

Sustainable Travel International Gives its First Four Star Rating

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Tour Operator sets new precedent in the United States

Sustainable Travel International announced today that Escape Adventures has just received its highest honor yet, a 4 out of 5-star rating through its Sustainable Tourism Eco-certification Program(TM) (STEP).

STEP is the only global certification system offered by a non-profit organization that is designed to assist the international travel and tourism industry in attaining sustainability. STEP addresses the major environmental, socio-cultural and economic problems facing the tourism industry and the planet at large including global climate change, loss of biodiversity, waste management, economic development, and social issues.

'STEP is undoubtedly one of the most challenging sustainable tourism certification initiatives in the travel and tourism industry because of the regimented and thorough criteria,' said Brian T. Mullis, president of Sustainable Travel International. 'We are hoping that this new precedent will raise the bar for other tour operators who may not be as 'green' as they claim and hopefully give other responsible companies something to aspire to.'

'Many meticulous months of on-site and in house audits and the adoption of new sustainability programs finally paid off,' explains Jared Fisher owner of Escape Adventures 'We've discovered that instituting environmental, economic and socially-conscious measures makes good business sense as it results in increased competitive advantage and market reach while helping us to sustain our natural treasures,' Fisher concludes.

Some of the best practices instituted at Escape Adventures that paved the way for the company to achieve certification include:

Collecting used kitchen vegetable grease from local restaurants to fuel their tour vehicles,

Growing their own organic produce for their guest's consumption,

Recycling 90% of company and guest waste,

Using only recycled products and buy merchandise with little or no packaging, and

Installing solar panels at their warehouse, office and bike shops

For more information on STEP, please visit www.ecocertification.org.

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