



Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) Newsletter October-December 2021 | Volume 8, Issue 4

From the Executive Director

Throughout 2021, the pandemic and climate crisis continued to pummel the world with uncertainty and angst. It was a difficult year for all involved in tourism, especially for destinations and local communities, but we are proud of all that the CREST community has done and accomplished. Through strategic collaboration, CREST developed research, projects, and events, shared critical resources, created climate action plans, and committed to a better future for tourism as a launch partner for the Glasgow Declaration.

The problems facing the tourism industry are big but not insurmountable. Together, we can transform travel for everyone. As we move forward, it is imperative that tourism returns in a more sustainable way that puts communities first.

We must address inequities created by the pandemic, as well as the ongoing climate crisis. We must also work to prevent overtourism and the loss of biodiversity and cultural heritage. We can do this by putting communities at the center of the tourism planning and decision-making process.

How will we at CREST do our part in 2022? We will continue bridging the gap between academic research and practical application, using a community- and people-centered approach to problem-solving, and collaborating with like-minded organizations around the country and the globe to develop a robust knowledge center.

From our team to you, thank you for your continued and ongoing support. Without you, none of this would be possible.





Gregory Miller, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Announcements

A Fond Farewell and Warm Welcome



After nearly eight years of steadfast leadership and unwavering commitment to our mission, Managing Director **Samantha Bray** will be stepping down from her role at CREST on December 31, 2021. During this time, Samantha has served two Executive Directors: 5+ years with Martha Honey and these past 2+ years with Gregory Miller. "Samantha has been the heart and soul of CREST," notes Gregory Miller. "She is a true thought leader in the field of sustainable tourism, leads by example, and has a real knack for strategic partnerships, embodied by her exemplary work with our Future of Tourism Coalition, World Tourism Day Forums, and destination stewardship in such diverse locations as Ethiopia, the upper peninsula of Michigan, Belize marine protected areas, and Charleston, SC."

We could not be more grateful for her time, talent, and energy, without which CREST would not be what it is today. We look forward to what comes next for Samantha – a Geography Ph.D. at the University of Waterloo, Canada where she'll study localizing and decarbonizing the supply chain with the Interdisciplinary

Centre on Climate Change - and look forward to collaborating on future research and projects. Ever forward, Samantha!

We are pleased to announce our new Director of Development & Partnerships, **Wes Espinosa**. Wes joins the CREST team with fundraising, grant management, and business development experience both in the US and abroad. Most recently, he served as the Director of the Torres del Paine Legacy Fund, a CREST fiscally-sponsored program. Wes will serve as CREST's first full-time development staff member and we are excited for him to help CREST strengthen its strategic partnerships and expand its programming.

"Wes has CREST's mission in his DNA, with a strong commitment to conservation, local communities and tourism as a force for good," offers Gregory Miller. "He has a keen business mind with a genuine eye on our dedication to a more holistic concept of sustainability. Team CREST will be a strong, vital force for a sustainable future through responsible travel!"

New eBook Released



Drawing upon trends and research throughout the Greater Caribbean, *COVID-19 and Climate Change: A Double-Edged Sword for Tourism in Cuba & Beyond* places particular emphasis on the case of Cuban tourism. An industry historically marked by high volatility due to foreign dependence, US policy, external shocks, and limited market diversification, Cuba's tourism industry today now faces the greatest existential threats to industry success and societal health: the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis. Throughout this eBook, we explore the impacts of and linkages among COVID-19, climate change, and the Cuban tourism sector.

The Spanish version of this eBook will be published in January 2022.

[Download eBook](#)

Coming Soon: Future of Tourism Coalition Community Toolkit



The Future of Tourism Coalition will soon be launching the first phase of four toolkits to help destinations and businesses on their path towards a better tourism model, covering topics of Destination Stewardship, Measure What Matters, Supply Chain Management, and Climate Change. Each toolkit will feature resources, tools, and services offered by the Future of Tourism Coalition members. Sign up for [email alerts](#) to receive updates about the toolkit and other exciting initiatives from the Coalition, or better yet, [join the Coalition as a Signatory](#).

