THE CREST VISION: “Transforming the Way the World Travels”

The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) is a unique policy-oriented research organization dedicated to increasing the positive global impact of responsible tourism. CREST assists governments, policy makers, tourism businesses, nonprofit organizations, and international agencies with finding solutions to critical issues confronting tourism, the world’s largest service industry. CREST provides interdisciplinary analysis and innovative solutions through research, field projects, publications, consultancies, conferences, courses, and documentary films. Recognizing tourism’s potential as a tool for poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation, CREST’s mission is “to promote responsible tourism policies and practices so that local communities may thrive and steward their cultural resources and biodiversity.”

HOW THE CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL (CREST) BEGAN

Originally known as the Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD), CREST was co-founded in 2003 by Dr. William (Bill) Durham and Dr. Martha Honey as a bi-coastal institute, with offices at Stanford University and in Washington, D.C. Durham was then a highly respected professor of anthropology at Stanford and MacArthur “genius” fellow. Honey, a former journalist, is an author and internationally recognized authority on responsible travel who was named one of the world’s top-10 eco-travel “watchdogs” by Condé Nast Traveler. They first conceived of CESD during the United Nations’ International Year of Ecotourism in 2002, when Stanford hosted a conference for ecotourism thought leaders and professionals working in Latin America.

After a few years of growth, CESD changed its name to the Center for Responsible Travel and became an independent, nonprofit organization registered as a 501(c)(3), with its own board of directors. In 2015, Durham retired as CREST co-director and Honey became executive director. Its headquarters is now located in Washington, D.C., but CREST works with a network of Academic Affiliates, or professorial collaborators, in a select number of U.S. and international universities.
International travel is the world’s largest service industry and one of its biggest employers, providing one in every 10 jobs globally, according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). This means it’s a potential lifeline for some of the world’s poorest communities. “Potential” because, as the primary foreign-exchange generator in 83 percent of developing countries, tourism continues to grow annually, even during economic downturns. In 2012, international tourism arrivals surpassed 1 billion for the first time and exceeded 1.3 billion in 2017, according to the UNWTO, which projects that number to reach 1.8 billion by 2030.

But, today, many destinations are negatively impacted by irresponsible tourism—tourism that fails to stimulate local economies or preserve a destination’s culture and/or environment. One reason is that the tourism industry, despite its size and importance, has suffered from a lack of thoughtful scrutiny and attention—both in public debate and in cutting-edge research and analysis. As Michael Caruso, editor-in-chief of Smithsonian, wrote in the magazine’s 2013 travel issue: “Tourism has become one of the most powerful, most influential and least-examined forces in the world.”

There is hope, however. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the concept of responsible travel emerged, and its proponents challenged the ways in which conventional tourism operates and created the principals and tools to make tourism a force for good. What today is known by a number of names—most commonly, “ecotourism” or “sustainable tourism”—demonstrates that, if developed responsibly, tourism can help reduce poverty, foster cultural understanding, educate travelers, and provide economic benefits to local communities and indigenous peoples.

The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) was founded to help move these efforts forward by providing cutting-edge analyses of the tourism industry and offering innovative, sustainable solutions. As an interdisciplinary institute, CREST stands alone, having built an international network of highly-trained experts proficient in a wide range of topics including: tourism best practices, indigenous rights, eco-certification, cruise tourism, travelers’ philanthropy, sustainable-destination management, tools for financing projects, and cost-benefit analyses of different types of tourism.

WHERE WE’RE GOING

In recent years, CREST has also deepened its focus on climate change and the Caribbean, as well as on coastal, island, and marine tourism, which are the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry. The rapid pace of resort and vacation-home developments along coastlines and on islands, and the aggressive expansion of cruise tourism, with ever bigger vessels and new ports-of-call, is contributing to a range of critical environmental and social challenges.

Responsible travel is no longer the goal of ecotourism alone; it must be embraced by the entire travel industry. In this era of climate change, responsible travel is not an option, it is an imperative. Given these realities, CREST remains committed to its original tagline: “Transforming the way the world travels.”

The following is a summary of CREST’s major projects and publications over the years.
CREST MILESTONES
2017

Throughout the year, CREST co-published four books on coastal and marine tourism in the Caribbean, offering a wide range of content provided by more than 60 expert contributors. The books look closely at the effects specific types of tourism-related activities—everything from golf to sport fishing to cruise ships—have on destinations and their environments in the context of climate change and, through case studies, offer solutions to some of the biggest challenges. Co-published by Business Expert Press, the books are divided into two general subject areas: Coastal Tourism, Sustainability, and Climate Change in the Caribbean, Vols. 1-2; and Marine Tourism, Climate Change, and Resilience in the Caribbean, Vols. 1-2.

2017 was a big year for CREST’s ongoing work in Cuba, where, in 2014, the doors permitting U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba were reopened after a normalization of relations established by then presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama. The summaries below cover aspects of that work.

The year certainly got off on the right foot. In January, CREST led its third Charter Club Trip to the island in partnership with the tour provider Cuba Educational Travel (CET). Fifteen travelers participated in the small-group experiential learning trip, visiting Havana, Trinidad, Cienfuegos, and Zapata Swamp.

Then, in February, CREST was invited by university officials in Cuba’s Pinar del Rio province to assist in organizing a workshop on sustainable tourism by identifying a roster of international experts to speak, providing support for Cuban speakers, assisting with organizing the event, and covering the costs of other components. With backing from the Ford and Christopher Reynolds Foundations, CREST completed all of these tasks successfully and even arranged for CET to organize a pre-conference educational tour of Viñales and a closing visit to La Moka Ecolodge and the adjacent community of Las Terrazas, Cuba’s oldest and most successful ecotourism experiment.

The event, the 2nd International Congress on Marketing, Local Development and Tourism (MARDELTUR), took place in mid-June, and the timing turned out to be auspicious for a few reasons. Given the UN’s declaration of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, CREST arranged to have MARDELTUR 2017 listed as an officially recognized event of the International Year. In addition, CREST was invited...
to collaborate with two universities to create a new research project on sustainable tourism in Pinar del Rio and Holguín provinces. As Carlos Cesar, president of the MARDELTUR 2017 organizing committee, noted during the event, **sustainable tourism is now a priority for Cuba.** “Cuba,” Dr. Cesar said, “has the potential to develop a tourism based on its rich natural and cultural resources, and to promote an authentic and distinctive form of tourism.” In other words, he added, Cuba can “cultivate high-value and not just high-volume tourism.”

In July, CREST presented key findings from its year-plus study *Cruise Tourism: Lessons Learned from Other Destinations*, at a workshop in Havana hosted by *Temas*, Cuba’s leading magazine on cultural and social issues. The study’s four key authors, including CREST’s executive director, Martha Honey, gave presentations on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of cruise tourism and concluded with a set of recommendations to be considered by Cuban policy makers. The workshop was extremely well-received, with Rafael Hernandez, *Temas*’ editor, calling it a “a game-changer.” *Temas* plans to publish the study as an e-book in Spanish, and CREST is working with a U.S. publisher to produce an edition in English tailored to a broader audience. The study has been supported with grants from the Ford and Christopher Reynolds Foundations.

CREST’s Cuba work has also increasingly involved **advocacy efforts in the United States**—prompted by recent U.S. policy reversals. On June 16, President Trump announced new policy directives that immediately banned individual people-to-people excursions for U.S. citizens and set in motion a string of changes further restricting travel to Cuba while fomenting both fear and misunderstanding.

