



## Center for Responsible Travel

*Transforming the Way the World Travels*

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### CREST Newsletter: Issue 9, October – December 2015

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#### **Sinaloa: CREST & GSTC Launch Destination-Wide Assessment of Southern Sinaloa**

CREST's project in the southern part of Sinaloa state (Sinaloa Sur) in Mexico is proceeding well with the assistance of two consultants from the UNWTO-supported Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and a newly hired Sinaloa-based tourism expert. CREST has retained Kathleen Pessolano, GSTC's Destinations Program Director, and Amos Bien, a GSTC technical certification expert to help carry out an assessment, based on GSTC methods and criteria, of 5 municipalities in Sinaloa Sur. This region has been earmarked for sustainable and competitive tourism development.

In addition, in December CREST's two principle partners in Sinaloa, the state business council CODESIN and the environmental organization CONSELVA, hired a local tourism expert, Valerie Sera, who is now working as the on-the-ground counterpart for the CREST team in carrying out the GSTC assessment. Sera is a Cuban tourism professor and former hotelier who has been living in Mazatlán and serving as Coordinator of the Universidad de Occidente's Masters in Tourism Program. Through his teaching and research, Sera is knowledgeable about sustainable tourism and familiar with the GSTC.

Over the past year, with grants from the International Community Fund and the Overbrook Foundation, CREST has been preparing for and actively undertaking the GSTC assessment process. Two CREST researchers, Oscar Axel Téllez, a Mexican working in the CREST office, and Kennedy Magio, a Kenyan academic who has just completed his Ph.D. in tourism at the Universidad de Occidente in Mazatlán, have been collecting, reviewing, and tabulating scores of documents and studies required for the GSTC assessment.

With Valerie Sera's assistance and guidance from CODESIN and CONSELVA, CREST expects to complete in January 2016 the GSTC's desk-based process of compiling documents and identifying stakeholders. Together with its two GSTC consultants, CREST then plans to spend about 10 days in Sinaloa in February, holding workshops, focus groups, and site visits in

Mazatlán and the five municipalities, and issuing its findings in the form of a scorecard. This scorecard, which will be presented confidentially to officials in Sinaloa, will show how well Sinaloa Sur complies with the nearly 100 GSTC environmental, social, cultural, and economic criteria for destinations and where improvements are required. Once The GSTC assessment is completed, Sinaloa Sur will become part of an elite group of less than two dozen destinations around the globe that have completed the GSTC assessment. This GSTC assessment marks the next step in a multi-year initiative, backed by US foundations as well as CODESIN and Sinaloa's Tourism Director, to development and promote sustainable and competitive tourism.

### **Bear Study Accepted for Publication by Peer-Reviewed *Journal of Ecotourism***

CREST is pleased to learn that its academic paper, based on its 2013-2014 field study and report on the economic value of bear hunting and bear viewing in the Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia, Canada, has been accepted for publication in the well-respected *Journal of Ecotourism*. The journal article, 'The comparative economic value of bear viewing and bear hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest' has gone through a rigorous peer-review, revision, and editing process over the past two years. The authors of the paper are Martha Honey, three of CREST's Stanford staff (Bill Durham, Austin Cruz, and Claire Menke), and two BC-



based experts, statistician Jim Johnson and tourism consultant Judy Karwacki. The original, widely-cited CREST study, found that bear viewing is growing far more rapidly than bear hunting, generating in 2012, 12 times more in visitor spending and over 11 times in direct revenue for BC's provincial government than bear hunting. The *Journal of Ecotourism* has not yet informed CREST of the publication date. CREST original, 130-page study, is available at [here](#).

