

Not being a member of the Construction Specification Institute, I was happy to get an invitation to February's meeting about the new LEED 2009 v. 3.0 Updates and Improvements. The talk was given by Ross Spiegel who, among many other things, is a LEED AP, and chairs the Credentialing Steering Committee for the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) of the USGBC.

Ross focused on the major changes from LEED v. 2.2 to v. 3.0, which include the addition of Harmonization (all rating systems now operate on a 100 point scale), Credit Weightings (more points allocated to credits that have a greater positive impact on environmental and human health concerns), and Regionalization (additional credits achievable within each region, or environmental zone, across the country).

Also presented were Minimum Program Requirements (MPRs) required to achieve LEED Certification. Projects must comply with environmental laws, be a permanent building or space, must use a reasonable site boundary, and comply with a minimum floor area and minimum building to site area ratio. The Owner must commit to sharing energy and water use data for at least five years.

Ross mentioned upgrades to a faster and smarter LEED Online, which is expected to provide a better user experience with its new functionality and improved support by the USGBC, while documenting project information for LEED Certification. Let's hope so!

As far as the new LEED exams go, proof of experience on a LEED project (or work in a sustainable field or educational program) is required to sit for the exam. One can either become a LEED Green Associate (by taking a 2-hour exam) or LEED AP with specialization (by taking both the LEED Green Associate and LEED Specialization exams). There are currently five categories for specialization. If you're already a LEED AP, you can achieve your specialization through the LEED Credentialing process, or take the test.

Another good tidbit Ross shared was that all previous Credit Interpretation Requests and Rulings have been incorporated into LEED 2009, v. 3.0.

All good information - my thanks to Ross Spiegel for providing this updates and taking questions afterward, and to Jennifer Casedy for inviting me!

Submitted by Sheri Dieso, AIA, LEED AP