In September, the United States withdrew 60 percent of staff from the U.S. Embassy in Havana due to unidentified health incidents reportedly affecting 24 Embassy employees and family members and ordered Cuban diplomats to leave their Embassy in Washington. The drawdown of the U.S. Embassy immediately prompted a **U.S. State Department Travel Warning**, throwing travel to Cuba into turmoil as U.S. citizens wondered whether it was both safe and legal to go there.

In response, CREST spearheaded the formation of a coalition of U.S. tour providers and NGOs involved in travel to Cuba. Our work kicked off its “Stay the Course” public awareness campaign with a press conference aboard the 130-foot schooner *Harvey Gamage*, which had docked in Washington, D.C., and was due to take gap-year students for an educational voyage to Cuba. CREST later put together a Cuba travel
advocacy webpage and, in collaboration with coalition partners, created an advocacy toolkit for those who want to help promote travel to Cuba, which is still safe and legal under restrictions set forth by the Trump administration in early November.

The core of the coalition’s argument is that, while 24 U.S. Embassy employees did indeed suffer health problems—whose cause remains unknown—there were no reports confirming that similar health symptoms afflicted the 4.7 million foreign visitors, including 620,000 Americans, who traveled to Cuba in 2017. The coalition’s end goal is to convince the U.S. Congress and, eventually, the Trump administration to rescind the latest restrictions, including the new travel advisories, so that the United States and Cuba can return to a normalization of relations.

On Sept. 27, World Tourism Day, CREST and UN Environment-North America Office co-hosted an extremely successful full-day forum recognizing the UN’s International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in Washington, D.C. More than 140 invited guests gathered to hear presentations from travel-industry experts from all over the Americas, with topics covering the International Year’s five “pillars”: social inclusiveness, employment, and poverty reduction; inclusive and sustainable economic growth; resource efficiency, environmental protection, and climate change; cultural values, diversity, and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace, and security. Aside from creating a website that provides summations of the presentations, CREST also shared a “Directory of Sustainable Tourism Initiatives & Resources” with its guests, as well as a special edition of CREST’s annual publication, “The Case for Responsible Travel: Trends & Statistics,” which focuses in 2017 on the UN’s five pillars and features a record 25 partnering tourism organizations and institutions. CREST plans to co-host a forum on World Tourism Day in 2018, the theme this time being “overtourism.”

CREST is the lead in organizing the SIFT, or Sustainable Investment and Finance in Tourism, network, with the goal to create a “one-stop shop” network of public and private institutions interested in investing in sustainable tourism. There’s also a plan to create a special fund with the capacity to invest in energy and water efficiency upgrades for accommodations. CREST, with help from experts in finance and renewable energy, is currently developing a business plan
for the SIFT enterprise and systematically exploring financial and operational partners as well as potential clients, with a primary focus on the hotel sector in the Caribbean.

Throughout 2017, CREST’s ongoing effort to facilitate sustainable tourism in Chihuahua, Mexico, resulted in the launch of the indigenous tourism business Experiencias Turísticas Rarámuri. In late October, CREST and its partner organization, Mano del Mono, traveled to the region to prepare and host a familiarization, or FAM, trip of Rarámuri community-based tourism offerings for local tour guides and operators. More than 20 operators and guides from Creel, Chihuahua, participated and said they’re interested in selling the experiences offered, as they are unique and of great interest to visitors. Following the FAM trip’s success, Experiencias Turísticas Rarámuri officially opened to the public in December. It offers four authentic activities, all operated by local residents: cooking, crafting, hiking trails in breathtaking Copper Canyon; and indigenous games-playing.

Also in December, CREST completed a year-long project in Tigrai province, Ethiopia. Commissioned by the Tigrai Culture and Tourism Bureau, two CREST experts undertook an analysis of the ancient rock-hewn churches and their wall paintings in the Wukro-Gheralta region. This marks the first steps in the process to include the churches on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. The project is also part of a multi-year effort to improve and increase international tourism in the region, where the Ethiopian Orthodox churches were built between the 4th and 15th centuries. The CREST consultants produced detailed reports based on their field work analyzing 17 churches, including the state of the buildings and their wall paintings and the conservation steps necessary for their ongoing protection.

While the Wukro-Gheralta churches are among the least-known of Ethiopia’s major monuments, tourism has been increasing and is expected to grow considerably with World Heritage status. As part of an earlier consultancy, CREST developed the first detailed English-language tourism map for the Wukro-Gheralta churches and other attractions in the region.
CREST MILESTONES

2016

2016 marked the 2nd year of CREST’s ongoing project Protecting Bio-Cultural Diversity through Community-Based Tourism in the Sierra Tarahumara, which assists local communities in developing indigenous and experiential tourism in Chihuahua, Mexico. Throughout the year, CREST project leader Ximena Alvis conducted workshops for the communities of Bacajipare and Huitosachi, with local NGO partners CONTEC and Mano del Mono. Workshops focused on creating “tourism experiences” for visitors to showcase Tarahumara cooking, handicrafts, eco-trails, ball games, and culture (including in the local museum). Ximena’s efforts focused particularly on training a group of women in how to run a community-based kitchen in Huitosachi. This project, funded by the Christensen Fund, with support from the state tourism office, began in early 2015 and is expected to continue through 2018. Starting in 2017, familiarization trips will test the various tourism experiences.

The latest edition of CREST’s annual study, The Case for Responsible Travel: Trends and Statistics 2016, was released in April, in collaboration with 16 leading international organizations and academic affiliates. In addition to the standard format, the newest release features six niche tourism markets, exploring sustainability in each emerging segment. The report reveals that demand for responsible tourism continues to outpace growth of the tourism industry as a whole, and each niche market serves to strengthen and diversify the breadth of responsible travel.

CREST officially launched its newest film, Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel: Your Choices Make a Difference, premiering at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., in late April. The 45-minute film offers vignettes of socially and environmentally responsible tourism businesses on four islands: Aruba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Jamaica. The film was then showcased at a Sustainable Tourism Conference in Havana, Cuba, and as a part of Grenada’s Blue Week Investment Forum in May. The film has been primarily marketed to academics and tourism businesses and associations, accompanied by a detailed Study Guide to assist teachers using the film. The Study Guide, in English and Spanish, is free. The English and Spanish versions of Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel can be downloaded for a small fee through CREST’s website.

CREST hosted two Charter Club Trips to Cuba in 2016, one in January and a second in May. Both trips accommodated small groups of responsible travelers interested in the unique natural and cultural tourism offerings of the island through people-to-people exchanges. CREST’s Charter Club trips, organized with tour operator Cuba Educational Travel (CET), offer participants authentic, educational experiences spanning multiple cities and a wide range of attractions.
In September, CREST, together with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), completed a *Destination-Wide Assessment of Five Municipalities in the Southern Part of the Sinaloa State, Mexico*. For the past six years, CREST has been involved in this project, which was designed to create a sustainable and competitive tourism corridor in Southern Sinaloa. The findings were presented in Sinaloa in late September, along with next steps including creating an Action Plan, establishing a Destination Management Organization for Southern Sinaloa, and developing a Strategic Plan for tourism development in the region.

CREST’s work towards *Sustainable Tourism in Cuba* developed steadily in 2016, with support from the Ford and Reynolds foundations. CREST and a team of researchers are conducting an in-depth study of cruise tourism and “lessons learned” from other Caribbean destinations regarding the environmental, social, and economic impacts of cruise tourism. The first presentation of the work, during a forum at the Ludwig Institute in Havana in October, was attended by 80 invited academics, architects, government officials, tourism specialists, and others. CREST also became a supporting institution of the recently established *Research Initiative for the Sustainable Development of Cuba (RISDoC)*, and has joined the RESPECT initiative for Responsible and Ethical Cuba Travel.

