GameTime and Modern Mill Bring Sustainability to the Playground With ACRE

New partnership introduces innovative material made from upcycled rice hulls to create natural-looking, durable playground environments


Children play on a bird-shaped ACRE sculpture.

FT. PAYNE, AL, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- What do rice hulls have to do with playgrounds? Quite a lot, as it turns out.

GameTime is partnering with Modern Mill to introduce ACRE, an innovative wood-alternative material made from upcycled rice hulls, into a new generation of nature-inspired playground designs.

ACRE looks and feels like real wood, but it isn't wood at all. Made from an agricultural byproduct that might otherwise go to waste, the material gives designers a new way to bring the warmth, texture, and character of wood into playground environments while delivering the performance needed for years of outdoor play.

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>
> *Spencer Cheak, President, GameTime.*

"At GameTime, we're always looking for new ways to help communities create play spaces that feel connected to the places around them," said Spencer Cheak, President, GameTime. "Our partnership with Modern Mill gives designers an entirely new material to work with. ACRE has the natural character people want in nature-inspired spaces, along with the durability and design flexibility a playground demands. And the fact that it begins with something as simple as a rice hull makes the story even better."

GameTime uses ACRE across a range of playground

applications, including barriers, decks and platforms as well as imaginative EverForms ™ nature-themed forms. The material can be cut, shaped, fastened, painted and stained, giving designers considerable freedom to create environments that reflect a community's landscape, character or story. It is also water-resistant and designed to resist the cracking, chipping and splintering common to traditional wood in outdoor environments.

For Modern Mill, the partnership takes a material already used in decking, siding, trim, and other architectural applications somewhere decidedly more playful.

"We created ACRE because we believed there was a better way to achieve the beauty and versatility of wood," said Chris Guimond, CEO of Modern Mill. "Seeing GameTime take that material and turn it into places where children climb, explore, imagine, and connect is an exciting extension of what ACRE can do. Both of our companies care deeply about innovation, sustainability and creating products that perform for the long term, so this partnership is a natural fit."

Play Is in Our Nature
The introduction of ACRE builds on GameTime's decades-long commitment to connecting children with nature through play.

GameTime's approach to nature-inspired playgrounds goes beyond making playground equipment look like trees, rocks, or animals. The company works with communities to create environments that encourage climbing, balancing, exploration, storytelling and discovery while reflecting the landscapes and identities of the places they serve.

ACRE adds a new dimension to that approach. Its natural grain and tactile quality let designers bring wood-like warmth to playground systems and larger-than-life sculptural features, while its workability opens the door to custom shapes, finishes, and details.

In other words, a playground can look a little more like it grew there without actually growing there.

The partnership also represents the latest chapter in GameTime's long-standing sustainability efforts. GameTime achieved ISO 14001 certification for environmental management in 2008, introduced recycled plastic lumber in 2012, and became the first playground manufacturer to join the U.S. Green Building Council in 2020. Its work with PlayCore on NatureGrounds and Pathways for Play has also helped communities explore research-informed ways to connect play environments with nature, trails, and green spaces.

ACRE is manufactured by Modern Mill in Mississippi using upcycled rice hulls sourced as an agricultural byproduct. Modern Mill developed the material as a long-lasting alternative to traditional wood for outdoor applications.

"Nature has always been one of children's greatest invitations to play," added Fred Wiechmann, GameTime Vice President of Marketing and Product Development. "The partnership with Modern Mill gives us another way to honor that connection while continuing to rethink the materials and experiences we can bring to communities. We can't wait to see what designers, and the kids who ultimately play in these spaces, do with it."

To learn more about ACRE by Modern Mill and its use in GameTime playgrounds, visit https://www.gametime.com/acre-playground-material To explore GameTime's broader approach to nature-inspired play, visit https://www.gametime.com/nature

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