



## **OUTWARD BOUND**

### **Thompson Island**

Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center  
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Non-profit business  
20 full-time employees

RE: Annual Boston Green Business Awards Nomination

Dear Boston Green Business Awards Committee,

I respectfully nominate Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC) for the Annual Boston Green Business Award. The nomination is based on the organization's provision of environmental education and the implementation of sustainable practices and procedures.

Thompson Island Outward Bound is a not-for-profit organization whose primary purpose is to provide adventurous and challenging experiential learning programs that inspire character development, compassion, community service, **environmental responsibility** and academic achievement. Our organization principally serves early adolescents from all economic and social communities of greater metropolitan Boston, and the institutions and adults who support them.

TIOBEC is located on Thompson Island, the hub of youth environmental education for the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area. With 204 acres of mature forests, meadows, freshwater and marine wetlands, salt marshes and a variety of important geological features, Thompson Island is an ideal outdoor classroom for environmental education and encouraging youth to actively explore their impact on the environment.

#### **-ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION-**

Thompson Island has a long history of providing environmental education to the students of Greater Metropolitan Boston, dating back to the Boston Farm School founded in 1833. In 2009, over 4,000 students from more than 50 schools in greater Boston participated in programs with TIOBEC, including over 20 Boston Public Schools. Programs are co-delivered by uniformed National Park Service (NPS) rangers who serve as role models for those who have made a career as a professional steward of our environment. Participants are educated to address environmental issues and sustainable practices on Thompson Island and within their own communities. Preliminary evaluation indicates

that 80% of participating students will demonstrate an improved connectedness to their local environment, the Harbor Islands, and the natural world and there will be a positive change in student's sense of environmental responsibility and stewardship behavior.

In 2009, TIOBEC delivered multi-day, overnight environmental education programs that included more than three hundred and fifty (350) 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8th grade students from Boston. Students from these Boston Public Schools, including Mildred Ave, Rogers, Curley, McCormack and Harbor schools, became true stewards of the environment and champions of sustainability. Over multiple days, National Park Rangers and Outward Bound instructors led students through a sequence of activities that included: salt marsh restoration science and removal of invasive plant species; eliminating food waste through weighing and graphing food waste over time in the dining hall; education on the benefits of composting and creating a large island compost heap from student dining hall meals; seminars on "leave no trace" ethics and major beach clean-up efforts where flotsam was examined, sorted, weighed and graphed. Students left Thompson Island with a junior ranger badge after being sworn in by National Park Service personnel and, perhaps even more importantly, with the feeling that they had power to help preserve and sustain the environment through their own individual and community actions.

TIOBEC also delivers the Green Corps summer jobs program (GC), a workforce readiness program, in partnership with the *City of Boston Youth Fund* and the National Park Service. In 2009, Boston-area high school students participated in several projects and workshops that improved the environmental impact of Boston Harbor Islands and prepared students to compete for jobs in the burgeoning "Green Collar" workforce. Accomplishments included:

- Improved and weatherized camping shelters on the island so that students participating in TIOBEC programs would be more likely to camp rather than use the dormitories, thus reducing the housing load and associated carbon footprint.
- Removed several acres of invasive species by hand on Thompson Island and Peddocks Island to reduce the amount of harsh chemical herbicides used.
- Students also removed tons of recyclable material and waste from Thompson Island (see below).

### **-SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES-**

In 2008 the TIOBEC Operations Department created a strategic plan to improve and sustain the ecological state of the organization's campus and the island itself, as well as reducing the carbon footprint. A comprehensive audit of all natural resources and the influences that would harm those resources was completed. An environmental sustainability program was created and implemented in 2009 to mitigate the detrimental influences to the natural resources.

In 2009 this program included:

#### **Disposal of all the waste collected from the past years on the island.**

TIOBEC contracted with CYN Environmental to take all the potentially harmful fluids that had been collected and contained on the island to their recycling plant. From this point forward the organization will continue that association by removing all waste oil generated from the maintenance areas of vehicles and sea vessels. Minimum waste oil will be contained in drums awaiting pickup while adhering to all safety principles for hazardous waste.