In 2016, CREST launched three internal programs of note. In February, the *Platinum Sponsors* program began with six exemplary inductees: Soneva Resorts, Residences, and Spas; Micato Safaris; Island Outpost; Hotel El Ganzo; Basecamp Explorer; and Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort. These companies are recognized leaders in sustainability and community involvement in the travel industry and have committed to supporting CREST through fundraising travel auctions for the next five years. In March, CREST released a new, *user-friendly website* to better serve our audiences, based on feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. And, in September, the *Academic Affiliates* program officially launched with 20 inaugural members from all over the world, who are professors studying topics related to responsible travel. CREST plans to partner with these Affiliates on conferences, publications, research, study tours, and internships.

In lieu of a conference in 2016, CREST continued editorial work on four volumes it is co-publishing with Business Expert Press: *Coastal Tourism, Sustainability, and Climate Change in the Caribbean (Vols. 1 & 2)* and *Marine Tourism, Climate Change, and Resilience in the Caribbean (Vols. 1 & 2)*. The volumes contain a wide range of rich content by some three dozen expert contributors, with planned release in 2017.
CREST MILESTONES
2015

The latest edition of CREST’s popular annual study, *The Case for Responsible Travel: Trends and Statistics 2015*, was released in April, with the endorsement of 11 leading tourism organizations including the UNEP and Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The publication, based on surveys, polls, and studies over the last five years, found continuing interest in responsible tourism among travelers, tourism companies, and destinations, with, according to TripAdvisor, 91% of businesses stating that operating in an eco-friendly manner is important.

In June, CREST released a study, *Market Analysis of Bird-Based Tourism: A Focus on the U.S. Market to Latin American and the Caribbean*, which analyzes bird-based tourism market statistics and presents the economic value of bird tourism in four countries: Belize, Guatemala, The Bahamas, and Paraguay. This study, together with a series of fact sheets, was commissioned by the National Audubon Society and financed by the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), a member of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

In July, CREST and its partner, Puntacana Ecological Foundation, hosted the first *Innovators Think Tank on Climate Change and Coastal & Marine Tourism* in Puntacana, Dominican Republic. The invitation-only gathering brought together 33 experts, including leaders in sustainable tourism and/or climate change analysts from the Caribbean and North America. The symposium focused on a single critical theme of how coastal and marine tourism must be planned, built, and operated in the era of climate change.

In September, CREST signed a contract with Business Express Press to publish two edited volumes: *Coastal Tourism, Sustainability, and Climate Change in the Caribbean* and *Marine Tourism, Climate Change, and Resilience in the Caribbean*. These volumes build on the Puntacana Think Tank proceedings and include essays and case studies by dozens of experts. The twin volumes will be published in 2017.

CREST completed a second round of trainings on *Linkages between Climate Change and Tourism in Grenada* in May. This training attracted 30 participants with the goal of training locals on the relationship between climate change and tourism. This project grew out of CREST’s 3rd Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism, held in Grenada in 2014, and was financed by GIZ.

CREST worked with the Grenada Hotel & Tourism Association (GHTA) to develop a *Destination-Wide Travelers’ Philanthropy Program for Grenada*, to strengthen and diversify the GHTA’s tourism marketing tools and strategies. As part of the project, CREST facilitated a learning exchange for five tourism officials from Grenada to visit Monteverde, Costa Rica to see and learn firsthand from their successful travelers’ philanthropy fund, known as the Monteverde Community Fund.
In September, CREST and the Mexican NGO Mano del Mono, together with partners in Chihuahua state, held successful workshops with indigenous communities as part of its two-year project, Protecting Bio-Cultural Diversity through Community-Based Tourism in the Sierra Tarahumara. The project, funded by the Christensen Foundation, is designed to develop tourism circuits to showcase certain cultural and natural attractions of several Raramuri communities living in or on the rim of Copper Canyon.

In late September, CREST and its Mexican partner, Sustenta, concluded their Strategic Plan for Ecotourism in Guerrero, Mexico, which was financed by the state government. The project, involving teams of experts from CREST and Sustenta, delivered two products: A Strategic Ecotourism Plan for Guerrero and an inspiring photo book depicting Guerrero’s many cultural and natural attractions.

CREST officially launched the next phrase of its Sinaloa Sur Initiative for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism, which is carrying out an assessment of five southern municipalities in the state. This destination-wide assessment is based on the UNWTO-backed GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) indicators and methodology as part of the process to establish the tools for building sustainable and competitive tourism in southern Sinaloa. CREST is working with the state business council, CODESIN, and the leading environmental organization, Conselva.

After a period of insightful field work, CREST produced a high quality English language route guide and map for the spectacular Wukro-Gheralta Rock Hewn Churches and other cultural attractions in Tigrai province, Ethiopia. This consultancy was part of the European Development Fund’s project Preserving and Promoting Tigrai’s Cultural Heritage for Development, which aims to promote Tigrai’s rich cultural heritage to the international market, in order to help increase jobs and local livelihoods.

For much of the year, CREST was involved in producing its latest documentary film, Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel: Your Choices Make a Difference. This 45-minute film depicts examples of socially and environmentally responsible tourism companies in four countries: Grenada, Jamaica, Aruba, and the Dominican Republic. Shot by Jamaican filmmaker Esther Figueroa and edited by videographer Richard Krantz, the semi-final version of the film was completed in December, with plans to release the finished documentary in 2016.
CREST released a nine-month study, *Economic Impact of Bear Viewing and Bear Hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia* which finds that bear viewing tourism generates 12 times more in visitor spending than trophy bear hunting. First Nations peoples living in the Canada’s magnificent Great Bear Rainforest have called for a ban on bear hunting, while the British Columbia government continues to issue hunting licenses. An article based on the study is being published in the scholarly academic publication, *Journal of Ecotourism*.

CREST published the 2nd annual edition of its popular factsheet, *Responsible Travel Industry: Trends and Statistics 2014* which reviews a wide range of surveys and studies done in the past 5 years. Released in March, “Trends and Statistics” was endorsed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, Global Sustainable Tourism Council, and eight other leading tourism organizations.

In July, CREST hosted the 3rd Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism in St. George’s, Grenada, together with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Grenada government, and private sector tourism association. Some 150 delegates attended the content-rich event whose program, organized by CREST, included some 50 speakers, 14 workshops, and 4 plenary sessions. Inspired by the Symposium, Grenada’s government and tourism leaders have stepped up their goal of becoming a top leader of responsible tourism in the Caribbean, under the banner of Pure Grenada.

In August, CREST concluded phase 2 of the *Sinaloa Sur Initiative for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism* designed to preserve critical wetlands and cultural heritage in Southern Sinaloa state, Mexico. CREST is working with a coalition of business leaders, government officials, and environmental and community activists to chart a course for responsible coastal tourism development in this fragile area.