Thank you for Ten Years of Service



At the end of 2021, two larger-than-life CREST Board members complete their terms of service after 10 years: Mike Robbins and Alice Marshall.

Mike, CREST's current Board Chair, has been a steadfast, even-keeled, and positive force for good within our organization. He has shepherded us through nonprofit challenges and offered countless hours of expertise and direction.

Alice, whose PR firm - Alice Marshall Public Relations - manages CREST as a pro bono client, has quite literally helped put CREST on the map. We are able to reach those who need to hear our message in large part thanks to Alice.

With their global experience and belief that CREST can provide the solutions the tourism industry needs, both Mike and Alice have pushed us to become better and given us tools to do so.

We are immensely grateful for their service and friendship over the last 10 years. But this is not goodbye - Once part of the CREST family, always part of the CREST family, and we look forward to working with them in new exciting ways. Thank you, Mike and Alice!

Updates

Crisis Response and Recovery: Nature-Based Tourism, Biodiversity, and Livelihoods



On November 17-18, CREST co-sponsored a virtual symposium alongside the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group (TAPAS Group), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Arizona State University (ASU) School of Community Resources and Development. We brought together global experts to discuss timely and important topics such as health and tourism, overtourism, conservation financing, and visitor management.

[View recordings](#)

[Access resources](#)

Three Year Project in Big Bay, Michigan Wraps Up



In December, CREST concluded three years of work with the community of Big Bay, Michigan, funded by the Lundin Foundation. **Year 1** focused on conducting a scoping study of responsible tourism opportunities and tourism visioning for the rural community of the Upper Peninsula. **Year 2** focused on creating the [Discover Big Bay](#) tourism brand and laying the foundation of a destination stewardship council. **Year 3** has focused on capacity building of the Big Bay Stewardship Council (BBSC), supporting organizational administration, relationship building, marketing, and placemaking projects. The BBSC also hosted their first event in collaboration with a local campground managed by the County, Perkins Park - the Big Bay Fall Fest.

CREST will conclude the project by finalizing an operations manual and business plan with the BBSC. We are honored and proud to have worked side by side with this resilient and inspiring community for so many years and can't wait to see the results of the BBSC's work in the years to come.

CREST will be compiling lessons learned from this rural tourism development project in a 2022 edition of the Destination Stewardship Report.

Economic Analysis in Southeast Alaska



This year, CREST has embarked on an independent economic analysis in Southeast Alaska to determine the benefits and costs of large-scale cruise tourism compared with other types of tourism, with particular emphasis on the ports of Juneau, Hoonah, Skagway, and Sitka (pictured above).

CREST has worked to carefully curate a team of expert economists and researchers with decades of experience in order to execute this project. Over the past months, our team has gathered quantitative economic evidence while in tandem posing points of discussion and consideration based on qualitative data collected from a wide array of voices: industry professionals, community residents, local governments, Native Alaskans, and more.

Our goal is to provide better factual, unbiased information and analysis that can be used as a foundation for dialogue and discussion among Alaska policymakers and government agencies, cruise lines, civic groups, tribal organizations, tourism businesses and associations, academic and research institutions, and the media. The results will be freely and publicly disseminated in early 2022, following CREST's long track record of producing insightful and academically rigorous studies that it makes publicly available without cost.

If you wish to provide information to our study, please reach out to Director of Research & Programs, [Ellen Rugh](#).

Fiscally Sponsored Program Updates



Destination Stewardship Center: Released in early November, the Destination Stewardship Center, in collaboration with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, released their [Autumn \(4Q\) edition of the Destination Stewardship Report](#), which includes articles from Italy, Sweden, Vanuatu, India, Tunisia, and German, all selected from the 2021 Top 100 destination stewardship competition. The report also features new publications, news links, and upcoming events and webinars. For a look at all Destination Stewardship Reports, click [here](#). If you have a story that you would like to pitch for publication, please reach out to Director of Research & Programs, [Ellen Rugh](#).