### **Climate Change and Coastal & Marine Tourism Books**

CREST is deeply immersed in preparing two edited and interconnected books, provisionally entitled Coastal Tourism and Climate Change (Vol. 1) and Marine Tourism and Climate Change (Vol. 2). CREST has signed contracts with Business Expert Press (BEP) to publish paperback and digital editions of the two volumes in late spring 2016. The volumes will be co-branded with CREST. CREST is currently seeking support from businesses, organizations, foundations, and academic institutions who will help underwrite the cost of editing the volumes in return for being listed as sponsors in the publications. (Contact Martha Honey at [mhoney@responsibletravel.org](mailto:mhoney@responsibletravel.org) for more details on sponsorship.)

The two volumes, which are edited to CREST and Dr. Kreg Ettenger of the University of Maine, include essays and case studies by some 40 experts. Many attended the July Think Tank in Punta Cana which was organized and hosted by CREST and the Puntacana Ecological Foundation. The tourism related topics in the two volumes include in Vol. 1 how climate change is affecting beaches and shorelines; resort siting, design and construction; operations of coastal resort chains and independent boutique hotels; golf courses; locally grown and sustainable food production; and airports and airlines, and in Vol. 2 how climate change is affecting ocean health and ecosystems; marine protected areas; fish stocks; marine recreation; and cruise ships, yachts and marinas.

The publisher, Business Expert Press, markets its books globally targeted to business and academic audiences. It has recently launched a sustainable tourism series which fits well with CREST's mission and key constituencies. BEP is the leader in providing unique content in comprehensive, accessible, and relatively short formats (150 - 200 pages). The CREST volumes are designed primarily to help coastal and marine tourism businesses better address climate change while educating academics, researchers, NGOs, and travelers about the forecasted impacts of climate change and how coastal and marine tourism needs to adjust to the impacts of climate change.

### **New CREST Film: "Caribbean 'Green' Travel: Your Travel Choice Makes a Difference"**

This newest CREST documentary shows that the Caribbean is more than traditional large resort and cruise tourism. Through the power of the good example, this 45-minute film includes portraits of tourism businesses in Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Aruba, and Grenada that are practicing environmental stewardship and generating social and economic benefits for the destinations.

Filmed by Jamaican filmmaker Esther Figueroa and edited by Richard Krantz and Pilot Productions, the final version will be released in early 2016, with a premier showing in Washington, DC.



The film will be used, together with the new CREST's new 2-volume publication on climate change and coastal and marine tourism, as part of a public education campaign targeting the Caribbean. CREST is seeking additional sponsors to cover the final editing and production costs of the film. (Contact Martha Honey at [mhoney@responsibletravel.org](mailto:mhoney@responsibletravel.org) for more details on sponsorship.) Photo courtesy of Puntacana Resort & Club.

## CREST Charter Club Trip to Cuba - May 2016 Trip Added

Due to high demand for CREST's January 2016 Charter Club trip, "Responsible Travel in Cuba," CREST has scheduled a second trip for **May 1 – 8, 2016**. Participants will go with CREST staff and tour operator Cuba Educational Travel to experience a number of the country's ecological and cultural wonders. View the [full itinerary](#) and register by January 4th.

CREST is also able to organize trips for special interest groups (theater, scientific, etc.). These trip will combine high-quality ecotourism with your specific field of interest. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in organizing a customized trip.



## Rock-Hewn Churches Route Development in Tigray, Ethiopia

In October, CREST program associate Samantha Hogenson spent two weeks in Tigray province, Ethiopia, to conduct the site-visit portion of a project to develop a route and visitors' map for the Wukro-Gheralta region's rock-hewn churches. According to Ethiopian oral tradition, these churches, carved and built into the mountainous landscape, date from the 4th century. Scholars have dated them roughly from the 7th – 12th centuries, though it's difficult to know when each



church was built/carved. The churches are still working establishments of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and villagers and visitors take on impressive physical hikes and occasional rock climbing to attend worship.

Working with local experts from the Tigray Culture and Tourism Bureau and Mekelle University, the team led by Hogenson

identified 11 churches and three cultural sites to be included in the route. The route will be marketed to English speaking international tourists to promote Tigrai's rich cultural heritage, in order to help increase jobs and local livelihoods, especially for youth and women in Tigrai region. Following the trip, CREST developed an informative map of the route, which is now in final production. This consultancy is part of the European Development Fund's project, "Preserving and Promoting Tigrai's Cultural Heritage for Development."