In October, CREST’s documentary *The Goose with the Golden Eggs: Tourism on Costa Rica’s Pacific Coast*, was shown to government and tourism leaders at a forum in Costa Rica’s Legislative Assembly in San Jose. The high profile event, which was organized and hosted by the Vice President of the Legislative Assembly together with Fundación Corcorvado and CREST, was attended by some 100 invited guests and included a panel discussion about what types of tourism are most appropriate in Costa Rica. In March, the film was accepted into and shown at the juried Environmental Film Festival in Washington, DC.
CREST’s documentary, *The Goose with the Golden Eggs: Tourism on Costa Rica’s Pacific Coast* was completed and released. Produced in English and Spanish and in partnership with Fundación Corcovado, this educational film supersedes an earlier version and features Costa Rica’s former First Lady and Parliamentarian, Margarita Penon. The film, which examines the impacts of large-scale resort and vacation home developments in Guanacaste, is intended to stimulate informed debate about what types of tourism are most appropriate, particularly in Costa Rica’s biodiversity-rich Osa Peninsula. It is being used by community groups, government agencies, tourism associations and businesses, NGOs, schools, and other institutions in Costa Rica and elsewhere.

CREST released its 1st edition of *Responsible Travel Industry: Trends and Statistics 2013* which makes a case for why responsible travel should be a priority for consumers, businesses, and destinations. This widely-used publication which is endorsed by a number of leading international tourism organizations, examines scores of surveys and studies done in the past five years to assess the strengths of the responsible travel market.

CREST hosted the 2nd Executive Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism in Los Cabos, Mexico. Over 140 participants attended, representing innovators currently involved in designing, financing, constructing, and operating socially and environmentally sustainable coastal tourism developments, as well as potential adopters.

CREST released *Balancing Sustainable Tourism & Commercial Fishing in a Marine Protected Area, Turneffe Atoll, Belize*. Based on six months of field and desk-based research, this report examines key issues facing the new 325,000 acre Marine Reserve and the Reserve’s two main economic sectors: commercial fishing and tourism.
CREST, together with the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), researched and produced *The Contribution of Animal Welfare and Sustainable Tourism to Sustainable Development*, a handbook of case studies drawn from an animal welfare conference in Costa Rica. The publication is a part of a greater toolkit for communities to integrate animal welfare strategically into sustainable tourism.

CREST experts helped the small Sicilian city of Agrigento and its neighboring Valley of the Temples, an extraordinary ancient Greek monument and World Heritage Site, to strengthen and expand its responsible tourism products. CREST was commissioned by the city’s leading industrialist to put together a feasibility study and development plan, *Agrigento: 2020 Vision*. The plan identifies ways to increase visitor spending and length of stay by linking the World Heritage Site to natural, archeological, cultural, culinary, literary, handicraft, and fine arts attractions in the surrounding towns and countryside. CREST presented its *2020 Vision* at a series of public events in Agrigento.

CREST released a new report, *Alternative Development Models and Good Practices for Sustainable Coastal Tourism: A Framework for Decision Makers in Mexico*, based on several years of research and work with a coalition of NGOs in Mexico. The study’s findings, which demonstrate that large-scale resorts can be developed in a responsible manner, were presented to national tourism authorities and business leaders in Northwest Mexico to help inform their development decisions.

Directed by a past CREST volunteer, Jill Talladay, *CARE for the Cape & Islands* was launched as a destination-wide travelers’ philanthropy program in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. With advice and institutional support from CREST, CARE is seeking to create opportunities for visitors to donate their ‘time, talent, and treasure’ to support local organizations working to preserve and protect the exquisite natural beauty, wildlife habitats, and history of the Cape.

CREST partnered with responsible small-ship company Ecoventura to host a *Charter Club Trip* exploring the flora, fauna, landscapes, and history of Darwin’s Enchanted Isles. Led by CREST Co-Director and Galapagos expert Bill Durham, the trip included visits to a half dozen islands and the Charles Darwin Research Station.
CREST published the *Travelers’ Philanthropy Handbook*, a first comprehensive, practical manual designed for businesses, communities, and travelers. The 250-page *Handbook* includes original essays, case studies, and surveys by some 30 experts, plus a Foreword by Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr. Wangari Maathai. The *Handbook*, along with CREST’s documentary film on travelers’ philanthropy, is a valuable tool designed to strengthen and professionalize travelers’ philanthropy initiatives around the world.

CREST’s Stanford office completed its field project and study, *The Importance of Ecotourism as a Development and Conservation Tool in the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica*. Based on surveys, key findings include that tourists visiting the Osa Peninsula express a willingness to contribute on average $68 to local community and conservation projects (travelers’ philanthropy), that tourism workers’ monthly income is twice as high as those of workers not in tourism, and that Osa residents have an overwhelming positive attitude towards Corcovado and other national parks. This apparent shift in local residents’ historically negative attitudes towards the parks appears linked to the positive benefits from the growth of ecotourism. An academic article based on CREST’s study was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.

CREST played a major role in a *third conference on indigenous community-based tourism* held in Mexico’s Chihuahua state. The conference’s purpose was to discuss formation of a regional indigenous tourism network for collective marketing and planning in order to help bring greater benefits from tourism. This was the capstone component of CREST’s ongoing indigenous tourism project which was directed by our Stanford office.

CREST’s Travelers’ Philanthropy program was named the *designated charity for the 2011 Zumba Instructors Convention* in Orlando, FL. At the event, CREST raised over $25,000 for health care in Central America and girls’ education in Africa.

CREST organized the *3rd International Travelers’ Philanthropy Conference: A Core Component of Responsible Travel* in Costa Rica, in partnership with the Monteverde Institute. Some 120 participants from 20 countries attended the four-day, how-to meeting which opened in San Jose and then moved to Monteverde. Conference proceedings were published to provide learning opportunities for others interested in travelers’ philanthropy initiatives.

CREST and Fundación Corcovado carried out a *field project to assess interest in creating a destination-wide travelers’ philanthropy program for the Osa Peninsula*. In a series of workshops, experts from the two organizations trained over 100 tourism and community leaders on the concepts of travelers’ philanthropy. However, the project concluded that, unlike Monteverde which is a smaller and more homogeneous community, in Osa it will be necessary to build such an initiative slowly and to take into account the area’s sub-regions.
CREST hosted the first Symposium for Innovators in Coastal Tourism, entitled Rethinking Coastal Tourism Development: The Importance of Innovators in Times of Climate Change & Economic Crisis, at Stanford University. Some 85 tourism executives and experts attended, including featured guest Chris Blackwell, founder and owner of Island Records and Island Outpost Resorts, Jamaica.

CREST completed the two-year analysis of coastal tourism in Costa Rica which included over 20 individual publications written by 15 U.S. and Costa Rican experts. A summary report (in English and Spanish), The Impact of Tourism Related Development on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, with policy recommendations, was presented to Costa Rica’s Tourism Minister and Vice President, released at a press conference in San Jose, and presented at a public forum at the World Bank, in Washington, DC.

CREST’s Stanford office organized and hosted in Chiapas, Mexico the 2nd international conference of the INTIRUNA network of indigenous ecotourism operators. The network seeks to strengthen the capacity of indigenous communities to use tourism as a tool to sustain and enhance culture and protect the environment.

Spearheaded by its Stanford University staff, CREST launched a multi-year project designed to assess and strengthen ecotourism in Costa Rica’s Osa Peninsula. Research began with a 10-person team of Stanford and Costa Rica students and CREST staff who conducted 250 interviews with tourists, lodge owners and staff, opinion leaders, and residents in the Osa.

In Marismas Nacionales, a Ramsar wetlands site in Sinaloa, Mexico, CREST began a partnership with local NGOs to assess the impacts of a massive new resort and vacation home development being undertaken by FONATUR, the Mexican government tourism development agency. CREST proposed a detailed set of economically viable and environmentally and socially sustainable alternatives.

