



# Center for Responsible Travel

*Transforming the Way the World Travels*

Stanford University & Washington, DC

[www.responsibletravel.org](http://www.responsibletravel.org)

## Project Fact Sheet: Innovators in Coastal Tourism Development

Over the last decade, the rapid pace of resort and vacation home developments, particularly along coastlines and on islands within a day's reach of the North American market, has contributed to a variety of environmental and social problems. This powerful development phenomenon is destroying critical habitat for myriad endemic species and drastically altering countless local communities.

Through our research and field projects on coastal and cruise tourism, however, Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) has identified a growing number of developers, hoteliers, financiers, architects, and others tourism executives who are on the cutting edge of green design and social responsibility. CREST realized that this small, scattered group of entrepreneurs has the potential to form a powerful bloc within the industry, and that they have an interest in spreading the responsible practices they've been pioneering. In the words of one such innovator "we don't want to be islands of sustainability in our destination, surrounded by a sea of wasteful development".

In order to disseminate innovative 'green' practices and generate a cohesive force out of the entrepreneurs we had identified, CREST partnered with the Stanford University Graduate School of Business to organize the first-ever Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism Development. The symposium, held January 20-22 2010 at Stanford University, brought together 85 'thought-leaders' and pioneers who are breaking the mold of cookie-cutter hotels and vacation homes, and forging new, sustainable, approaches to coastal tourism development. Attendees included executives behind the development of responsible resorts, vacation homes, marinas, golf courses, and other tourism facilities and activities.



Together with Stanford faculty and a range of other experts, they explored ways to overcome the barriers that are preventing sustainable design from becoming standard practice. Particular attention was paid to innovations in green finance, and the impacts of both climate change and the global economic crisis on coastal tourism projects. A variety of developments were presented as sustainable alternative models to the gated, all-inclusive beach resorts that today dot coastlines throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, and we met our objective of creating cohesion and momentum to drive change from within the industry.

A powerful group of representatives from the tourism and conservation sectors in Mexico attended the symposium, and they were particularly keen to learn and spread good models of coastal tourism development. Momentum is building for a second symposium to be organized by CREST and held in Mexico in 2011.

For more details about CREST's engagement with coastal tourism innovators, contact David Krantz: [dkrantz@responsibletravel.org](mailto:dkrantz@responsibletravel.org) or 202-347-9203, ext 417.

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