## **CREST Part of World Bank Mission to Turkish Community in Cyprus**

In late October, CREST Executive Director Martha Honey participated in a short-term World Bank consultancy in the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. The week long mission included site visits, meetings with government officials, and a 2-day workshop on tourism, the country's largest industry. The mission focused on the Turkish part of Cyprus, known as the Turkish Cypriot Community (TCc).

While the Republic of Cyprus has legal sovereignty over the island, holds a seat in the UN, and is a member of the European Union, in reality, since 1974 the island has been partitioned into Greek and Turkish sectors divided by the UN administered Green Line. The self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is recognized only by Turkey, covers about 40% of the northern part of the island. In early 2016, Cyprus is scheduled to hold a popular referendum on reunification. In preparation for this important vote, the World Bank is providing support to both the tourism and agriculture industries in the northern sector to bring them into compliance with EU standards.

The workshops, held in the Turkish section of Nicosia, was attended by some 40 TCc experts from tourism businesses and associations and government agencies. CREST's presentations at the workshop included sustainable tourism trends globally and specific case studies from Costa Rica and Montenegro. CREST also lead participants in a SWOT analysis and a visioning exercise. The site inspections included tours of attractions in Nicosia, a visit to the port city of Kyrenia whose picturesque stone harbor is a leading tourism attraction in the TCc, and brief visits to small rural towns offering nature-based and cultural tourism. CREST also visited the TCc's most problematic tourism sector: one of two dozen beach resort casinos which are dominated by Turkish investors, staffed mainly with imported Turkish workers, and attract primarily vacationers on low budget Turkish package tours. Photo by Zeki Murad.



## Travelers' Philanthropy Spotlight

### Ethiopian Airlines

CREST is proud to have partnered with [Ethiopian Airlines](#) to make our Rock-Hewn Church Route Development project in Tigray, Ethiopia, a reality. A previous supporter of CREST initiatives, this project was especially meaningful for the airline, as the benefit of the route creation will be reaped by Ethiopia's own people. We are incredibly grateful for their support and to be aligned with such a conscientious company. No stranger to philanthropic projects, in 2008 Ethiopian Airlines launched a long-term environmental campaign known as FLY GREENER in order to plant trees throughout the country. Since launching the initiative, "7.5 million seedlings of multipurpose and indigenous trees have been distributed to various communities in the Southern part of Ethiopia. And taking this initiative further, Ethiopian has now pledged to plant one tree for every passenger flown." The airline is also a supporter of various social projects within Ethiopia and greater Africa. Read more about their latest initiatives [here](#).



### Hotel con Corazón

[Hotel con Corazón Granada](#) is a boutique Nicaragua, which we were lucky to get to through our eco-auctions. The hotel in 2008, with the aim of investing all profits education for underprivileged children in area. Full capital investment came through donations from friends and families of the originators, companies, and foundations. in Granada have been tremendous, with children completing primary school, a new secondary school opening, scholarships available for high school and university, and financial partnerships established with local NGOs. The hotel has also provided stable jobs for the local community and linked into the supply chain.



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Because of this success, Hotel con Corazón is looking to expand their model. Investors have already signed on with projects in Mexico, Cambodia, Suriname, and a second project in Nicaragua. Counting these projects, the goal is to build a total of ten more hotels around the world in the next ten years. If you are interested in becoming an owner or impact investor to expand the idea of "a hotel with a heart," download Hotel con Corazón's [Investment Brochure](#).

## Sharing Expertise ~ Providing Leadership

### CREST Intern Spotlight Article

Through our internship program, CREST is able to offer learning opportunities to students from all around the world each semester. This fall, we had the pleasure of hosting Noora Laukkanen from Mikkeli, Finland. Noora is enrolled in a Master of Tourism program at Aalborg University in Copenhagen, Denmark, where she is specializing in Global Tourism Development. During her time here, Noora did a research report for her program to gauge US tourism industry perceptions of Airbnb. Check out her [summary article](#) for a synopsis of what she learned.



