

Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) Newsletter November - December, 2020 | Volume 7, Issue 4

From the Executive Director

This has been a year of great uncertainty and loss. For travel and tourism destinations and the industry overall, 2020 was a year of drastic reduction of tourist arrivals, millions of jobs gone, and trillions of dollars lost. But we know the tourism industry is a resilient one. Destinations, businesses, and communities have already begun adapting to this new normal with enhanced screening and testing, stricter cleaning protocols, touchless guest experiences, and virtual experiences. As travel slowly reemerges and more individuals get vaccinated, we will see the tourism industry and local economies recover.

We are confronted with the question, what should recovery look like? This pandemic is a human crisis. It is not only challenging our ability to collectively respond as a global society but also testing our capacity and willingness to be more responsible citizens. Business as usual is not an option, and it has become even more obvious that our COVID recovery efforts need to prioritize the needs of everyday people.

We hope for a more holistic approach to sustainability in 2021, one that includes natural, cultural, and spiritual elements of place coming together to promote economic sustainability. Whether it's slower travel, longer stays, or more local travel, we seek a world where destinations, businesses, communities, and travelers all share a greater sense of humanity and a deeper understanding of our interconnectedness, not just with each other, but with the natural world. Please [join us on this journey of sustainability and regeneration](#) and support CREST if you can, to ensure a sustainable future for everyone.

Yours in responsible travel,





Gregory Miller, Ph.D.

Executive Director

CREST Selected for Project to Protect Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System



CREST is excited to announce that we are embarking upon a new project in Belize! With support from World Wildlife Fund, the Belize World Heritage Advisory Committee, and the Protected Areas Conservation Trust, CREST will be building upon efforts to protect the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (BBRRS), the second largest coral reef system in the world consisting of seven marine protected areas. The BBRRS was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996 but was placed on the List of Sites in Danger in 2009. After the combined efforts of the private, public, and civil sectors and the scientific community, it was removed from that list in 2018.

CREST will be developing a marketing and branding strategy and communications plan to strengthen the Belizean and international community's perception of the importance of the BBRRS. More than half of Belize's population, or about 190,000 people, are supported by income generated through reef-related tourism, fisheries, and scientific research. The economic contribution of these activities is estimated at around 15 percent of Belize's gross domestic product. The BBRRS contains a huge diversity of plant and animal life, with many more species waiting to be discovered. It is also a top destination for scuba diving.

If you have information to contribute to this project, please contact Program Manager Kelsey Frenkiel (kfrenkiel@responsibletravel.org).

Scenario Analysis Underway for Cuban Tourism Sectors





CREST's organizing theme for 2020 was *Tourism in a Changing Climate*, building on CREST's years of work in the Caribbean and our series of publications focused on coastal and marine tourism and climate change. However, 2020 has also challenged the tourism industry with another threat-- the COVID-19 crisis. In an urgent effort to address the dual existential threats to our industry's future, CREST has spent the year conducting critical research surrounding the impacts of COVID-19 and climate change on the Cuban tourism sector. The findings, which will amalgamate into a report to be released in summer 2021, will explore COVID-19 recovery through a series of scenario analyses and will hypothesize future outlooks for specific subsectors of the Cuban tourism industry, such as cruise tourism and accommodations. The report will draw thoughtful conclusions about what this future recovery might imply for combating our ongoing climate crisis and make the case for the travel industry, policy makers, and civil society to engage in urgent mobilization against climate change.

If you are interested in hearing more about what the future of US travel to Cuba might look like in 2021 and beyond, please join us for a [webinar today, December 17 at 5pm EST](#), sponsored by CREST and Cuba/US People to People Partnership, created by the Fund for Reconciliation and Development.

Climate Change & COVID: Voices and Insights from Costa Rica



To elevate real voices on the ground, CREST is releasing a human-interest piece, which shares insights from ten practitioners within Costa Rica's tourism industry. The article, available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), explores what the "new normal" actually means for these individuals in the face of two existential crises—COVID-19

and climate change. Having explored the interconnectedness between these two topics since the start of the pandemic, CREST has found that discourse and research often stall at the national level. To shed light on the current situation and fill this critical gap in knowledge, the interviewees, through anecdotal details, inspire us with hope about human resilience as they share details about how individuals have been coping with the changes that have occurred in 2020.

