



Supporting Sustainable Tourism

PRE-EVENT MEDIA ALERT

Virginia Green Travel Alliance to Announce Winners of the **2023 Virginia Green Travel Star Awards**

At the 10th Annual Virginia Green Travel Conference on March 21st!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 20, 2022.

RICHMOND, VA. – The Virginia Green Travel Alliance is pleased to announce the winners of the *2023 Virginia Green Travel Star & Leader Awards*. These awards are presented annually to Virginia’s greenest tourism operators and partners for their outstanding commitments to sustainability and contributions to green tourism in Virginia. The awards will be presented in conjunction with the [Virginia Green Travel Conference & Awards](#) that will be held on March 21 & 22, 2023 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

This year, ten (10) Virginia tourism operations were chosen to receive the Virginia Green program’s highest award, the *Virginia Green Travel Star Award*. Ten (10) additional tourism businesses are being recognized with the *Virginia Green Travel Leader Award* for their continued commitments to environmental stewardship, and three (3) individuals are receiving the *Green Team All-Star Award* for their efforts to lead their organizations’ green program efforts. Two (2) additional individual will receive awards for their *Lifetime Achievement & Support* of the Virginia Green Travel program. Finally, voting for the inaugural Virginia Green Travel People’s Choice Awards is still underway through March 21st, and those winners will be announced at the conference luncheon on March 22nd. The awards will be presented on March 21st during a reception starting at 530pm, co-hosted by Virginia Tourism Corporation’s Rita McClenny and Joel Rubin of Joel Rubin Communications and the WINDSdays project in Virginia Beach.

“Conserving natural resources, engaging customers, and working to increase sustainable tourism business in Virginia. The Virginia Green Travel Certification program works to support and promote those businesses that are committed to reducing the environmental impacts of their operation,” says Tom Griffin, the Executive Director of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. “The Virginia Green Travel Star Awards recognizes the ‘greenest’ businesses and individuals that have demonstrated outstanding commitments to the environment in the past year. We are proud to recognize these businesses as they are true partner in our efforts to promote sustainable tourism in Virginia!”

The conference runs from March 21-22, 2023 and features six technical workshops, plenary discussion panels, and a Green Tourism Business Expo that is open to the public. The Virginia Green Travel Alliance has partner with Keep Virginia Beautiful for this year’s conference in honor of the 70th anniversary of that organization. Keynote speakers include the President/CEO of Keep America Beautiful Jennifer Lawson and Erik Hansen of the US Travel Association.

The Virginia Green Travel program is run through a partnership between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Virginia State Parks, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association, and the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. The program encourages green practices in all

sectors of Virginia's tourism industry. More than 1,200 businesses and partner organizations have voluntarily certified their green commitments through Virginia Green.

The 2023 Virginia Green Travel Star Award winners are:

- Green Attraction of the Year Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, VA Beach
- Green Brewery of the Year Elation Brewing, Norfolk
- Green Caterer of the Year Centerplate-SodexoLive! @ VA Beach Convention Center
- Green Dining Services of the Year JMU Dining Services, Harrisonburg
- Most Innovative Green Projects Virginia Beach Convention Center's Green Event Incentives Initiative
- Most Innovative Green Projects Shored Up LLC's Hampton Oyster Paddles & *Shellabration*
- Most Innovative Green Projects CCC Cabin Restorations at Douthat State Park
- Most Innovative Green Projects Virginia Living Museum's Lakeside Litter Cleanup

The 2023 Virginia Green Travel Leader Award winners are:

- Jenny Elmes, full circle catering
- Birdsong Pleasure Garden, Luray
- Oak Grove B&B, South Boston
- Stable Craft Brewing, Waynesboro
- RVA Environmental Film Festival, Richmond
- Storybook Events, Henrico
- Capital Region Airport Commission, Richmond

The 2023 Green Team All-Star Award winners are:

- Kimberlee Dobbins, Virginia Beach Convention Center
- Erick Pinzon, Electrified Marina, Norfolk
- Meggan Saul, Holiday Lake State Park

Life-Time Achievement & Support:

- Virginia Green Stellar Supporter Award: Katie Register, Clean Virginia Waterway, Longwood University
- Industry Game Changer Award: John Cario. Hilton Richmond Downtown

If you would like more information about the awards, please contact Tom Griffin of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance at (804) 986-9119 or Viriniagreenta@gmail.com.

Links & Resources

More about the conference can be found at www.VAGreenTravelConference.com. Members of the news media are invited to attend the conference and awards. If you would like to attend or for more information, please contact the Virginia Green Travel Alliance at (804) 986-9119 or VirginiaGreenTA@gmail.com.

- The Virginia Tourism Corporation promotes the certified Virginia Green program partners at www.virginia.org/green-travel and encourages visitors to plan their green vacations in Virginia.
- The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality provides technical resources and oversight of the certification process -- www.deq.virginia.gov/get-involved/pollution-prevention/virginia-green
- The Virginia Green Travel Alliance is the non-profit organization that administers the Virginia Green certification program and supports partner outreach and educational opportunities – www.VirginiaGreen.net.
- All 41 [Virginia State Parks](#) are certified in the Virginia Green Travel program, and VSP and Virginia Green Travel are working to “co-brand” and promote sustainable tourism opportunities in all regions of the Commonwealth.
- [Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association](#) assists in promotion and development of educational opportunities for the tourism industry.
- The [Virginia Green Travel Alliance](#) is the 501c3 non-profit organization created to administer the Virginia Green Travel Certification program and promote certified partner businesses.
- [10th Annual Virginia Green Travel Conference & Travel Star Awards](#).