

Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) Newsletter January - March 2021 | Volume 8, Issue 1

From the Executive Director

Despite unprecedented health and economic tragedy in 2020, CREST ably weathered this storm and has proven itself to be resilient, adaptive, and responsive to change. I see 2021 as full of both promise and pitfalls.

To address the challenges ahead, we have sharpened our strategic focus around: Tourism in a Climate Crisis; Conserving Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage; Addressing Overtourism (yes, it's back); and Narrowing the Wealth Gap. We have a wonderful new website and expanded social media presence, an organizational commitment to DEI, considerable global traction with our Future of Tourism Coalition, expansion in the USA and the Americas, and we will soon be rolling out a new corporate sponsorship program.

Going forward, CREST will champion change by promoting the stewardship approach of destination management, effectively measuring and managing tourism's impacts, and encouraging quality over quantity tourism (value over volume). It is the quality of visitation, not the quantity of visitors, that countries and destinations need to seek and measure, with an individual and societal commitment to a responsible recovery. At CREST, we remain steadfast in our commitment to a holistic approach to sustainability that focuses on the natural, cultural, and spiritual elements of place. This is the essence of why, and where, we travel.

I look forward to continuing our sustainability journey together.

Yours in responsible travel,





Gregory Miller, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Updates from the Future of Tourism Coalition



The Future of Tourism Coalition (FoTC) is a coalition of six non-governmental organizations that have come together to stand united in an appeal for change. These six organizations include CREST, the Destination Stewardship Center, Green Destinations, Sustainable Travel International, Tourism Cares, and The Travel Foundation, all of which formally adopted the mission to create an inclusive, multisector global movement that puts destination needs at the center of tourism for a sustainable future. So far in 2021 we have:

Developed long-term goals, including:

- Rebalance the tourism model to benefit people, places, the planet, and our industry.
- Catalyze and amplify a multisector community to implement the new tourism model.
- Maximize Coalition members' individual and collective potential, impact and fundraising.

Expanded our Advisory Committee, which provides expertise and guidance on areas that are strategic for the transformation of tourism but may otherwise be under-represented. It provides broader perspectives to ensure the movement remains true to its Guiding Principles, mission, and vision, and that the approach is inclusive, integrated, and representative.

Hosted two global donor roundtables, which brought together the donor and development community to share candid feedback on the Coalition's messaging and strategy.

Launched our FoTC “Reset Tourism” webinar series, designed to equip

destinations with key information for decision-making as they look to the future of tourism. The first webinar on Destination Stewardship & Stakeholder Engagement was presented by CREST and the Destination Stewardship Center on March 25th, with nearly 600 registrants. The recording may be accessed [here](#). Additional webinars will take place in April (Measuring Tourism's Impacts and Success) and May (Local and Sustainable Supply Chains), presented by FoTC colleagues. Join us! Simultaneously, the FoTC is developing a toolkit on these topics, which will be released in a concluding webinar at the end of May.

CREST and ASU Release a Joint Report



ASU
Center for
Sustainable
Tourism

Results from CREST 2020
World Tourism Day Webinar

*"The Case for Responsible Travel:
Lessons from COVID -19 for
Tourism in a Changing Climate"*



CREST
Center for Responsible Travel

We face a unique challenge: how to promote true sustainability within the travel and tourism industry amid two crises, a pandemic and climate change. In the fall of 2020, we discussed these challenges at our World Tourism Day Forum with destinations, businesses, and community members.

In a partnership, the [Arizona State University Center for Sustainable Tourism](#) and CREST released a [joint report](#) that synthesizes the data from the webinar while framing key takeaways within the context of the Future of Tourism Coalition's 13 Guiding Principles.

Included in this report are key quotes from distinguished panelists, Dr. Daniel Scott, Erin Francis-Cummings, and Ewald Biemans. They discuss their thoughts on tourism in a climate crisis and share their experiences about what they're doing to mitigate it. This report concludes with strategies for managing the climate crisis as well as achieving destination management and stewardship.

CREST and Caribshare Host Sustainable Food Waste Management Conference





In January, Jamaican non-profit [CaribShare](#) co-hosted a conference with CREST that made the case for sustainable food waste management in the tourism sector. The hybrid online and in-person conference, held over two days at Half Moon Resort in Jamaica, tackled issues of food waste reduction and recycling. It also provided practical guidance to hoteliers on how to holistically manage their food waste to achieve a positive impact on their bottom lines. The second day featured a live student mentorship session where tourism sector panelists shared their knowledge, successes, and challenges through a Q&A with students. The event was supported financially by the US Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica; CAF Canada; and the World Wildlife Fund.

The industry event was attended by 41 hotel representatives and other industry stakeholders, representing 17 hotels on Jamaica's north coast. Nine panelists from the USA, Aruba, and Jamaica participated (online and in-person). The student mentorship and sustainable tourism workshop event were attended (online and in-person) by 60 high school students studying advanced tourism and entrepreneurship from 7 schools in the Montego Bay-Trelawny area.