Community Development Initiative Makes Headway in Rural Michigan



Through 2020, CREST has worked in partnership with the community of Big Bay, Michigan, Eagle Mine, and the Lundin Foundation to advance responsible tourism initiatives. This initiative in this hearty rural community in the Upper Peninsula have included:

- Conducting baseline data collection;
- Developing the “Discover Big Bay” brand;
- [Storytelling](#) in collaboration with the county destination marketing/management organization, Travel Marquette;
- Building local, county, and regional partnerships;
- Installing branded way-finding signage;
- Supporting local businesses in COVID-recovery; and
- Establishing the Big Bay Stewardship Council.

The Big Bay Stewardship Council is an organization made up of representatives from the public, private, and civil sectors, with the mission to facilitate the protection of the unique nature of the greater Big Bay area and promote community improvements in Powell Township (where Big Bay is located) through responsible, properly scaled economic development and stewardship of the natural resources and cultural enrichment.

CREST will continue to work with the Big Bay Stewardship Council through 2021 to build capacity to meet the community’s goals. With CREST’s assistance, the group will kick off a business and strategic planning initiative in January while simultaneously working on tangible and impactful placemaking and marketing projects.

CREST seeks to take lessons learned from this project to help other rural

communities achieve responsible economic development goals through the formation of destination stewardship councils. This initiative is a unique collaboration between CREST, Big Bay, and Eagle Mine, and it highlights our collective commitment to supporting local community development and economic resilience.

Regenerative Travel Whitepaper Outlines Path Forward for Industry

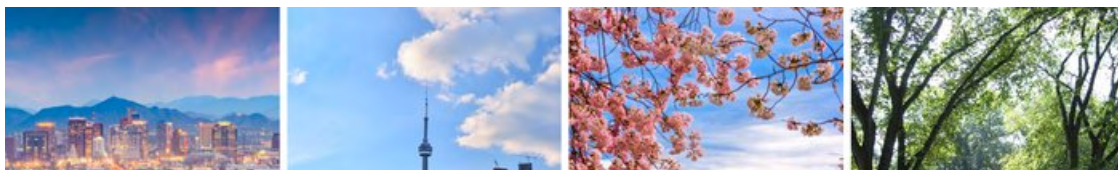


In December, CREST joined six other industry leaders as an affiliate on Regenerative Travel's latest white paper, "[Regenerative Travel Principles for Hospitality.](#)" This paper provides a framework for hospitality stakeholders by focusing on five regenerative principles: whole systems thinking, honoring sense of place, community inclusion and partnership, aspirational in nature, and continual co-evolution.

We believe regenerative travel is essential for improving not only the current conditions at tourist destinations but also the quality and condition of the overall natural and cultural systems. This has never been more critical than it is now. As the tourism industry rebuilds post-COVID, it will be crucial to develop a truly collaborative relationship with both nature and community.

CREST enthusiastically supports Regenerative Travel's inspirational vision and belief that we need to give back, do better, and have tourism be a force for good, and we are proud to be joined by affiliates B-Tourism Group, Global Wellness Institute, Global Wellness Summit, Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, and The Transformational Travel Council.

Leading Tourism Professors Join Academic Affiliates Network





This Fall, CREST released its first-ever Call for Academic Affiliates. We launched our Academic Affiliates program in 2016, and since then, we have established affiliations with leading tourism professors at dozens of universities around the world. We are pleased to welcome our newest Academic Affiliates.



Christine Buzinde is currently an Associate Professor and Director of the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. Prior to joining ASU, Christine Buzinde was an assistant professor at Penn State University. She is the Academic Director for the Civic Engagement Institute of Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, a state department program hosted at ASU from 2016-2018. Her research focuses on two areas: community development through tourism and the politics of tourism representations. Dr. Buzinde has conducted research in the United States, India, Tanzania, and Mexico. Her work has been featured in top-tier academic journals. She serves on the editorial board of *Annals of Tourism Research*.