CARE for Cape & Islands: In October, CARE hosted its fifth annual CARE for the Cape & Islands Day at the [Chatham Drama Guild](#), activating 75+ volunteer hours to conduct needed maintenance and upkeep on a beloved community theater operated solely by volunteers. CARE also held its annual fall summit on November 4, where they presented their annual Business/Organization Stewardship Award to Stephanie Murphy from Woods Hole Sea Grant/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute for a boat wrap recycling program that removed 12 tons of plastic from the waste stream. They also presented their Youth Stewardship Award to 12 year old Zoe S., who contributes environmental pieces to the school paper.

Torres del Paine Legacy Fund, Chile: Over the past few months, the Torres del Paine Legacy Fund (TDPLF), led by their enthusiastic volunteers, executed two monumental field projects in the national park. TDPLF's first volunteer group, in collaboration with the National Forestry Agency (CONAF), monitored the reforestation of thousands of lenga plants and eliminated invasive species threatening native ecosystems. Then, TDPLF, CONAF, Conservation VIP, and volunteers officially wrapped up a 5-year flagship project: 11 kilometers of new, sustainable trail from Paine Grande to Italiano on the W circuit in Torres del Paine.

We congratulate and thank all those involved for their hard work in protecting the health and longevity of this precious landscape!

Five New Interns Join the Team





Lauren Broce (USA): Lauren is a Communications Intern at CREST. She graduated from Kansas State University with Degrees in both Mass Communications and Spanish, as well as a Certificate in Travel and Tourism Promotion. She is excited to use her experience in social media and communications strategy to promote sustainable tourism and responsible travel with CREST.

Jacqueline Harper (Canada): Jacqueline is Program and Research Intern at CREST. She holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies in Environment and Business from the University of Waterloo, and is pursuing a Master of Environmental Studies in Geography (with a sustainable tourism research focus). She is committed to merging her experience and passion together to aid tourism organizations in becoming positive stewards for both natural ecosystems and the local community.

Tara Hetz (USA): Tara is a Programs & Research intern at CREST focusing on gateway communities, Sustainable Destination Management, and natural resource protection. She is a Master's Student in the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department at the University of Utah, and her goal is to conduct research in social-environmental science. She wants to contribute to the development of interdisciplinary conservation science with a comprehensive understanding of social-ecological interactions. She wants to help better engage communities in protected area conservation design, custodianship of natural resources, and improvement of livelihoods.

Sarah Anupi Kutahi (Kenya): Sarah is a Communications Intern with CREST. She is an environmental scientist, a birder, and a creative writer. She recently acquired a Postgraduate Diploma in Mass Communication following her discovery of writing as an avenue of educating masses on critical environmental issues. She hopes to become an equipped communications person after the internship and to communicate and influence others to adopt sustainable use of resources.

Natalie Malouf (USA): Natalie is a Programs & Research Intern at CREST. She is especially interested in sustainable development and how travel and tourism impact the economies, communities, and natural environments of countries around the world (particularly developing countries). She hopes to continue learning more about the intersection of tourism and international development and eventually work to help international communities and destinations align their development and tourism goals with more sustainable practices.

Support

Help Us Transform Travel for Everyone



This year our goal is to raise \$5,000 to support our destination stewardship research and projects around the world. As travel restrictions lift and people travel once again, it is imperative that we continue putting communities first. It's better for people, our planet, and our collective prosperity.

Join us this holiday season. Help us transform travel and support destination communities by donating today.

[Donate today](#)

New Platinum Sponsor: Welcome Hotel Otavalo!



[Hotel Otavalo](#) by Art Hotels best known for “Los Ponchos” market, is a must see destination in Ecuador since it hosts the largest Andean fair of artisanal handicrafts and textiles in all of South America. Hotel Otavalo is one of the oldest buildings within the city. Recently refurbished, the history of the city is showcased through the building materials used for its construction more than a century ago, which creates the sensation of being in a castle within the city. Hotel

Otavalo incorporates the pure essence of a Boutique Hotel that offers its guests the comfort and hospitality of 5-star accommodations.

