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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES CHECKLIST

For the Lodging Industry

Sustainability is a growing trend in all industries and is now finding its way into mainstream tourism. The increasing popularity of sustainability has led to differing understandings of what sustainability really means. To help clarify for industrial professionals, the Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University has developed a working definition to include "actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues, and taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination's socio-cultural, historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors."

The following twelve categories are offered for consideration where you might incorporate sustainability within your tourism business, in developing government policy, or in your personal life. Within each category you will also find a list of specific actions in sustainable practices for the lodging industry.

This list is not intended to be an environmental certification program. It is also not intended to replace a formal sustainability management plan, however it can be a helpful tool in assessing your current business practices and serve as a spring board in developing your own business' formal sustainability plan. This checklist is a work in progress and businesses are encouraged share best practices not included in this list.

We would like to acknowledge the staff of Sustainable Travel International (STI) for the development of many of these items as well as their permission to use this information for informational purposes. Please visit www.sustainabletravelinternational.org for further information and a list of their services. You can contact Katherine Baucom, East Coast STI /Center for Sustainable Tourism Representative at Katieb@sustainabletravel.com.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Management and Reduction

1. Use renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal;
2. Use passive solar water heating systems;
3. Purchase renewable energy credits and or greenhouse gas offsets;
4. Minimize transportation by scheduling deliveries for multiple items;
5. Provide guests opportunities to offset the greenhouse gas emissions that result from travel and stay by purchasing carbon offsets, green tags, or renewable energy credits.
6. Provide opportunities for the use of alternative forms of transportation for guest and staff such as carpooling, mass transit maps, bike racks, and showers;
7. Offer preferred parking spaces for guests and staff who use alternative fuel vehicles or alternative transportation;

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8. Choose local vendors to reduce transportation of items;
9. Use electric or manual landscaping equipment;
10. Institute fuel economizing programs for vehicles utilized in company operations such as regular inspection of vehicles, reduced idling, and revise travel plans to minimize distances;
11. Allow flexible staff schedules to minimize staff travel during heavy traffic periods;
12. Utilize and provide for staff and guests video conferencing or teleconferencing to minimize travel to meetings;
13. Adopt alternative forms of transportation and fuels, such as hybrid-electric, biodiesel, E85 such as shuttle (Ethanol) or electric for business activities services and/or errand and delivery companies;
14. Adopt alternative forms of transportation and fuels, such as Participate in used cooking oil recycling program for biodiesel processing.

Solid Waste Management, Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

1. Conduct a waste audit to determine a baseline for future waste reductions;
2. Purchase products in reusable/returnable containers; formally ask suppliers to reduce packaging, and develop "take back" programs with vendors to return crates, pallets, and other packing materials;
3. Reduce and reuse paper by:
 - Selecting photocopiers and printers able to print on both sides;
 - Distributing information to customers, staff, and business associates via e-mail and avoid hard copy;
 - Avoiding use of fax cover sheets;
 - Distributing inter-office documents using routing slips, bulletin board, or scan for email distribution rather than printing a copy for individual staff members;
 - Providing daily newspapers and phonebooks to clients on demand only;
 - Using both sides of paper when printing; use reverse side of used paper for printing rough drafts;
 - Streamlining operational systems that rely on paper or "hard" copies;
 - Reusing envelopes for inter-office mail;
 - Providing guests with the option of paperless check-in and check-out
 - Set and use fax and copy machines to copy documents directly to computers rather than printing a new copy;
4. Donate obsolete or unwanted equipment, electronics, furniture, drapes, and carpeting to charity;
5. Eliminate the use of Styrofoam and other difficult to recycle products; If necessary, develop "difficult to recycle" programs if volumes warrant;
6. Donate surplus room amenities, paper products, and linens to charity or local artisans/craftsmen;
7. Donate unused food to a community food bank or compost;
8. Purchase products such as bathroom amenities, cleaning supplies, and food in bulk and in concentrated form whenever possible;
9. Give preference to products with high post-consumer recycled content in purchasing policy;
10. Give preference to reusable options if available, such as glass cups, cotton bags, and refillable soap and shampoo dispensers, over single use items in purchasing policy;
11. When reusable options are not feasible, use disposable products that are compostable such as corn based cutlery;
12. Distribute condiments and napkins from behind the counter or upon request;
13. Ensure that printed materials, brochures and marketing materials, have a high level of post-consumer recycled content (at least 35%) and print using soy ink;
14. Purchase antiques and furniture from local vendors;
15. Recycle damaged towels and sheets as cleaning rags and craft torn or worn linens into other usable items, e.g., sheets into pillowcases;
16. Reuse newspaper, shredded paper, and incoming packaging materials (bags, boxes, peanuts) for packaging and shipping needs;



