



Science Barge floating farm gets decked out in new solar electric system



by Nicole Jewell, 10/11/16



The Science Barge is a fully functioning off-grid urban farm and environmental education center on the Hudson River that teaches students about the importance of sustainable urban agriculture. Now, thanks to a \$50,000 donation from Green Mountain Energy Sun Club, the barge will be outfitted with a new and improved solar electric system that will double the greenhouse's current power generation and storage.

The Science Barge earned the Omega Institute's prestigious "Leadership in Sustainable Education" award in 2014, and has since converted into a popular immersive STEM educational experience for students. The program teaches thousands of kids the ins and outs of urban agriculture in addition to subjects related to biodiversity, botany, carbon footprint, scientific method, and more.



Located at 99 Dock Street in Yonkers, the floating greenhouse grows tons of fresh produce with zero net carbon emissions, zero pesticides, and zero runoff. The garden's irrigation system is run on collected rainwater and purified river water.

Thanks to the Sun Club's large donation, the barge will now have a more efficient off-grid solar energy system to power its hydroponic farm. The grant will enable the boat to have 12 new LG solar panels that will produce a total of 3,420 watts, essentially doubling the vessel's current solar power and energy reserves.

“The Sun Club loves working with unique nonprofits, and the Science Barge is an excellent demonstration of renewable energy and environmental education,” said Mark Parsons, president of Green Mountain Energy Sun Club and general manager of Green Mountain Energy Company. “We’re proud to support the Science Barge by helping the sustainable urban farm operate completely off the grid.”

*Images via Science Barge and **Jim Henderson***