirely electric commercial teaching kitchen;
- To avoid introducing new soil biology, invasive species, and trucking in loam from elsewhere, the construction team exclusively utilized on-site loam for all new planting areas around the Center;
- The floor throughout the building is the poured concrete used for the foundation and includes floor drains throughout which helps maximize the functionality of the rooms.

The Smith Center is named in honor of LMC and Eleanor Houston Smith and their family. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the Smiths purchased, stewarded, and ensured the conservation of lands throughout Maine, including the over 600 acres that is now Wolfe's Neck Center. The Smith Center will recognize the history of Wolfe's Neck and the extraordinary gift of conservation and provision of public access provided by the Smith family.

### **About**

Wolfe's Neck Center for Agriculture and the Environment is a non-profit, farm-based education, research, and visitor center situated on over 600 acres, stewarded for thousands of years by the Abenaki people, members of the Wabanaki Confederation of Native people in Maine. Wolfe's Neck Center is on a mission to transform our relationship with farming and food. With our work, we seek to utilize our unique setting to create place-based, regenerative agricultural solutions to climate change driven by an educated consumer base, connected farmers, and a thriving food producer community. Learn more at [wolfesneck.org](http://wolfesneck.org).