CREST and the Monteverde Institute launched the first-ever destination-wide Travelers’ Philanthropy program in Monteverde, Costa Rica. Businesses, travelers, and NGO’s came together to “leave more than just a foot print”, supporting environmental and social/cultural projects with visitor donations collected at hotels, restaurants, and gift shops. The Monteverde program serves as a model for other destinations hoping to harness travel giving for the betterment of local communities.

The scholarly publication, Journal of Ecotourism published Social and Environmental Effects of Ecotourism in the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica: The Lapa Rios Case by CREST Co-Director William Durham, and two Stanford graduate students, Angelica Almeyda Zambrano and Eben Broadbent. Based on field analysis, the study concludes that Lapa Rios ecolodge “fulfills the definitional promise of ecotourism and delivers social, economic, and environmental benefits to the region.”
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Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD) is renamed and rebranded as the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST).

CREST was commissioned by the Netherlands Development Agency (SNV) to research and write The Market for Responsible Tourism Products with a special focus on Latin America and Nepal. In the report, which was published in English and Spanish, CREST offered marketing recommendations to tourism businesses in Nepal and six Latin American countries.

CREST published the Dos and Don’ts of Travel Giving and a DVD of the Proceedings of the 2008 Traveler’s Philanthropy Conference as tools to help tourism businesses and travelers engage in responsible giving programs.

CREST was commissioned by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to develop the concept paper and business plan for the SIFT (Sustainable Investment and Finance in Tourism) Network, designed to increase the flow of public and private funds into sustainable tourism projects in developing countries.

2008

A large team of CREST researchers, from the U.S. and Costa Rica, began a major research project to assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts of different models of tourism along Costa Rica’s Pacific Coast.


CREST launched a new Traveler’s Philanthropy website, with an Experts Bureau and a secure portal with capacity to solicit donations for community projects that are supported by our partner companies.

CREST helped to improve the effectiveness of travel giving in Africa by organizing the 2nd International Travelers’ Philanthropy Conference in Arusha, Tanzania, for 230 delegates. Keynotes speakers included Nobel peace laureate Wangari Maathai.

CREST commissioned two Stanford graduate school film students (Charlene Music and Peter Jordan) to make the first ever film about travelers’ philanthropy. The documentary, “Travelers’ Philanthropy: Giving Time, Talent, and Treasure” looks at a range of travelers’ philanthropy initiatives in Kenya, Tanzania, and Costa Rica. It was premiered at the Tanzania conference.

CREST Co-Directors hosted two private Charter Club Trips: in January, to a leading eco-lodge in The Bahamas and in December, to award-winning safari camps in Tanzania’s northern game parks.
2006

At a press conference in Belize, CREST and its Belizean partners presented the key findings from the study, *Cruise Tourism in Belize: Perceptions of Economic, Social, & Environmental Impact*, which is based on field work by CREST and Belizean researchers. An academic version of this report is included in the book, *Economics of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* and the study’s findings have been widely cited in various publications.

Teams of CREST researchers conducted extensive field research on the impacts of cruise tourism in Costa Rica and Honduras to help shape policy recommendations for government and the tourism industry.

CREST, through its Stanford office, organized and facilitated a small conference in Quito, Ecuador, of indigenous people in the Americas who are involved in ecotourism. This catalyzed the formation of INTIRUNA, the first indigenous ecotourism network in the Americas.

CREST Co-Directors led the organization’s first private Charter Club Trip that showcased two premier eco-lodges in Costa Rica, Finca Rosa Blanca and Lapa Rios.

2007

CREST became a fully independent NGO (with 501(c)(3) status), headquartered in Washington, DC with a west coast office at Stanford University, and with its own Board of Directors.

CREST published *Cruise Tourism Impacts in Costa Rica & Honduras: Policy Recommendations for Decision Makers* (in English and Spanish), based on extensive field research by CREST teams in both countries. The study found that stayover tourism is generating far more revenue through spending, purchases, and taxes for the local economy than is cruise tourism.

CREST published *Global Trends in Coastal Tourism*, which was commissioned by WWF’s global marine program. It examines the growth, importance, and operations of sun-sand-and-sea tourism, with separate case studies on Central America, East Africa, and the Coral Triangle. Researched and written by a team of CREST staff and researchers.

CREST Co-Directors hosted a 2nd private Charter Club Trip to an award-winning U.S. eco-ranch in Montana, and published a photo journal of the trip.
**2005**

CREST carried out field research in Mexico (Mahujual), Belize, and Grenada to determine the economic impacts of cruise tourism in ports-of-call. Teams of U.S. and local students surveyed cruise passengers and interviewed local businesses, NGOs, parks, and government officials to assess the value of cruise tourism compared with stayover tourism.

CREST created four practical, user-friendly *Handbooks on Certification* (Simple User’s Guide; Funding; Marketing; and Financing), in English and Spanish. The Handbooks were published in partnership with TIES and Rainforest Alliance.

**2004**

CREST hosted at Stanford University the first major international *Travelers’ Philanthropy Conference* which brought together some 80 practitioners and philanthropy experts. CREST then published the proceedings on its new travelers’ philanthropy website which is designed to serve as a one-stop shop for travel giving and voluntourism.

CREST compiled recent surveys and studies into its popular publication, *Consumer Demand and Operator Support for Socially and Environmentally Responsible Tourism*, which has been periodically revised and reissued.

**2003**

CREST researched and published *Rights and Responsibilities: A Compilation of Codes of Conduct for Tourism and Indigenous and Local Communities* which has become a valuable tool for those involved in indigenous and community-based tourism projects.

CREST began a 3-year, multi-faceted analysis of sustainable tourism certification programs around the world, with focus on small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs, including community-based and indigenous businesses, as part of a project with Rainforest Alliance, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and TIES.

CREST, originally named the *Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD)* is founded as a bi-coastal institute, with offices at Stanford University and at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC. The Washington office is shared with The International Ecotourism Society (TIES).
Select Findings Shared in CREST Research & Publications:

Tourism Industry
- Tourism is the world’s largest service industry, accounts for nearly 10% of global GDP, and is the world’s largest employer.
- In 2012, global tourism arrivals surpassed 1 billion and growth is expected to reach 1.8 billion by 2030.
- Tourism plays a major role in the economies of 125 out of 170 countries.
- Tourism is especially important to poor countries: it’s the main foreign exchange earner for 83% of developing countries.
- Tourism sector is highly decentralized: 85% = small businesses.

Ecotourism & Sustainable Tourism
- Ecotourism emerged as an alternative model in the late 1970s and reached a critical mass in the early 2000s.
- Ecotourism has spawned a number of similar ethically-based terms, including responsible travel, sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism, and geotourism. While they vary in emphasis, they all contain three basic pillars: that tourism, done well, should 1) provide tangible benefits for the environment, 2) respect local culture and benefit host communities, and 3) be educational as well as enjoyable for the traveler.
- In its first two decades (1986 – 2005), ecotourism in Costa Rica increased 7 fold and receipts 14 fold – generating twice as much spending per visitor, and becoming the country’s #1 foreign exchange earner.
- Employees in ecotourism in Costa Rica’s Osa Peninsula earn twice as much as workers in other industries.
- “Sustainable tourism” applies the principles and good practices of ecotourism to mainstream tourism including large hotels, convention centers, airports and airplanes, rental cars, golf courses, ski slopes, boats, marinas, beaches, and other sectors.
- Ecotourism and sustainable tourism emphasize attracting high value, not simply high volume tourism. High value tourists spend more with local businesses, stay longer, and visit different locations so that tourism revenue is more widely dispersed in the local economy.