### CREST Spring Internship Opening

CREST is looking for a Spring 2016 Research & Program Intern! This position is based in Washington, DC, and is a great opportunity for someone looking to expand their knowledge of responsible and sustainable travel in hospitality, events, and/or destination management. View the [internship description](#) and contact [Samantha Hogenson](#) for more information.

## CREST Holiday Eco-Auction & Upcoming Valentine's Day Auction

CREST's Holiday Eco-Auction was held December 1 - 15, via [Charitybuzz](#). This and CREST's other auctions would not be possible without generous donations from leading tourism businesses. We invite only businesses well recognized for providing both high quality of service and socially and environmentally responsible tourism. These auctions are critical to supporting CREST's various programs, including CREST's research and field studies, internship program, travelers' philanthropy, and operational expenses as a non-profit. Donors included:

[4 Rivers Floating Lodge](#), [Al Maha, A Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa](#), [Amerian Portal del Iguazú](#), [Blueberry Hill Inn](#), [Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort](#), [Casa del Mar Golf Resort & Spa](#), [Casa San Francisco](#), [Country Walkers](#), [Coyaba Beach Resort](#), [Desert Adventures Kutch](#), [El Ganzo](#), [Genesis Eco Retreat](#), [Green Roof Inn](#), [Hotel Antumalal](#), [Hacienda Chichen](#), [Hotel con Corazon](#), [Hotel Maya Luna](#), [Intrepid Travel](#), [ION Adventure Hotel](#), [Isle of Reefs Tours](#), [Laluna](#), [Lindblad Expeditions](#), [Mahogany Springs](#), [Montfair Resort Farm](#), [Morgan's Rock](#), [Munduk Moding Plantation](#), [Nkasa Lupala Tented Lodge](#), [Platinum Heritage](#), [RiverDance Lodge](#), [Rock View Lodge](#), [Six Senses Duoro Valley](#), [Surama Ecolodge](#), [Tailwind Jungle Ecolodge](#), [Tao Philippines](#), and [Wequassett Resort and Golf Club](#).

If your business is interested in being a part of our Valentine's Day eco-auction (January 20 – February 2), please contact CREST program associate, [Samantha Hogenson](#). This is a great opportunity for responsible travel businesses to showcase sustainability initiatives and create or

maintain a connection with CREST.

## CREST in the News

- **October 14, 2015:** *The Costa Rica News* article by Jordan Dobrowski - [Pavement is finally coming to Dominical, Costa Rica — but is it a change for the better?](#) This article takes a brief look at the potential impacts of paving the main road in Dominical, Costa Rica, and the possible implications for tourism. CREST's 2010 Study "[Impact of Tourism Related Development on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica](#)" is quoted when considering the two very different forms of tourism that might take the stage.
- **November 8, 2015:** *National Post* article by Cassidy Oliver – [Is B.C.'s trophy hunt for grizzly bears bad business?](#) CREST's 2012 study on the [economic impact of bear hunting vs. bear viewing in the Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia](#), Canada, is again brought to the forefront as the debate rages on between guides with international tourists who come to see the bears and big-game hunters who are there to bring them home as trophies.

## End of Year Giving

CREST's work is entirely funded by public and private grants and donations. As another productive year comes to a close, we at the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) reflect on how our work to promote responsible travel that offers enriching experiences, while benefiting host communities and the environment is made possible by supporters like you. As part of your holiday giving, we hope that you will consider supporting CREST's responsible travel mission and initiatives. [Donating is easy and tax deductible](#). We thank you for your continuing support and collaboration, and wish you a joyous and peaceful holiday season!

Want to receive the CREST newsletter and other updates via email? Let us know at [staff@responsibletravel.org](mailto:staff@responsibletravel.org)!