17. Institute a composting program for yard and food waste. Mulch grass clippings and avoid bagging;
18. Purchase recyclable toner cartridges;
19. Institute policies that provide for the reuse of any unopened amenities and re-fill if possible;
20. Use non-bleached napkins, paper towels, and coffee filters;
21. Provide alternatives to individual plastic water bottles such as water pitchers and point of use water filters;
22. Use effective inventory control, such as just-in-time purchasing, effective labeling systems, and last in/first out, to reduce waste from expired stock;
23. Install high efficiency hand-dryers to minimize paper towel use;
24. Ensure proper disposal of hazardous materials such as aerosol cans, solvents, and other potentially hazardous materials;
25. Purchase products that can be reused, repaired, refinished, or reupholstered if damaged;
26. Use rechargeable batteries;
27. Provide cigarette disposal bins in smoking areas;
28. Purchase durable goods of sufficient quality to allow reuse, refinishing, and/or reupholstering
29. Ensure proper disposal of hazardous materials such as aerosol cans, solvents, and other potentially hazardous materials;
30. Use preventative maintenance on equipment to reduce risk of having to replace equipment;
31. Provide and publicize recycling bins throughout company property, including guest rooms;
32. Begin or enlarge a recycling program to include:
 - Aluminum
 - Glass
 - Office mix
 - Batteries
 - Yard waste electronics
 - Plastic
 - Corrugated cardboard
 - Newspaper
 - Ink cartridges and laser toner cartridges
 - Phone books
 - Fluorescent light tubes
 - Electronics such as computers and televisions.

Freshwater Consumption Reduction

1. Conduct regular inspections and establish preventative maintenance schedules to ensure maximum efficiency, i.e., ensure that the blow down on cooling towers are at manufacture's specifications;
2. Educate staff on water conservation and best practices;
3. Conduct a water audit with a water conservation professional;
4. Discourage water-based cleanup and use alternatives such as microfiber technology;
5. When purchasing new or replacing appliances or fixtures, purchase water-efficient models such as those certified by EPA WaterSense® and Energy Star®;
6. Install low-flow aerators on sinks (1.5 gal/min) and low-flow shower heads (2.75 gal/min);
7. Install automatic shut off sinks in common area rest rooms;
8. Use re-circulating, chilled water loop and temperature control systems in water cooled ice machines, air conditioners, and water cooled refrigeration units;
9. Use air-cooled ice machines rather than water-cooled models;



10. Clean windows on an on-call basis rather than according to an established schedule;
11. Use gray water (from dishwashers, laundry, etc.) and rain water irrigate landscaping. Check state and local government-approved uses;
12. Adopt an optional linen reuse service program for guests that stay multiple nights. Include staff and guest education to maximize effectiveness.
13. Use floor cleaning equipment with high pressure, low volume and recycling filtering systems;
14. Use best management practices in water usage for landscaping/irrigation, including:
 - Establish frequency schedule according to local climate, season and landscaped area (multiple hydro zones) in order to maximize water use efficiency;
 - Raise lawn mower cutting height to cut down on evaporation;
 - Routinely inspect sprinkler system, including heads, nozzles, lines and valves, to ensure efficient settings and proper operation;
 - Limit lawn areas and/or use xeriscaping;
 - Place ornamental water features in shaded areas;
 - Avoid plant fertilizing and pruning that would stimulate excessive growth;
 - Use soaker hoses in plant beds;
 - Remove weeds and unhealthy plants so that remaining plants can benefit from water saved;
 - Water landscapes only when necessary; one inch of water per week is sufficient to sustain established lawns in most circumstances;
 - Time watering to occur in the early morning or evening when evaporation is lowest;
 - Remove any thatch and aerate turf to encourage the movement of water to the root zone;
 - Avoid runoff and make sure sprinklers do not run onto sidewalks paved areas;
 - Do not water on windy, rainy, or overly hot days;
 - Install rain shut-off or moisture sensors to ensure against over watering;
 - Ensure irrigation equipment applies water uniformly;
 - Establish drip irrigation systems where feasible;
 - Mulch around plants to limit evaporation and discourage weed growth;
 - Avoid extravagant uses of water such as hosing down sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots.