Travelers’ Philanthropy
- Travelers’ Philanthropy, a relatively new form of development assistance, is funneling tens of millions of dollars annually into community and conservation projects – beyond what is generated through normal tourism business transactions.
- 58% of visitors to the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica said they would contribute an average of $68 to support local projects.
- In Arusha, Tanzania, 27 tour companies donated nearly $690,000 to community projects in 2008.
- A sampling of donors interviewed by CREST said they contributed on average $1000 to $2000 annually to projects they learned about while traveling.
- A new concept of destination-wide travelers’ philanthropy has sprung up, assisted by CREST, in places like Monteverde, Costa Rica and Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Different Types of Tourism
- Cruise ship passengers in Belize, Costa Rica, and Honduras use the same tourism attractions as stay over visitors (beaches, coral reefs, parks, archaeological sites, etc.) but leave on average only 1/15 the economic benefit per visitor as stay over tourists.
- In 2005, stay over tourism in Costa Rica generated 111 times more than cruise tourism ($2.1 billion vs. $18.9 million) in spending, taxes, and fees.
- In 2006, 9 out of 10 tourism jobs in Belize were generated by stay over tourism even though Belize received 4 times as many cruise passengers as stay over visitors.
- While Mexico, Panama, and other governments offer incentives to attract foreign retirees and vacation home owners, the economic benefits of residential tourism is often questionable: Vacation homes consume more water and land per person; compete with hotels for occupants, pay far less in taxes; and create only 0.3 jobs/room compared with 1.1 jobs/room in hotels.
- In Costa Rica, ecotourists stay longer (13 compared with 9 nights), visit more places in the country, and spend more than do tourists staying in all-inclusive beach resorts.
- Golf courses are considered standard components in coastal resort developments. However, only 2% of international tourists in both Mexico and Costa Rica play golf during their holiday. Golf course construction is being driven more by real estate considerations than by consumer demand: vacation homes built around golf courses command premium prices of 25% to 80% more.
- Bear viewing in Canada’s Great Bear Rainforest is generating 12 times more in visitor spending than bear hunting, and over 11 times more direct revenue for BC’s provincial government.
Coastal & Resort Tourism

- Coastal and marine tourism = the largest segments of the tourism industry.
- Coastlines and oceans are being heavily impacted by large-scale tourism-related development and are most susceptible to degradation linked to climate change.
- Rapid growth of coastal tourism raises sovereignty issues: much of coastlines owned by foreigners.
- With a return on investment (ROI) of less than 5 years for coastal resort and vacation home complexes, developers have little incentive to protect the destination. Often developers are willing to commit violations and then pay modest fines.
- All-inclusive resorts date from the 1950s. However, in the late 1970s both the World Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank officially closed their tourism departments because developing countries complained that that this type of tourism was not bringing economic benefits.
- Today we’re seeing ‘déjà vu all over again’ – large scale coastal resort complexes that function like small towns, providing hotels, vacation homes, spas, marinas, golf courses, shopping facilities, etc.

Climate Change & Tourism

- Tourism sector today account for 5% to 14% of global CO₂ emissions. And by 2035, if no action is taken, CO₂ emissions generated by tourism will be more than three times higher than today.
- The world’s poorest people live in areas most vulnerable to climate change, but the poorest half of the global population is responsible for only about 10% of total global emissions.
- In the Caribbean, the world’s most tourism dependent region, a 1 m rise in sea level will place an average of 38% of the major tourism properties at risk – and over 70% of those in Belize, Grenada, and Turks & Caicos. A two meter sea level rise will put on average, almost half of tourism resorts in the Caribbean at risk.
- Responsible tourism in the era of climate change is no longer a choice; it is a business imperative - and a competitive advantage.

Positive Trends in Responsible Travel

- With the rise of ecotourism and sustainable tourism since the last quarter of the 20th century, we have developed the tools to make tourism a force for good.
- Eco-certification continues to grow, with some 140 ‘green’ tourism programs around the world measuring the social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism businesses. The criteria are becoming more standardized for accommodations, tour operators, beaches, destinations, and other tourism sectors.
- Consumer demand for responsible tourism is pushing business reforms. “Concern about sustainability and the planet is top of mind for everybody,” says James Canton, CEO of Institute for Global Futures. He adds that “over 98% of consumers worldwide view themselves as environmentalists.”
- Sustainability has become much more main stream across the tourism industry. “The tourism sector is embracing responsible tourism not as an option, but as a condition for its continuous growth,” declares Luigi Cabrini, Chair of the Board of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).
- A growing number of coastal tourism innovators (developers, investors, architects, operators, etc.) are applying social and environmental sustainability principles and practices to larger resorts.
- International agencies and some private banks and investors are setting sustainability criteria as a precondition for lending or investing in tourism projects.
- ‘Green’ technologies are helping reduce environmental footprints.
- Travelers’ Philanthropy and give-back has become an integrated component of responsible travel.
- CREST is actively advancing these and other positive trends by spreading knowledge and best practices for applying sustainability in the tourism sector.
The following philanthropic foundations, international development agencies, government agencies, private companies, and nonprofit organizations have provided financial support for CREST studies, field projects, programs, conferences, publications, and films. Several have provided multiple grants. Not included are donations by CREST Board members, in-kind donations, or contributions of less than $5,000.

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy
Africa Safari Lodge Foundation and Beyond
Banco Popular
Basecamp Foundation
Belize Tourism Board
Blue Moon Fund
Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort
Christensen Fund
Christopher Reynolds Foundation
CODESIN (Consejo para el Desarrollo de Sinaloa)
Compton Foundation
Corporación Aeroportuario del Este
CRUSA (Costa Rica USA Foundation)
CS Mott Foundation
ECODIT
Ecoventura
Environmental Defense Fund
European Development Fund
Fidecomiso de Turismo de Los Cabos
Flora Family Fund
FONATUR
Fundación Agireinsieme
Ford Foundation
Foundation for Global Community
Freeman Foundation
Fundacion Corcovado
Hidden Canopy Treehouse
Holbrook Travel
GIZ (German International Cooperation)
Government of Grenada
Green Vacation Homes
Grenada Hotel & Tourism Association
Inter-American Development Bank
Inter-American Foundation
International Community Fund
International Finance Corporation
Intrepid Travel Foundation
Island Press
Jane Goodall Institute
JetBlue
La Chonta Nature Park
Lennox Foundation
Loreto Bay Foundation
MacArthur Foundation
Micato Safaris
Ministry of Environment, State of Guerrero, Mexico
Multilateral Investment Fund
Municipality of Los Cabos
Munson Foundation
Overbrook Foundation
Pacific Foundation
Packard Foundation
Park Foundation
Pellas Development Group
Peninsula Papagayo
PorParques Foundation
Puntacana Ecological Foundation
Puntacana Resort & Club
Ramada Plaza Herradura
Rancho La Puerta
Resort Developers (anonymous)
Rainforest Alliance
Resources Legacy Fund
Rockefeller Brothers
Save the Waves Coalition
Secretary of Tourism, State of Chihuahua, Mexico
Sheraton Hotels & Resorts
SNV (Dutch Development Agency)
Spirit of Big Five Foundation
St. Kitts Foundation
Stanford University
Summit Foundation
Sustenta Soluciones
The Nature Conservancy
The Ocean Foundation
The Travel Foundation
Thomson Safaris
Tides Canada
Tinker Foundation
Turneffe Atoll Trust
UN Development Programme
UN Environment Programme
UN Foundation
USAID
Virgin Unite
Wallace Global Fund
William Young Foundation
World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)
World Wildlife Fund
Contributors to CREST Auctions

The following businesses have contributed to CREST’s fundraising travel auctions, as of the end of 2017.