Solid waste collected and removed from the island included 137 tires, 23 lead acid batteries, 4 railway barge rails, as well as over 300 bags of miscellaneous debris and trash collected by the students and volunteers. All of which had been left behind on the island from approximately 200 years of continuous use.

Goals in 2010 include the continuous enhancement of waste disposal procedures and vigilant removal of debris from the beach.

### **Strengthening the recycling program to reduce the waste stream.**

Throughout 2009 the TIOBEC recycling program reduced the landfill waste stream by 30% by containing and recycling office paper, cardboard, and scrap metal. This program was augmented by introducing City of Boston recycling bins at both of our events sites, as well as strategic locations across the island. The bins allowed the inclusion of plastic bottles and cups generated during the TIOBEC events and conferences season (~11,000 individuals served) into our recycling program. Therefore, we streamed an additional 30 tons of recyclable materials through the program.

Additionally, TIOBEC maintained a metal recycling dumpster where all operationally-recovered scrap metal and outdated or broken appliances are disposed. Metal items found on the beach were also disposed of in this manner. Since the start of 2009, six tons of metal have been removed from the island and recycled.

Goals in 2010 are to include *all* can and metal waste used in food preparation and consumption in the recycling program. Furthermore, we will develop and implement staff, student, and volunteer training to ensure island-wide participation and compliance with the recycling program.

### **Creating a composting system that will utilize all “yard waste”; leaves, felled trees, brush, and clippings, and introduce an education program highlighting food waste disposal.**

In 2008, TIOBEC cleared and resurrected a compost pit built by the Boston Farm & Trades School in 1923. In 2009, TIOBEC reused processed brush and limbs from trimmed trees to provide ground cushioning on island trails. Leaves and clippings were composted to provide planting material for landscaping throughout the campus. Food waste generated by the youth in our programs was added to the compost pit to provide bacterial generators necessary to break down plant material. In addition, sustainable food waste disposal and composting was incorporated into the TIOBEC educational curriculum, teaching students about reducing landfill-directed food waste.

Goals in 2010 include installing rain barrels throughout the campus to utilize collected rainwater to irrigate all plantings.

### **Corporate Volunteer Program.**

Preserving urban ecosystems is essential not only to Thompson Island’s programs locally, but to the overall environment. Thompson Island shelters astonishing levels of biodiversity – but managing more than 200 acres of wilderness is more than our three-person maintenance crew can handle. Volunteers are essential to ensuring the natural habitat of Thompson Island remains pristine and healthy so that it can continue to be the Island Classroom in which we educate and inspire Boston’s young people.

Each year over 600 employees from local companies help preserve and maintain the island. Corporate Volunteer Service Days are scheduled between May and September and volunteer groups range in size from 15 to more than 100.

**Diminish TIOBEC's overall carbon footprint by decreasing fuel and electricity used to support organizational programs and operations.**

As a result of consolidated ferry scheduling, TIOBEC reduced transportation fuel consumption from 3,488 gallons in FY08 to 2,736 gallons in FY09, a 22% reduction, while increasing participant and clients served by 2,497 individuals (+14%). The organization also reduced electricity kWh consumption from 461,720 kWh in FY08 to 430,920 kWh in FY09, a 7% reduction.

Goal in 2010 is to continue to efficiently manage fuel and electricity usage to further minimize TIOBEC's carbon footprint.

It is for these reasons that I believe Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center is a leading Green business and deserving of the Annual Boston Green Business Award. Not only is TIOBEC continuously implementing and enhancing environmentally sustainable practices, we are *teaching* the youth of Boston the same practices. There is a critical need for Boston youth to identify the local environment as their wilderness. TIOBEC is committed to creating the next generation of environmental stewards through example and the design and delivery of our educational programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Arthur Pearson  
Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center