Wastewater Management

1. Ensure proper use, storage, and disposal of cleaning products and other potentially harmful chemicals such as fertilizers and paints;
2. Limit the number of chemical products used and stored, minimize stockpiling on the property and have a management plan for chemical purchasing, such as just-in-time purchasing;
3. Ensure that all chemicals are securely stored and clearly marked;
4. Use best storm-water runoff practices to ensure that wastewater does not enter local waterways. Practices include:
 - Reduce amount of hard surfaces such as impervious parking lots;
 - Create natural buffers around bodies of water;
 - Build bio-swales or ditches near parking lots;
 - Build natural areas to retain storm water such as rain gardens;
 - Limit use of chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides, and ensure they are not used near storm-water drains and natural water;
 - Place food scraps into the trash or composting bins prior to washing dishes and other kitchenware;
5. Use environmentally safe cleaning products:
 - MSDS Health Hazard Rating of 1 or less for all cleaning chemicals used on property
 - Ensure dishwashing detergents are biodegradable and do not contain nitrilotriacetic acid or chlorine bleach, that they are phosphate and bleach-free, nontoxic, biodegradable, and are concentrated liquid or powder laundry detergents;
 - Use disinfectants only when necessary and in accordance with public health standards;
 - Use environmentally certified cleaning products;
6. Use an Ozone washing machine which has shorter wash cycles, enhanced soil removal and disinfectant capability;
7. Use less harmful alternatives if possible, such as organic substitutes for chemical fertilizers;



8. Monitor equipment and products for potential chemical leaks such as aerosols, fire extinguishers, CFCs and HCFCs from cooling equipment refrigerators, and automotive liquids;
9. Use an integrated pest management (IPM) system for interior and exterior pest control;
10. Follow best management practices for fats, oil, and grease;
11. Use a chlorine alternative in pools and jacuzzis;
12. Use environmentally preferable or certified paints, solvents, and coatings;
13. Reuse paint thinners;
14. Use latex paints rather than oil based paints;
15. Educate staff on proper methods of containment and clean-up of spills, drips, leachings, and conduct regular inspections in relevant areas;
16. When doing exterior cleaning or pressure washing, proper care should be taken to avoid discharge of contaminants, such as detergents, into rivers, wetlands, or other natural bodies of water.

Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Management

1. Conduct an energy audit with an energy conservation specialist to determine your baseline energy use and what improvements should be made;
2. Monitor, record, and post rates of energy to quickly identify if there is system leakage;
3. Work with an energy expert to develop an energy management system;
4. Develop a comprehensive energy education and conservation program;
5. Use a renewable energy heating system such as passive solar or geo-thermal;
6. Use natural light whenever possible;
7. Turn off electronic equipment at the end of each workday. Consider using surge protectors enabled with master switches so that energy is not consumed when electronics are not in use;
8. Activate sleep/standby or low energy mode on applicable appliances and electronics;
9. Maximize central air efficiency by allowing sunlight to enter through windows in the winter and blocking sunlight in the summer. Install heat-control glass and/or sun control window film to windows with heavy sun exposure;
10. Weatherize the workplace by ensuring that doors and windows have tight seals and remain closed when shut. Seal unused windows and doors, and inspect building at least annually for cracks and leaks;
11. Set water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit rather than pre-set 140 degrees;
12. Replace existing lighting (particularly incandescent) with energy efficient or compact florescent bulbs. Replace or retrofit T12 florescent lamps and magnetic ballasts with T8 or T5 lamps and electronic ballasts;
13. Use programmable Energy Star®-labeled thermostats. Set to appropriate temperature ranges and conduct regular inspections to ensure efficient function;
14. Perform regularly scheduled preventative maintenance on equipment and appliances, including replacing and cleaning air filters, cleaning burners and air conditioner coils, and checking duct and pipe insulation for damage;
15. Wrap water heaters with an insulation blanket.
16. Install energy saving equipment whenever feasible, including timers, motion sensors, and master switches activated by room key cards;
17. Purchase and replace existing equipment with energy efficient or Energy Star® labeled electronics, appliances, and heating and cooling equipment;
18. Insulate facilities, including pipes, interior and exterior walls, ceilings, and wall cavities;
19. Use LED or electroluminescent exit signs;
20. Open windows rather than using central air when appropriate;