As a result of the conference, Carol Lue, Founder & Executive Director of CaribShare, noted that "We are seeing the beginning of a shift as a result of the conference, in that the industry feels more empowered and there is an intent to mobilize on the issue of food waste management despite COVID-19." You can read more about the proceedings and view the recording [here](#).

What's Next for US Travel to Cuba?



Following the US Presidential election results last November, CREST co-sponsored the Cuba/US People to People Partnership, created by the Fund for Reconciliation & Development, for a webinar on the future of US travel to Cuba in December. An expert panel, including CREST's very own Dr. Gregory Miller, led the conversation

around COVID-19's impacts on Cuban tourism and the possibility that the Biden-Harris administration would relax travel restrictions to Cuba. A synopsis of the webinar's key takeaways was highlighted by [Travel Weekly](#). Following the fruitful session, a subsequent Zoom call was organized in January as a way to foster further participatory discussion among travelers, advisers, tour operators, and others involved in the sector regarding their concerns, outlooks, and plans around the return of travel to Cuba.

Since the United States reformed its Cuba travel regulations in 2016 resulting in greater mobility between the countries, CREST has been a leading voice on sustainable travel to Cuba. We believe that educational and people-to-people exchanges to Cuba are important for fostering cross-cultural understanding and can be transformational both for Cubans and for American travelers. To listen to the webinar recordings, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

What Fuels You Hits the Road!

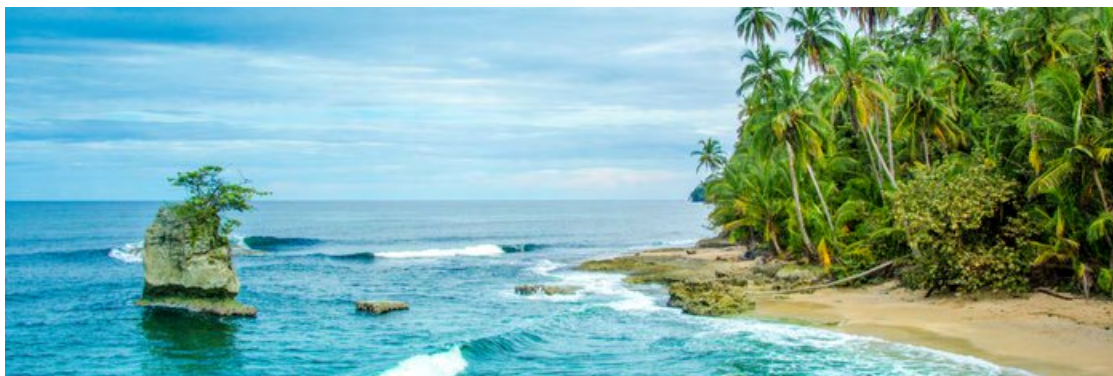


What Fuels You? has hit the road! Since January, Erika Gilsdorf, the solo traveler and producer of the media campaign, has been towing her tiny house and sharing authentic, unscripted perceptions from local people and communities on how we can become better travelers and stewards of the places we visit, whether we have loved them for decades or are only just beginning to explore them.

Throughout 2021, Erika will continue taking us on a journey to see wildlife refuges, tour local businesses, and meet with everyday people. She'll share inspiring stories of those tackling the climate crisis and working to protect our natural places for the benefit of wildlife, human health, and local economic viability. Most recently, she spoke with photographer Dylan Gordon in California who co-founded Help California, an organization designed to provide assistance to families recovering from fires and floods. You can view this episode of [Mitsubishi's Soul Pursuits](#) here.

To catch-up on Erika's stories, travel along the journey with her, or to get involved via sponsorship or story pitches, follow the *What Fuels You?: An Electric Road Trip* on their [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

CREST Films Have Been Released for Free



In order to give back to all of the travelers, advocates, and partners who continue to support us during the pandemic, we are permanently releasing our three seminal films on sustainable tourism solutions for free!

These films, available via our [Youtube channel](#), are illustrative resources on responsible travel, impact tourism and travelers' philanthropy, economic development, and marine and coastal tourism. They offer case studies from across the globe to show how tourism can be leveraged as a tool for good. All films are available in both English and Spanish and can be viewed with subtitles.

Caribbean Green Travel: Your Choices Make a Difference

This educational documentary shows that the Caribbean is more than traditional large resort and cruise tourism. Through the power of good example, this film highlights tourism businesses in Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Aruba, and Grenada that are practicing environmental stewardship and generating social and economic benefits for local communities.

In addition, a [free study guide](#), based on the film, is designed to help teachers at any level who wish to use the film in their classes. It includes brief summaries, discussion questions, ideas for in-class and take-home activities, suggestions for supplemental readings and websites for further exploration, and questions that can be used for quizzes or exams.

The Goose with the Golden Eggs: Tourism on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast

This educational documentary examines the impacts of large-scale resort and vacation home developments along Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, as well as cruise ship arrivals in the port city of Puntarenas. The film highlights the challenges coastal communities are facing over water, beach access, land ownership, and protection of mangroves, among other issues, specifically by comparing the costs and benefits of large-scale resort tourism with models of sustainable coastal tourism in Manuel Antonio National Park and small-scale ecotourism in the Osa Peninsula.

