



Supporting Sustainable Tourism



Virginia's Greenest Tourism Operators Recognized at the 8th Annual Virginia Green Travel Conference on April 28 & 29, 2021

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RICHMOND, VA. – The Virginia Green Travel Alliance is pleased to announce the winners of the *2021 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 were presented virtually in conjunction with the [Virginia Green Travel Conference & Awards](#) that was held on April 28 & 29, 2021.

This year, fifteen (15) Virginia tourism operations were chosen to receive the Virginia Green program's highest award, the *Virginia Green Travel Star Award*. Eleven (11) additional tourism businesses are being recognized with the *Virginia Green Travel Leader Award* for their continued commitments to environmental stewardship, and six (6) individuals are receiving the *Green Team All-Star Award* for their efforts to lead their organization's green program efforts. Additionally, 3 of the award winners were also recognized in the inaugural offering of the *Virginia Green Travel People's Choice Awards*.

Each of the award winners is listed below, and summary slides about their individual efforts can be found on the [2021 Virginia Green Travel Awards website](#).

"2020 was an incredibly challenging year for us all in the tourism industry", said Jack Berry, the CEO of Richmond Region Tourism and the Board Chairman of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. "It is exciting to have the chance to recognize these Virginia Green Travel Partners for their continued commitments to excellence and to sustainable tourism practices. Moving forward, sustainable tourism will be an integral part of our industry's recovery."

The 8th Virginia Green Travel Conference included feature presentations by:

- Rita McClenny, CEO/President of the Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Virginia Senator Ghazala Hashmi
- Earl B. Hunter, Jr., Founder/President of Black Folks Camp Too
- Melissa Baker, Director of Virginia State Parks
- Marc Berejka, Director of Community & Government Affairs for REI Cooperative.

The 2-day conference also showcased a virtual Green Tourism Business Expo, discussion panels and breakout workshops on various environmental topics related to green tourism.

The Virginia Green program is supported through a partnership between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association, Virginia State Parks 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 business practices through the Virginia Green program.

The 2021 Virginia Green Travel Star Award winners are:

- Green Hotel of the Year Hilton Downtown Richmond
- Green Attraction of the Year Birdsong Pleasure Garden, Luray
- Green Conference Center of the Year Chesapeake Conference Center
- Green Event of the Year The Virginia Living Museum Oyster Roast
- Green Dining Service of the Year JMU's East Campus Dining Hall
- Green Tours of the Year Shored Up LLC, Hampton
- Green Supplier of the Year Babylon Micro-Farms, Inc., Richmond
- Green Transportation Facility of the Year RVATukTuk, Richmond
- Green Inn of the Year The Red Lantern Inn, Clifton Forge
- Most Innovative Green Projects Croc's 19th Street Bistro *Native Plants Garden*, Virginia Beach
- Most Innovative Green Projects DuCard Vineyards, *Sipping for Saplings*, Etlan
- Most Innovative Green Projects Powhatan State Park, *Paper Waste Reduction*
- Most Innovative Green Projects Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center E-ticketing, education & waste reduction, Virginia Beach
- Most Innovative Green Projects Awesome Oysters LLC, Plastic waste reduction & solar battery charging, Village
- Most Innovative Green Projects Virginia Living Museum, *Green Teens*

The 2021 Virginia Green Travel Leader Award winners are:

- RVA Environmental Film Festival, Richmond
- Hampton Inn Virginia Beach Oceanfront North
- Back INN Time B&B, Kilmarnock
- Shady Acres Bed and Breakfast LLC, Hanover
- Pathosans, *Sanitizing Installation for the Virginia Railway Express*, Alexandria
- Westmoreland State Park, *Pollinator Garden*
- Nauticus, *Plastic or Planet? Exhibit*, Norfolk
- Oak Grove Plantation B&B, *Sustainable Renovation of the Little House*, South Boston
- The Mariners' Museum and Park, *Bumble Bee Garden*, Newport News
- Hampton Inn Manassas, *Pollinator Garden*
- Natural Bridge State Park, *Environmental Education Area*

The 2021 Green Team All-Star Award winners are:

- Travis Land, Virginia Living Museum
- Suzanne Moss, The Nature Bus, Virginia Beach
- Karen Riddle, Shadow Mountain Escape, Luray
- Jenny Elmes, full circle catering, Lexington
- Deck Hankins, Go Green Distributors, Newport News
- Phil Irwin, Caledonia Farm 1812, Flint Hill

The Inaugural 2021 Virginia Green Travel PEOPLE'S CHOICE Award winners are:

- 1st Place: Chesapeake Conference Center
- 2nd Place: Shored Up, LLC, Hampton
- 3rd Place: The Virginia Living Museum, Newport News

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

- Virginia Green Travel Conference & Awards website – <https://web.cvent.com/event/ccefe41b-34a4-4aa9-b3a3-c455f49eab83/summary>
- Awards website hosted by the Virginia Green Travel Alliance -- www.viriniagreen.net/virinia-green-travel-star-awards-2021.
- The Virginia Tourism Corporation promotes the Virginia Green program partners at www.ViriniaGreenTravel.org 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/virinia-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.ViriniaGreen.net.
- The Virginia Restaurant Lodging & Hospitality Association assists in promotion and development of educational opportunities for the tourism industry.