Tour Operators
ACTUAR - Costa Rica
Agrotavel Turismo Responsable - Spain
Bulldog Tours – South Carolina, USA
The Bushcamp Company - Zambia
Chem Chem Safari - Tanzania
Country Walkers - Vermont, USA
EcoAfrica Travel - Africa
Ecoventura - Galapagos
ExperiencePlus! Bicycle Tours - USA
Hamaca Tours - Ecuador
Himalayan Smile Treks - Nepal
Holbrook Travel - USA
Hoopoe Safaris - Tanzania
Intrepid Travel - Australia
Isle of Reefs Tours - Carriacou, Grenada
Kutch Adventures India - India
Lindblad Expeditions - USA
Micato Safaris - Kenya
Mountain Travel Sobek - USA
Myths and Mountains - USA
NYC Urban Adventures - New York, USA
Platinum Heritage - UAE
Preseli Venture - Wales
Ocean Explorations - Nova Scotia, Canada
Off the Beaten Path - USA
Rainforest Expeditions - Peru
Subcultours - Costa Rica
Tao Philippines - Philippines
Taste of Place Tours - Washington, DC, USA
The Tasmanian Walking Company - Australia
Totonal - Viajes que iluminan - Mexico
Traverse Journeys - Ecuador

Accommodations
IXaus Lodge - South Africa
250 Main Hotel - Maine, USA
4 Rivers Floating Lodge - Cambodia
Al Maha, A Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa - UAE
Alaska Wildland Adventures - USA
Alto Atacama Desert Lodge & Spa - Chile
Amerian Portal del Iguazu - Argentina
Armway Grand Plaza – Grand Rapids, MI, USA
Anantara Golden Triangle Resort - Thailand
Anantara Phuket Layan Resort & Spa - Thailand
andBeyond – Tanzania & Kenya
Arenas del Mar (Cayuga) - Costa Rica
Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas - Greece
Ashburnham Estate (Tonic Lanka) - Sri Lanka
Asilia Africa - Kenya & Tanzania
Banyan Tree Mayakoba - Mexico
Bardessono Hotel & Spa - California, USA
Basecamp Masai Mara - Kenya
Bel Air Plantation Villa Resort - Grenada
Belcampo Belize - Belize
Belmont Mont Farm - St. Kitts
Blueberry Hill Inn - Vermont, USA
Bodhi Surf & Yoga - Costa Rica
Bougainvillea Beach Resort - Barbados
Boutique Hotel San Felipe el Real - Mexico
The Brando Tetiaroa Private Island – French Polynesia
Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort - Aruba
Calabash Hotel - Grenada
Cape Codder Resort & Spa - Massachusetts, USA
Casa Andina - Peru
Casa San Francisco - Nicaragua
Casa del Mar - Mexico
Cavallo Point - California, USA
Cayuga Sustainable Hospitality - Costa Rica
CGH Earth - India
Cheetah Paw Eco Lodge - South Africa
Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu - Maldives
Coco Bodu Hithi - Maldives
Colony Hotel & Cabana Club - Florida, USA
CostaBaja Resort & Spa - Mexico
Costa Navarino (Temas S.A.) - Greece
Cotton Tree Lodge - Costa Rica
Coyaba Beach Resort - Grenada
The Crossing Resort - Canada
Cuffie River Nature Retreat - Tobago
Cristalino Jungle Lodge - Brazil
Danta Corcovado Lodge - Costa Rica
Distant Relatives Ecolodge & Backpackers - Kenya
Dwarika's Hotel - Nepal
El Mangroove - Costa Rica
El Monte Sagrado Living Resort & Spa - New Mexico, USA
El Nido Resorts - Philippines
El Silencio Lodge & Spa - Costa Rica
Elite Island Resorts - Antigua
Enchanting Hotels - Costa Rica
Exotica Cottages - Dominica
Fairmont Kea Lani - Hawaii, USA
Fiji Island Resort (Cousteau) - Fiji
Finca Luna Nueva Lodge - Costa Rica
Fogo Island Inn - Canada
Fond Doux Holiday Plantation - St. Lucia
Gaia Shasta Hotel & Spa - USA
Genesis Eco-Oasis - Mexico
Golden Door - California, USA
Gondwana Collection - Namibia
Grand Bliss Riviera Maya - Mexico
Grand Bohemian Hotel Charleston - South Carolina, USA
Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit - Mexico
Grand Palladium Resort & Spa - Mexico
Great Huts Resort - Jamaica
Green Roof Inn - Carriacou, Grenada
Greentique Hotels of Costa Rica - Costa Rica
Grootberg Lodge - Namibia
Grupo Islita - Costa Rica
Guludo Beach Lodge - Mozambique
h2hotel - California, USA
Hacienda Chichen - Mexico
Hacienda Santa Rosa - Mexico
Hacienda Tres Rios Resort Spa & Nature Park - Mexico
Half Moon Bay - Jamaica
Hamadryade Lodge - Ecuador
Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort - Belize
Harmony Hotel - Costa Rica
Hawk and Ivy Bed & Breakfast - North Carolina, USA
Heritage Kandalama Hotel - Sri Lanka
Hillsdale House Inn - Nova Scotia, Canada
Hillsnek Safari Camp - South Africa
Hog Hollow Country Lodge - South Africa
Holiday Inn, Escazu - Costa Rica
Honduras Shore Plantation - Honduras
Hotel Antumalal - Chile
Hotel Arctic - Greenland
Hotel con Corazon - Nicaragua
Hotel El Ganzo - Mexico
Hotel Maya Luna - Mexico
Hotel Monaco - Washington, DC, USA
Hotel Las Colinas - Costa Rica
Hotel SPaventura Ecolodge - Brazil
Hotel Vermont - Vermont, USA
Iguana Lodge - Costa Rica
Inn at Ocean’s Edge - Maine, USA
Inn by the Sea - Massachusetts, USA
InterContinental New York Barclay - New York, USA
ION Adventure Hotel - Iceland
Island Outpost’s GoldenEye - Jamaica
Jicaro Island Ecolodge - Nicaragua
Jungle Bay - Dominica
JW Marriott Guanacaste – Costa Rica
Ka’ana Resort - Belize
Kasbah du Toubkal - Morocco*
Kessler Collection - USA
Kilimanjaro Eco Lodge - Tanzania
Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants - USA
Knight Inlet Lodge - Canada
Laguna Lodge Eco-Resort & Nature Reserve - Guatemala*
Laluna Resort - Grenada, West Indies
Lapa Rios Ecolodge (Cayuga) - Costa Rica
Las Brisas Hotel Collection - Mexico
Latitude 10 Beach Resort - Costa Rica
Legendary Lodge & Spa - Tanzania
Lisu Lodge - Thailand
Maca Bana Luxury Boutique Resort - Panama
Macaw Lodge - Costa Rica
Madidi Jungle Ecolodge - Bolivia
Madulkele Tea & Eco Lodge - Sri Lanka
Mahogany Springs Safari Lodge - Uganda*
Mallin Colorado Ecolodge - Chile
Mandarin Oriental - Washington, DC, USA
Maui Eco Retreat - Hawaii, USA
Meadowood Napa Valley - California, USA
Miraval - Arizona, USA
Montfair Resort Farm - Virginia, USA
Morgan’s Rock - Nicaragua
Mukul Beach, Golf & Spa - Nicaragua
Munduk Moding Plantation - Indonesia
Munga Eco-Lodge - Zambia
Namushasha River Lodge - Namibia
Nantucket Island Resorts - USA
Nayara Hotel, Spa & Gardens - Costa Rica
Nemasu Eco-Lodge - The Gambia
New Hermopolis Cultural Village - Egypt
Nkasa Lumphu Tented Lodge - Namibia
Nuarro Lodge - Mozambique
Orchard Hotel - San Francisco, USA
The Palms Hotel & Spa - Florida, USA
Papagayo Four Seasons - Costa Rica
Paradise Farms Organic - Florida, USA
Parrot Cay by COMO - Turks & Caicos
The Pavilions Himalayas - Nepal*
Penthouse Papagayo - Costa Rica
Pico Bonito Hotel - Honduras
Playa Cativo Lodge - Costa Rica
Playa Nicuesa Rainforest Lodge - Costa Rica
Playa Viva Resorts - Mexico
Pole Pole Bungalows - Tanzania
Poogans’ Hospitality - South Carolina, USA
Porchers Inn - Massachusetts, USA
Post Ranch Inn - Big Sur, USA
Pousada Rio Claro - Brazil
Puntacana Resort & Club - Dominican Republic
Punta Islita Resort - Costa Rica
Radisson Ft. George Hotel & Marina - Belize
Rainforest Adventures Eco-Park & Lodge - Costa Rica
Rainforest Ecolodge - Sri Lanka
Rainforest Expeditions - Peru
Rancho la Puerta - Mexico
Rara Avis - Costa Rica
Red Lion Inn - Massachusetts, USA
Refugio Ecológico Caiman - Brazil
Reserva do Ibitipoca - Brazil
Riad AnaYela - Morocco
Rios Tropicales - Costa Rica
RiverDance Lodge - Namibia
Rock View Lodge - Guyana
Rosalie Bay Resort - Dominica
Rosewood Mayakoba - Mexico
Royal Mansour - Morocco
Sabi Sabi Safari and Resort - South Africa
Sea Breeze Bed & Breakfast - Massachusetts, USA
Sea Crest Beach Hotel - Massachusetts, USA
Sea Ranch Lodge - California, USA
Secret Bay - Dominica
Selva Verde Lodge - Costa Rica
Shaxi Old Theatre Inn - China
Sheraton Hacienda del Mar - Mexico
ShoreWay Acres Inn & Cape Cod Lodging - Massachusetts, USA
Si Como No Resort, Spa & Wildlife Refuge - Costa Rica
Singita Grumeti Lodges - Tanzania
Six Senses Duoro Valley - Portugal
Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas - Vietnam
Six Senses Laamu - Maldives
Soneva - Maldives & Thailand*
South Seas Island Resort - Florida, USA
STAR Island Resort - Bahamas
Sugar Beach, A Viceroy Resort - St. Lucia
Surama Eco Lodge - Guyana
Tabacon Grand Spa & Resort - Costa Rica
Tailwind Jungle Lodge - Mexico
Tamara Coorg - India
Tiamo Resort - Bahamas
Tierra Hotels - Chile
Topaz Hotel - Washington, DC, USA
Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge - Nepal
Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge - Nepal
Tranquileseas Eco Lodge & Dive Center - Honduras
True Blue Bay Resort - Grenada
Tweedsmuir Park Lodge - Canada
UXUA Casa Hotel & Spa - Brazil
Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel - Costa Rica
Weguassett Resort & Golf Club - Massachusetts, USA
Westin Georgetown - Washington, DC, USA
White Elephant Hotel - Massachusetts, USA
Xanadu Island Resort - Belize
Xixim, Unique Mayan Hotel - Mexico
Yachana Lodge - Ecuador
Yacutinga Lodge - Argentina
Yangshuo Mountain Retreat – China
Yangshuo Village Inn – China