Travelers' Philanthropy: Giving Time, Talent, & Treasure

This film examines for the first time the concept of "Travelers' Philanthropy," also

referred to as impact tourism, or the growing global movement by responsible tourism companies and travelers to support social service, environmental, micro-enterprise, and other types of projects in the host communities where tourism takes place.

The film profiles community and conservation projects in Costa Rica, Kenya, and Tanzania that are being supported by tourism companies. The filmmakers talk with community members, travelers, and experts about both the benefits as well as the pitfalls of travelers' philanthropy.

An Update on Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Process



Over the past few months, CREST has been working to improve our policies and practices to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive space for our staff and partners, as well as for the destinations we work with. **We believe that sustainability cannot exist without diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.** True sustainability balances the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit. Our work to date has included conducting various internal audits, reviewing our recruitment and hiring processes, examining our programmatic portfolio, developing baseline accountability measures, and more.

Recently, we released our [DEI Vision Statement](#). You can read the statement as well as updates on our DEI work (and what is to come) in our [newest blog post here](#).

Summer Intern Application Now Open!





CREST's summer internship applications are now open! We are looking for **two Program & Research Interns and one Communications Intern** to join us remotely for the summer period. Interested applicants will need to submit a cover letter, resume, two references, and a short writing sample/portfolio of your creative work [via this online form](#) by **Wednesday, April 14**.

- **Program & Research Interns** provide assistance on research and consulting projects and provide general support as needed. This internship is a great opportunity for someone looking to expand their knowledge of responsible and sustainable travel in hospitality, events, and/or destination management. Please contact Program Manager [Kelsey Frenkiel](#) with any questions.
- **Communications Intern** will provide assistance on a wide variety of nonprofit communications projects. Interns will have the opportunity to learn about nonprofit marketing, media relations, policy advocacy, and content creation across all communications channels, including email, digital, and social media. Please contact Communications Manager [Alix Collins](#) with any questions.

You can find more details on these two internships [here](#).

CREST Shares Our Experience

Tahoe Summit: At the invitation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and myriad public and private sector stakeholders active in the Lake Tahoe basin, Dr. Gregory Miller gave the keynote address at the sustainable tourism and recreation summit in March and has been invited back to provide another keynote for the Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.

National Park Service/US Agency for International Development International Parks Collaborative for the country of Georgia: In March, NPS invited Dr. Gregory Miller as a panel expert to speak on USA experience with the benefits of wilderness for sustainable tourism and recreation in Georgia, Asia, and the Middle East.

Soul of Travel Podcast: In honor of International Women's Day, Samantha Bray was the guest for Lotus Sojourns' Soul of Travel podcast. [Listen in](#) as Samantha and host Christine Winebrenner Irick discuss destination stewardship, semantics in the sustainable and responsible tourism space, and how travelers can make a difference.

University of South Florida Sustainability Speaker Series: In February, Kelsey Frenkiel presented at the Patel College of Global Sustainability at the University of South Florida's Sustainability Speaker Series, where [Academic Affiliate](#) Dr. Brooke Hansen is a professor. Students, professors, sustainability organizations in the South Florida area, and the general public tuned in to hear about CREST's work to better understand the landscape of food waste prevention in the Caribbean

tourism industry.

Arizona State University class: In February, Kelsey Frenkiel was a guest presenter for students studying sustainable tourism at Arizona State University, where [Academic Affiliates](#) Dr. Christine Buzinde and Dr. Christine Vogt are professors. She gave an overview of responsible travel and a snapshot of different CREST projects that applied to topics they were discussing in class.

University of North Texas class: In March, Kelsey Frenkiel spoke to [Academic Affiliate](#) Dr. Birendra KC's graduate class on policy-making and planning sustainable tourism. She used CREST's Big Bay, Michigan project as a framework to describe tourism planning at the municipal level, destination stewardship council formation, data collection, and branding and marketing.

Endicott College class: In March, Samantha Bray was a guest presenter for [Academic Affiliate](#) Dr. Todd Comen's sustainable tourism honors class at Endicott College. Samantha discussed the fundamentals of tourism in a climate crisis, CREST's current projects to address climate change, and how the industry is embracing the opportunities of climate solutions

CREST in the News

CREST's recent media outreach has focused on what's next for the tourism industry post-pandemic, what travel to Cuba will look like under the Biden-Harris administration, and the impacts of climate change on the tourism industry. Of special note: Managing Director Samantha Bray was profiled for Barron's and CREST won Treehugger's Award for Best Organization! Check out [these articles](#) from Forbes, Globe and Mail, Barron's, Travel Weekly, Skift, Travel & Leisure, and more.



The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit public charity based in Washington, DC. Founded in 2003, our mission is to promote responsible tourism policies and practices globally so that local communities may thrive and steward their cultural resources and biodiversity. [Support our work here.](#)

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