

Canadian Charter for Sustainable Tourism

“Sustainable tourism actively fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural, cultural and historic resources and special places by local residents, the tourism industry, governments, and visitors. It is tourism which is viable over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.”

Canada boasts a grandeur of natural landscapes, a wealth of cultural heritage, and a distinctive, vibrant society. It is ideally positioned to demonstrate global leadership in sustainable tourism.

Tourism in Canada, in every aspect, shall be based on criteria of sustainability. Marketing, services, operations and development must be ecologically sound, economically viable and responsible, and culturally, ethically and socially equitable. Sustainable Tourism is the process of destination stewardship: it preserves our natural and cultural capital, and enhances society and economy. Through destination stewardship, tourism industry businesses and organizations, parks and sites, and marketing associations will show leadership in building sustainable communities.

Sustainable tourism is based on a Code of Ethics. The Canadian tourism industry is guided by values of respect, integrity and empathy in the design, delivery and marketing of sustainable tourism products, facilities and services.

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WHEREAS sustainable tourism protects and enhances the environment, culture, society and economy of the community,

Name of business or organization

pledges to support these principles of the Canadian Charter for Sustainable Tourism:

Integrity of place: We will be active stewards of our destination, developing and improving it only in ways distinctive to the locale, accurate and reflective of its natural and cultural heritage, and sensitive to its peoples, society and culture.

Protect Natural Heritage Resources

We will support and contribute to the protection, enhancement and restoration of the integrity of natural environments, habitat, species at risk, biodiversity and scenic appeal; encourage the establishment of parks, sites and reserves; minimize our ecological footprint by respecting zoning and policies, conducting environmental impact assessments as warranted; and work to enhance public awareness and involvement in the protection of natural heritage.

Promote Appreciation and Enjoyment

We will engage our clients and visitors in the distinctive natural and cultural story of our region of Canada, sharing experiences of our natural, cultural and social heritage; and fostering support for the protection and sensitive use of heritage resources and places.

Collaborate with Communities

We will collaborate with and respect the rights and values of the community, First Nations, property owners, agencies and organizations, customers, suppliers and employees. We will support education, planning, decision-making and stewardship for sustainable community development and delivery of tourism programs and services.

Support Culture

We will support local culture and arts, preserve and protect heritage sites, and respect local architecture and cultural tradition through marketing, trip-planning, tourism activities and in our leading-edge services and facilities; and we will encourage efforts by both residents and visitors to do likewise.

Grow the Economy

We will create sustainable products and services reflective of the region, and will collaborate with our industry and the community to maximize regional economic development while pursuing best practices of sustainability in ensuring our financial success.

Minimize Human Impacts

We will seek innovative solutions to mitigate or avoid undesirable environmental, social and cultural impacts; and limit activities, services and facilities to levels that do not threaten the integrity of heritage resources or systems. We will minimize water use, reduce energy consumption, reduce greenhouse emissions, reduce solid waste and pollution, prevent introduction of invasive species, and use native species in landscaping insofar as possible.

Raise Awareness

We will collaborate with organizations, First Nations, agencies, our community, governments and our staff in education, training and research for better knowledge, sound decision-making and stewardship toward sustainable tourism and sustainable community development.

Contribute and Commit Globally

We will proudly display this Canadian Charter for Sustainable Tourism, which we commit to support and foster through developing our own sustainability plan. We recognize that achievement must be measurable and credible, and therefore accept the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria* as an accreditation and review process. We will show leadership and advance sustainable tourism in Canada by building capability and sharing best practices, technologies, planning and solutions with governments, communities, stakeholders, travellers, and other industries. As applicable, we will participate in national policy development and initiatives.

* *Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria* World Conservation Congress, Barcelona, Spain; October, 2008