21. Install and use ceiling fans to circulate air in both winter and summer;
22. Install VendingMiser© or similar technology and/or remove unneeded lights on vending and snack machines;
23. Utilize techniques to reduce heat island effect, such as a white or 'green' roof;
24. Install variable speed fans where appropriate;
25. Use ventilation fans with humidity sensors for areas where needed;
26. Operate multiple and individual climate controlled comfort zones such as providing thermostats in each guest room;
27. Clean lighting fixtures and lamps regularly to increase illumination;
28. Keep appliances and office electronics on only when in use;
29. Develop policies to minimize the number of rooms needed to be lit and/or heated/cooled;
30. Use Energy Star's© or other similar benchmarking tools for the Hospitality Industry.

Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation

1. Follow the principles of Leave No Trace®: Know before you go; Leave it as you find it; Stick to trails; Be careful with fire; Trash your trash and pick up poop; Keep wildlife wild; Share our trails and manage your pet;
2. Participate in local environmental and conservation efforts either through sponsorship, monetary contributions, or volunteering and supporting employees to do so;
3. Provide environmental education materials and information on local biodiversity conservation efforts to staff and guests;
4. Design landscaping or on-site gardens to incorporate and support "heirloom" and native species;
5. Work with relevant parks and public land agencies to find out how your business might participate in ecosystem and biodiversity conservation efforts;
6. Provide information on how staff and guests can become involved in community volunteer conservation projects. Post project information in common areas and offer transportation assistance when needed. Provide staff incentives to those who volunteer;
7. Rehabilitate or improve waterways on property or in the region;
8. Develop partnerships with local conservation organizations;
9. Avoid purchasing and serving overexploited species, particularly seafood. Consider developing a sustainable seafood policy;
10. Set aside property and/or donate land to a conservation society or consider establishing a conservation easement;
11. Prevent wildlife from accessing trash and food by secure food sources;
12. Ensure that interactions with wildlife is done at a safe and respectful distance;
13. Provide information on local ecology and wildlife to guests and staff;
14. Protect sensitive areas, such as wetlands and large trees;
15. Install glass that has low levels of reflectivity;
16. Establish measures to reduce light pollution;
17. Contribute a percentage of annual net revenues to local non-profit conservation-based organizations.

Land Use Planning and Management

1. Follow standards for development and construction that take into account community values, distinctiveness, and sense of place;
2. Adopt strategies to develop a constructive and collaborative relationship with local community;



3. Direct development towards existing local communities that are already served by infrastructure and utilize the resources they have to offer;
4. Support the integration of mixed land uses and provide local community with more choices in housing, shopping, communities, and transportation;
5. Integrate green building design in new construction and remodeling;
6. Ensure that property and operations do not cause soil loss, soil contamination, or other negative impacts, such as erosion and sediment pollution to lands and waterways;
7. Participate in community events such as National Arbor Day, Earth Day, Great American Backyard Bird Count, and Take a Child Outside Day with local community;
8. Assure that preference is given to environmentally responsible landscaping, pool, and construction services.