Rachel Dodds is a Professor at the Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Ryerson University. She was also a past Director of the [Hospitality and Tourism Research Institute](#) at the University. Rachel has more than 25 years of tourism experience working with tour operators, destination management companies, accommodation facilities, festivals and non-profit organizations and still works actively with the industry in her role as a consultant to help the tourism industry become more sustainable. Her recent research examines sustainable tourism, overtourism, destination management, marketing, and tourist motivations. Rachel holds a Ph.D. from the University of Surrey in the UK and a Master's degree from Griffith University in Australia. She has lived and worked in four continents and traveled to over 80 countries.



Seleni Matus has spent more than 15 years designing and directing large, multi-stakeholder initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean that have enhanced the quality of tourism offerings and helped to ensure the long-term health of natural ecosystems. These



include the Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative and the Sustainable Destinations Alliance of the Americas. She is currently the Executive Director of The George Washington University's International Institute of Tourism Studies and Adjunct Professor. A native of Belize, Seleni served as the country's Director of Tourism and oversaw the reorganization of the tourism board in order to meet the demands of a fiercely competitive global marketplace.



Edwin Sabuhoro currently serves as Assistant Professor in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management and African Studies at Penn State University. He received his Law degree from the National University of Rwanda, a Masters of Science degree in Conservation and Tourism from the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK, and a Ph.D. in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at Clemson University. He has worked in all of Rwanda's national parks. Beyond that, Edwin worked as a Senior Economic Development Advisor for SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, Chairman of Tour Operators and Travel Agents Association in Rwanda, President of Rwanda Chamber of Tourism, and Chief Executive Officer for Rwanda Eco-Tours. Edwin has lectured widely at different universities and institutions in Rwanda and the US.

Outstanding Students Selected for CREST Spring Internship

CREST is pleased to welcome three new Program & Research interns, who will be supporting our critical research and analysis in the Spring.

Jinal Dalal is currently a graduate student at the New York University pursuing an M.S. in Tourism Management. She was born and brought up in Mumbai, India and has an MBA in Finance. Through her financial career, she gained experience in investment banking, financial data analysis, risk, and wealth management. She also holds a certificate in Sustainable Business Strategy from Harvard Business School online.

At NYU, she has worked on projects such as Responsible Travel, Sustainable Tourism in Italy and developing sustainable business models for travel and airline companies. She also worked on a consulting project for a US restaurant chain to reduce plastic pollution and carbon emissions. She volunteers at NYU EarthMatters and Citizens Climate Lobby for environmental justice and climate action. Jinal is on the tourism committee at NYU, currently working on their summit event - Social Innovation and Environmental Sustainability.

Carolien den Boer attends Uppsala University Campus Gotland in Sweden, where she is studying for a masters in Sustainable Destination Development. There she is focusing on nature-based tourism. In 2020 she graduated from the University of Amsterdam with a Bachelor in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology

with minors in both Gender and Sexuality studies and Conflict Studies.

Carolien has a lot of experience working in various tourism sectors, such as for an airline and sustainable hotel. She found that she could combine her passion for travel and for sustainability, which is her motivation to pursue a career in sustainable tourism. She believes that an important way to combat the climate crisis is to travel more sustainably.

Kristina Rocks is a graduate student currently attending the Patel College of Global Sustainability at the University of South Florida. She will be graduating in the Spring of 2021 with a Master of Arts in global sustainability, with a concentration in sustainable tourism. While at USF, she has become a LEED Green Associate and a passionate supporter of responsible and ethical tourism practices.

As an undergraduate student, Kristina studied at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, recognized as the highest-ranking hospitality and tourism program in the nation. There she served as a mentor with the Peer Outreach and Mentoring Program (POMP), guiding new and at-risk students towards academic excellence while fostering an environment of cultural diversity. During her time at Rosen College, Kristina learned the value of service, professionalism, and leadership which she has consistently applied throughout her many experiences working in the hospitality and tourism industry. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in hospitality management, she chose to pursue a graduate degree that would allow her to make positive and meaningful changes within a dynamic global industry.

