



Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) Newsletter April - June 2021 | Volume 8, Issue 2

From the Executive Director

Travel's recovery from the pandemic is now underway, and so far it is messy, uneven, and confusing for most of us. But, make no mistake, the travel and tourism engine is revving up. Travel is back. While vaccination rates vary widely across the globe, many countries are easing restrictions for travelers: In the US, 7.1 million passengers were screened over Memorial Day weekend in May. People are eager to travel and many destinations, it seems, are eager to invite travelers back.

But we at CREST are cognizant of the period of reflection we just had. We know the tourism industry cannot carry on as it had before the pandemic, as past tourism practices were often not sustainable. The problems we were facing then still exist: overtourism, biodiversity and cultural heritage loss, the climate crisis, and the inequitable access to wealth. In fact, some of those problems have been greatly exacerbated in the absence of tourism. That leaves us with the question, "Are we prepared to deliver on a responsible recovery *now that the moment is finally here?*"

In June, CREST released its book *Overtourism: Lessons for a Better Future*. In it we chart a path forward for tourism that is truly sustainable, focusing on the triple bottom line of people, planet, and prosperity. We urge destinations, tourism operators, and policymakers alike to heed the warnings from so many destinations around the globe and stay committed to the lessons we've learned. The time is now.

While many destinations saw a drastic decrease or near elimination of visitors, many outdoor spaces did not. In the US, the National Park Service welcomed 237 million visitors in 2020. While this represented an overall decrease of 28% from the previous year, there were 20 national parks that broke 2019 records or set a new visitation record in general. Overcrowding and an increase in litter were just some of the issues these parks faced. Determined to enhance environmental awareness and bridge the gap between outdoor recreation and sustainable tourism, CREST has recently partnered with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Guided by our common goals and shared passion for protecting the outdoors, we aim to find a

more sustainable way to protect our natural and cultural resources in all outdoor destinations and communities.

Experience-based economies were devastated by the pandemic, so the return of tourism – albeit slowly – is a relief for so many. If we are to truly ‘Build Back Better’ we must continue to be thoughtful about how we move forward and demand better not only for communities of today but of tomorrow as well.



Gregory Miller, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Announcements

CREST Declares a Climate Emergency & Announces 2021 World Tourism Day Forum



Humanity’s contributions - including those of the travel industry - to our warming planet have put everything at stake. In alignment with our critical work on Tourism in a Climate Crisis, CREST has signed on to [Tourism Declares](#), an initiative that supports tourism businesses, organizations, and individuals in declaring a climate emergency and taking purposeful action to reduce their carbon emissions as per the advice from The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to cut global