



Supporting Sustainable Tourism

MEDIA ALERT

Virginia Green Travel Alliance Announces Winners of the **2026 Virginia Green Travel Star Awards** at the 13th Annual Virginia Green Travel Conference on March 20th!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 23, 2026.

RICHMOND, VA. – The Virginia Green Travel Alliance is pleased to announce the winners of the *2026 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 in conjunction with the 13th Annual Virginia Green Travel Conference that was held March 19-20, 2026 at **Massanutten Resort** in McGaheysville, Virginia.

This year, fourteen (14) Virginia tourism operators were chosen to receive the Virginia Green Travel program’s highest award, the *Virginia Green Travel Star Award*. Six (6) additional tourism businesses were recognized with the *Virginia Green Travel Leader Award* for their commitments to environmental stewardship, and four (4) individuals received the *Green Team All-Star Award* for their efforts to lead their organizations’ green programs. Two (2) organizations also received honorable mention recognition for their continued efforts as committed Virginia Green Travel Partners. Finally, two of these award winners were also recognized in a social media contest - the 4th annual *Virginia Green Travel People’s Choice Award*.

The awards were presented on March 20th included in the post-event media alert. All of the awards will be presented at an awards luncheon co-hosted by **Rita McClenny**, the President/CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation with assistance from the Commonwealth’s Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources **David Bulova**.



“The Virginia Green Travel Certification program works to support and recognize tourism businesses and organizations that are committed to reducing the environmental impacts of their operations,” said Tom Griffin, the Executive Director of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. “Through the *Travel Star Awards*, we get to recognize the ‘greenest’ businesses and individuals that have demonstrated outstanding effort and achievements in the past year. We are proud to recognize these businesses as they are true partners in our efforts to promote sustainable tourism in Virginia!”

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 1,300 businesses and partner organizations have voluntarily certified their green commitments through the Virginia Green Travel program.

The 2026 Virginia Green Travel Star Award winners are:

- Green Restaurant of the Year The Camel, Richmond
- Green Large Attraction of the Year Virginia Zoo, Norfolk
- Green Small Attraction of the Year Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville
- Green Brewery of the Year Hardywood Craft Brewery West Creek, Richmond
- Green B&B/Inn of the Year Roanoke Boutique Hotel, Roanoke
- Green Lodging of the Year Iris Inn & Cabins, Waynesboro
- Green Supplier of the Year Tidewater Compost, Virginia Beach
- Green Convention Center of the Year Virginia Beach Convention Center
- Most Innovative Green Projects Fillagreen *Eco-Elves Upcycling Drive*
- Most Innovative Green Projects DCR VA State Parks *Association of Southeastern State Parks Directors Conference*

- Most Innovative Green Projects JMU Dining *Too Good to Go Program*
- Most Innovative Green Projects COVA Brewing *Nitrogen Generator Project*
- Most Innovative Green Projects Tidewater Compost *Drop-Off Program*
- Most Innovative Green Projects Richmond Region Tourism *CERF 2025 Net Zero Emissions Conference*

The 2026 Virginia Green Travel Leader Award winners are:

- full circle catering, Lexington
- Secure Solar Futures, Staunton
- Springhill Suites Norfolk Virginia Beach
- Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, Virginia Beach
- Sperryfest, Sperryville
- Ironclad Distillery, Newport News

The 2026 Honorable Mention Award winners are:

- Oak Grove Bed & Breakfast, South Boston
- Back INN Time B&B, Kilmarnock

The 2026 Green Team All-Star Award winners are:

- Lisa Harrison, Harris, Hardy & Johnstone
- Mary Beth Mains, Virginia State Parks
- Sammy Zambon, Virginia State Parks
- Ken Benson, Virginia State Parks

The 2026 People's Choice Award winners are:

- Virginia Beach Convention Center
- Roanoke Boutique Hotel

Links & Resources

- More about the conference can be found at <https://vgt-conference-26.lovable.app>
- 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 -- <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/business-construction/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 [Virginia State Parks](http://www.virginia.gov/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](http://www.virginia.org/restaurant-lodging-travel-association) assists in promotion and development of educational opportunities for the tourism industry.
- The [Virginia Green Travel Alliance](http://www.virginia.org/virginia-green-travel-alliance) is the 501c3 non-profit organization created to administer the Virginia Green Travel Certification program and promote certified partner businesses.