Air Quality Protection and Noise Reduction

1. Eliminate the use of ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's) in refrigerants and aerosols;
2. Designate your property as a non-smoking establishment and/or designate smoking areas outside of the building and away from air in-take;
3. Address odors rather than masking them with the use of artificial air cleaners, refreshers, and cleaning products with fragrances;
4. Purchase only no- or low-VOC paints, carpeting, and construction materials;
5. Maintain quiet hours at night and early morning for staff and guests. Schedule necessary work for less air- and noise-sensitive times;
6. Design landscaping with noise reduction in mind;
7. Place insulation around loud equipment;
8. Design ventilation to exhaust outside of the building and not roof space;
9. Install dehumidifiers in high moisture areas (ex. kitchen and laundry), and assure that these areas are well ventilated. Relative humidity is maintained between 35 and 55%;
10. Use High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters;
11. Regularly test for gases such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and radon;
12. Regularly test for particulates such as lead and asbestos;
13. Regularly inspect HVAC system for mold/bacteria, air flow blockages, and clean drip pans;
14. Ensure that air filtration is in place/available for guestrooms.

Preserving the Social Norms and Cultures of Local and Indigenous Communities

1. Develop methods of establishing dialogue with local representatives to determine socio-cultural and economic impacts of your organization and to ensure their concerns are recognized in operational decisions;
2. Train staff to ensure they are well-informed on local customs;
3. Develop informative educational materials for guests about the local community and local history;
4. Use appropriate and authentic cultural elements from the local region;
5. Make your property available for community events;
6. Establish policies that restrict commercialization of endangered or protected flora and fauna;
7. Incorporate local arts and crafts in your facility and make information available to guests.

Providing Economic Benefits to Local and Indigenous Communities

1. Provide information to and encourage guests to purchase local products and services;



2. Provide employment opportunities for local community members;
3. Allow local artists to display and sell their handicrafts and art work at your property;
4. Provide information to guests on local attractions and cultural activities;
5. Form partnerships with locally owned businesses (e.g., restaurants and guide services);
6. Use local goods and services whenever possible;
7. Involve your organization in local philanthropic projects and develop a public relations plan that ensures guests, the greater community, interest groups, and others can be aware of your community involvement;
8. Provide volunteer opportunities for guests and staff;
9. Exceed minimum local standards for employee's wages, salaries and benefits;
10. Ensure that operational demands for basic services (water, electricity, roads, food, and other resources) do not compete with local needs;
11. Provide education and training opportunities in your place of business for local community member;
12. Support training for community members for non-competitive tourism-related activities that compliment your business;
13. Provide promotional information on local services and businesses to guests.

Responsible Purchasing

1. Assure that your organization has an environmentally preferable procurement/purchasing program that has a clear mission and distinct purchasing targets:
2. Adopt a "least toxic alternative" purchase policy:
3. Purchase only recyclable or compostable materials:
4. Purchase products and services from local sources whenever possible:
5. Give preference to purchases that are "sustainable" (e.g., local and/or organic), produce, meats, fish, and other food products are given preference in purchases;
6. Ensure that firewood comes from sustainable sources;
7. Use recycled and/or environmentally certified building materials on property;
8. Give preference to vendors and suppliers that are environmentally and socially responsible;
9. Regularly test new environmentally preferable products for effectiveness in operations and evaluate current products used;
10. Ensure that life-cycle analysis is conducted for major investments such as new equipment and construction projects;
11. Incorporate environmental preferences and requirements in RFP's and contracts with vendors and suppliers. Suppliers and vendors can then be held accountable to the environmental commitments made during negotiations;
12. Provide that "Fair trade" purchased for business use as well as for resale to guests.

Training and Education for Employees and Clients

1. Guarantee that a formal environmental program is in place that includes all staff participation and input;
2. Assure that informational signage about your organization's sustainable practices are placed around the property in appropriate places;
3. Provide an incentive program for staff and guests to provide input on your business's' current sustainable practices;
4. Ensure that claims of environmental practices are transparent and verifiable by third party entities (e.x. housekeeping, if asked, must be able to show packaging for environmentally preferable cleaning products if the organization claims it uses such products);
5. Notification about sustainable efforts is provided to guests in publications, advertising, and web site;
6. Offer feedback or comment cards to get guest and staff input on further sustainable practices;



7. Educate other businesses about sustainability by speaking at events and conferences and providing tours of facility's sustainable practices;
8. Provide continuing sustainability training for staff and forums for staff input;
9. Include sustainability as part of staff evaluation;
10. Participate in an environmental or sustainable tourism certification program.