This past September, Hotel Otavalo launched its ME ECUADOR project to an international audience. This project formalizes the work carried out towards the development of artisan and artist enterprises in indigenous communities of the province of Imbabura for the promotion of tourism among travelers, travel advisors, and providers through transformational experiences.

Thank You Fall Auction Donors



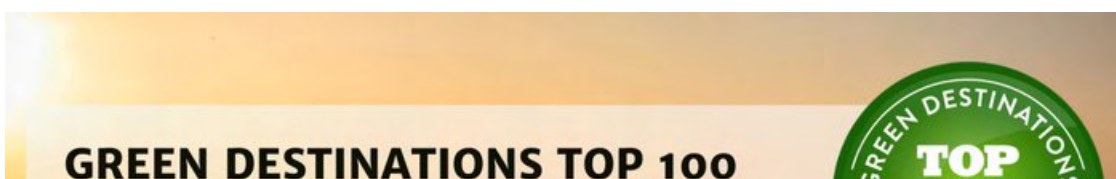
Throughout the pandemic, the constant support of the travel industry in advancing CREST's mission has been both heartening and humbling. Our Fall Travel Auction was held October 26-November 9 via Charitybuzz.com, and we'd like to extend a huge thank you to our Fall Travel Auction donors: [Alaska Wildland Adventures](#)*, [Country Walkers](#)*, [Hacienda Jimenita](#)*, [Art Hotels Ecuador](#)*, [Laguna Lodge Eco-Resort & Nature Reserve](#)*, [Montfair Resort Farm](#)*, [Pavilions Himalayas The Farm](#)*, Indagare ([Canyon Ranch Tucson](#) and [Miraval Berkshires](#)), [Hilton](#), [Inkaterra Peru](#), [Mashpi Lodge](#), [Océano Patagonia](#), and [Overseas Adventure Travel](#).

**Indicates CREST Platinum Sponsorship*

Our next fundraising auction will be January 27 - February 10. Would your business like to join us? Submit your package [here](#) by January 13! We'd love to share your sustainability and community initiatives with the CREST audience. Contact Director of Development & Partnerships [Wes Espinosa](#) with any questions.

Want to bid in our next auction? Be sure to create a CharityBuzz account in advance. Have an idea of a package we could offer? Contact our Director of Development & Partnerships [Wes Espinosa](#).

Green Destinations Top 100 Stories





Since 2014, the Green Destinations Top 100 Stories competition has generated an amazing collection of Good Practice Stories, covering many aspects of sustainable destination management and regeneration. They illustrate the leadership of their storytellers, and they are a great inspiration for destinations, businesses and travelers.

This 8th edition of the Top 100 competition is supported by the Future of Tourism Coalition and we welcome destinations from all around the world to tell their story, share their experience and successes, and inspire the future's tourism leadership.

[Learn more](#)

Media & Outreach

Sharing Expertise

On November 10, Dr. Gregory Miller spoke with Melissa Biggs Bradley, CREST Board Director, and CEO and Founder of **Indagare Travel**, and fellow panelists Shoshana Stewart (CEO, Turquoise Mountain), Neil Midlane (Group Impact Manager, Wilderness Safaris), and Jean Gael Collomb, PhD (Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Network) on making a positive impact while traveling. They discussed how - and why- travelers should do it throughout their travels, touching on the various benefits not only to people and wildlife but also to themselves. [View recording](#).

On December 1, Kelsey Frenkiel spoke to **New York University's School of Professional Studies** on Climate Action in Tourism & Hospitality, walking students and professionals through the climate action planning process.

CREST in the News

CREST's recent media outreach has focused on what's next for the tourism industry as travel begins to open back up, with particular focus on the climate crisis, overtourism, and what individuals can do to be a more responsible traveler.

Check out [our latest articles](#) from Grist, The New York Times, AFAR, Travel Weekly, and more.



The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) is a 501 (c)(3) global nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC dedicated to increasing the positive global impact of responsible tourism. 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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