Others
Air Greenland - Greenland
Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel - Florida, USA
Belmont Estate - Grenada
Cultivar Wine - California, USA
Ethiopian Airlines - Ethiopia
FiveThirtyEight
Frey Vineyards - Oregon, USA
Nature Air - Costa Rica
New York Hall of Science
Nora’s (Restaurant) - Washington, DC, USA

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ACCOLADES

“CREST has set the standard for thoughtful and innovative research on the effects of tourism and the promotion of ‘ecotourism’.”
—Elizabeth Becker, author, *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel & Tourism*

“I’m impressed with CREST’s cutting-edge work, notably in travelers’ philanthropy and in researching ways to keep the world’s popular coasts and islands from being loved to death.”
—Jonathan Tourtellot, Fellow Emeritus, National Geographic

“We have come to know CREST as an innovative, respected, and strategic catalyst of sustainable tourism. Their work has advanced a much-needed conversation on how to improve the sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism sector at the national and local levels.”
—Gabriela Anaya, Program Officer, Resources Legacy Fund

“CREST experts provided our town, Agrigento, Italy, with a way forward.”
—Salvatore Moncada, President of Moncada Energy and the Agrigento Foundation

“The on-site research conducted by the CREST team has been invaluable in advancing my eco-resort project. Their follow up and industry contacts have also been most helpful.”
—Private Resort Developer

“From the Galapagos Islands to Kruger National Park in South Africa, [CREST] provides detailed and insightful analysis of the ecotourism industry today, with examples from around the world.”
—Explore Magazine

“CREST’s network of the greatest sustainable tourism brains and resources in the world is providing pioneering solutions for the successful survival of the global tourism industry.”
—Loreto Duffy-Mayers, Regional Programme Manager, Caribbean Hotel Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action – Advanced Programme (CHENACT – AP)
“What a wonderful experience. I learned so much, was definitely inspired, and even grew on a personal level.”
—Ryan Crabbe, Sr. Director, Global Spa Brands and Operations, Hilton Worldwide

“An outstanding event. I was very pleased with the level of discussion around such important topics...
Keep up the good work.”
—Miguel Pena, Sr. Analyst, Sustainability Programs, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

“I came expecting good networking opportunities and got outstanding ones. One of the things I didn’t expect, however, was all the fantastic content. From the panels to the plenaries to the field trip, the range of topics, speaker enterprise, and audience engagement made me want to attend every single one.”
—Kimberley Player, Economic & Real Estate Adviser

“[CREST has] established in an explicit manner that travelers’ philanthropy should be a part of the concept of responsible travel and contribute to sustainable social, environmental, and economic development of local communities and tourism destinations.”
—Margarita Penon, Costa Rica’s former First Lady and Member of Parliament

“What a great think tank! Congratulations! The structure of the sessions was very well thought through, the organization and logistics were perfect, we were warmly welcomed and taken care of - very very impressive - let’s not lose momentum!”
—Anonymous Comment, Evaluation form for 2015 Climate Change & Coastal/Marine Tourism Think Tank

“The sustainable tourism conference supported by CREST in Cuba was a priceless experience. Not only was the conference professionally managed and of the highest quality, but the range of experts assembled from both the Cuban and international communities was unparalleled. The entire experience was outstanding. From the content of the conference, to the interactions with local Cubans, to the location of the event in the incredible Viñales Valley, my expectations were far exceeded. Thanks CREST!”
—Julie Regan, Chief, External Affairs, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency