The Greening of the Tourism Industry

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Brian T. Mullis, President
Sustainable Travel International
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Who is STI?

Non-profit mission to help travelers and tourism providers protect the places they visit, and the planet.

*Leave the World a Better Place®*
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Why Sustainable Tourism?

- **1950**: 25 million international travelers
- **2006**: 842 million international travelers
- **2007**: 900 million international travelers
- **2020**: 1.5 billion international travelers
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Why Sustainable Tourism?

- Environmental Impacts
- Socio-cultural Impacts
- Economic Impacts
Why Sustainable Tourism?

- 70 percent of all plants and animals exist on 1.4 percent of the earth’s land surface
Defining Sustainable Tourism

"Sustainable tourism in its purest sense, is an industry which attempts to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment, and the conservation of local ecosystems. It is responsible tourism which is both ecologically and culturally sensitive.” (UNWTO)
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Defining Triple Bottom Line

An expanded baseline for measuring performance, adding socio-cultural and environmental dimensions to the traditional economic benchmark.

A positive triple bottom line means a net:
- Improvement in conservation of the natural environment
- Social benefit for local communities
- Profit for business owners and shareholders
- Gain for national and regional economies
Sustainable Tourism –
A Force for Positive Change

Company Benefits
- Improved profitability
- Attraction of talent
- Preservation of the environment and cultures
- Increased market strength
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Sustainable Tourism —
A Force for Positive Change

Company Benefits

- **55.1 million adult Americans** have ceaseless expectations for unique and culturally authentic travel experiences that protect and preserve the ecological and cultural environment (*TIA and National Geographic Traveler 2002*).

- **More than half** of all U.S. adults say they would be more likely to select a travel provider that uses more environmentally friendly products and processes (*Travel Industry Association 2007*)
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Sustainable Tourism –
A Force for Positive Change

Traveler Benefits

- Gain an appreciation / understanding of other cultures
- Enhances global perspective
- Help to protect special sense of place locally/regionally
- Feel good about giving back - supporting communities and environmental conservation
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Host Community Benefits
- Improved local employment opportunities / wages
- Increased opportunities for local enterprise
- Improved infrastructure and increased access to services
- Increased participation of local stakeholders in decision-making
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Sustainable Tourism Practices

- Carbon Neutral Travel
- Travel Philanthropy and Voluntourism
- Zero waste
- Certification
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Defining Carbon Offsets

Mechanisms by which the impact of emitting a ton of GHG or CO2 can be negated or diminished by avoiding the release of a ton elsewhere, or absorbing a ton of GHG or CO2 from the air that otherwise would have remained in the atmosphere.
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Why Carbon Offsetting?

- Travel is a main culprit of climate change, accounting for up to 1/3 of world-wide climate damaging greenhouse gas emissions (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development study)
- The average American emits over 10 tons of CO2 per year
- If everyone in the world emitted this much CO2, we’d need more than 2 ½ planets to support us all.
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Carbon Offsetting

Quality offset projects:

- **Diversify our power supply** and reduce dependency on imported fuels
- Support the development of resources and technology that does not pollute, helping communities **reduce air and water pollution**
- **Contribute to sustainable development**, improved quality of life, transfer of knowledge and technology, and local job generation
- **Increase demand for renewable energy technology** and energy efficient products
Defining Travel Philanthropy

Travel Philanthropy is a voluntary movement of conscientious consumers and responsible travel companies who are donating financial resources, time, talent and economic patronage to protect and positively impact the cultures and environments they visit.
Volunteer Tourism or VolunTourism is a field of tourism in which travelers visit a destination and take part in projects in the local community. Projects are commonly nature-based, people-based or involve such things as restoration or construction of buildings, assisting archeologists in digging up artifacts, etc.
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Why Travel Philanthropy & VolunTourism?

- Traveler gains a sense of purpose and connection
- Movement towards participatory philanthropy
- Highly effective and influential use of resources and time
- Generates community benefits
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Pitfalls to Avoid

- Selecting appropriate partners and projects
- Focused on self-reliance and personal initiative
Zero Waste

- An approach to waste disposal that takes the whole picture into account, emulating natural cyclical processes.
- Since tourism generates pollution and waste, zero waste becomes an important strategy in coastal and other fragile ecosystems.
- At least 30% of a hotel’s solid waste can be sorted for reuse and recycling and up to 50% can be composted.
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Sustainable Tourism Certification

Quality Program Characteristics
- User-friendly
- Multi-Stakeholder Involvement
- Educational Orientation
- Systematic Approach
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Questions?

Thank You!

Web: www.sustainabletravelinternational.org
Email: info@sustainabletravel.com
US Phone: 720-273-2975
UK Phone: +44(0)779-931-1228