Travel Auctions Provide Critical Support of CREST's Initiatives



CREST extends a heartfelt thank-you to the exemplary travel providers that contributed to our Fall Travel Auction, which took place via Charitybuzz November 10 - 24. We recognize that this is a very challenging time for our partners in the travel industry, and their continued support of our mission through these critical fundraisers in 2020 is appreciated beyond words. Responsible, sustainable, and regenerative travel is the way forward as we all contend with the climate crisis, COVID-19, and a myriad of other challenges and these auctions allow us the ability to push forward with timely research and solutions. Donors to our most recent auction included: [Alaska Wildland Adventures*](#), [Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort*](#),

[Coyaba Beach Resort](#), [Diamond M Ranch Resort*](#), [Hostelling International USA*](#), [The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach Seychelles](#), [Hilton](#), [Mashpi Lodge](#), [Overseas Adventure Travel](#), [Nayara Gardens](#), [Océano Patagonia](#), [Seychelles Tourism Board](#), [VBT*](#), and [Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi](#).

**Signifies Platinum Sponsorship, which means that the donor has committed to supporting CREST auctions for a period of five years.*

Would your business like to support our work to transform the way the world travels? Our Valentine's Day Auction will take place from **January 28 - December 11**. Please contact Kelsey Frenkiel at kfrenkiel@responsibletravel.org to discuss the opportunity by **Friday, January 8**.

CARE for the Cape & Islands Announces Stewardship Award Winners



CARE for the Cape & Islands, in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, recently announced its 2020 Stewardship Awards. The annual Stewardship Award was given to Jess Georges, owner of Green Road Refill, a zero-waste mobile retail shop. The Youth Stewardship Award was given to brothers Owen (10) and Rye (7) Silva for their efforts to reduce the amount of litter in their community of Martha's Vineyard.

You can support CARE's work by shopping online at Redbubble. A portion of all purchases made through [this link](#) will go to support CARE, and you will also receive \$20 off your first order. Check out CARE's newest [Take Care Cape Cod winter masks](#) and other designs! CARE for the Cape & Islands is a fiscally-sponsored program of CREST.

Left photo: Brothers Owen and Rye accept the CARE Youth Stewardship Award for their work to reduce the amount of litter in Martha's Vineyard

Right photo: Jess Georges, owner of Green Road Refill, accepts the CARE Stewardship Award for her work to raise awareness around single-use plastics in Cape Cod.

Torres del Paine Legacy Fund Releases Biennial Report





While the pandemic has kept us traveling more with our minds than with our feet, the Torres del Paine Legacy Fund (TDPLF) has been utilizing this time to prepare for the return of travel to Torres del Paine National Park and southern Patagonia. Over the last two years, their diversified portfolio of projects and partners has allowed them to support the conservation and development of Patagonia's protected lands and communities. Further details of TDPLF's impact can be found within their [2018-2020 Biennial Report](#). As we reflect on the past year and hope for a travel-filled 2021, TDPLF thanks all of the local and international partners who have continually made this work possible. TDPLF is a fiscally-sponsored program of CREST.

CREST Shares Our Experience

CREST values and frequently participates in opportunities for knowledge exchange on topics related to responsible travel. [Recent virtual speaking engagements](#) include:

- **Washington University in St. Louis:** In December, CREST Managing Director Samantha Bray joined Academic Affiliate Andrea Murray's "Tourism & Sustainability" class to speak on the topic of Tourism in a Climate Crisis. Samantha presented the fundamentals of climate change, how tourism is impacted, how tourism contributes, lessons we've learned from COVID related to tourism in a crisis, and solutions for the path forward. The class engaged in a lively discussion, exemplifying the enthusiasm among young people to understand and tackle this complex topic.
- **Wellness Tourism Association:** As part of their annual meeting, On November 18, CREST Executive Director Gregory Miller was an invited speaker on "Sustainable, Regenerative Travel: Rebuilding Responsibly" and was joined by CREST Board member, Jessica Blotter of Kind Traveler.
- **Denver, Colorado (virtual), Global Youth Summit of the Americas:** On November 9, Gregory Miller organized and led a panel of thought leaders on regenerative travel and responsible recovery for youth leaders from 16 countries across the Americas.

CREST in the News

CREST's recent media outreach has focused on the path forward for tourism as we slowly begin to emerge from this pandemic. Check out [these articles](#) from The

IslandNow, The Tye, Travel Weekly, TravelAge West, The Telegraph, Forbes, Beau Monde Traveler Luxury Travel Magazine, 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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