

# **Supporting Sustainable Tourism**

# PRE-EVENT MEDIA ALERT

Virginia Green Travel Alliance Announces the Winners of the

# 2022 Virginia Green Travel Star Awards

In Celebration of EARTH DAY!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – APRIL 22, 2022.

RICHMOND, VA. – In celebration of Earth Day, the Virginia Green Travel Alliance is pleased to announce the winners of the *2022 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 <u>Virginia Green Travel Conference & Awards</u> that will be held on April 25 & 26, 2022 "in-person" for the first time in three years at the Hilton Richmond Downtown.

This year, nine (9) 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 seven (7) individuals are receiving the *Green Team All-Star Award* for their efforts to lead their organizations' green program efforts. Additionally, voting for the inaugural Virginia Green Travel People's Choice Awards is still underway through April 24<sup>th</sup>, and those winners will be announced at the conference on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The awards will be presented on April 25<sup>th</sup> during a reception starting at 530pm, co-hosted by Virginia Tourism Corporation's Rita McClenny and NBC12 Meteorologist Andrew Freiden.

"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 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 2022 Virginia Green Travel Star Award winners are:

Green Hotel of the Year
Fairfield Kingsgate Wyndham, Williamsburg

Green Attraction of the Year
Green Leaf & Pebble Tea Spa & Café, Virginia Beach

Green Brewery of the Year
Stable Craft Brewing, Waynesboro

Green Convention Center of the Year
 Green Event of the Year
 Greater Richmond Convention Center, Richmond
 The Yuengling Shamrock Marathon, Virginia Beach

Green Transportation Facility of the Year James River Transportation, Richmond

Most Innovative Green Projects
Virginia Clean Cities – Mid-Atlantic Electrification Project

Most Innovative Green Projects
Richmond Region Tourism – Net Zero Emissions

Conferences

Most Innovative Green Projects
Virginia Living Museum - Floating Wetland

# The 2022 Virginia Green Travel Leader Award winners are:

Birdsong Pleasure Garden, Luray

- Twin Lakes State Park, Green Bay
- Crazy Rooster Brewing Company, Powhatan
- Elation Brewing Company, Norfolk
- Oak Grove B&B, South Boston
- James Madison University Dining Services, Harrisonburg
- Shored UP LLC, Hampton
- Ducard Vineyards, Etlan
- Westmoreland State Park, Montross
- Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Richmond
- Capital Region Airport Commission, Richmond

## The 2022 Green Team All-Star Award winners are:

- Sarah Stalcup-Jones, Virginia Clean Cities
- Hannah Proteau, Green Leaf Green Leaf and Pebble Tea Spa & Café
- ➤ Chef Khaled and Team Green Team All-Star, Hilton Richmond Downtown
- Megan Hale, Chesapeake Parks, Recreation & Tourism
- Matt Robinette, Richmond Region Tourism

## **Life-Time Achievement & Support:**

- Virginia Green Stellar Supporter Award: Ron Kuhlman, Virginia Beach CVB
- Industry Game Changer Award: Mark Swingle, Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

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

#### **Links & Resources**

More about the conference can be found at <a href="www.VAGreenTravelConference.com">www.VAGreenTravelConference.com</a>. 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 <a href="https://www.virginia.org/green-travel">www.virginia.org/green-travel</a> 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 -- <a href="www.deq.virginia.gov/get-involved/pollution-prevention/virginia-green">www.deq.virginia.gov/get-involved/pollution-prevention/virginia-green</a>
- 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 <u>Virginia State Parks</u> 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 <u>Virginia Green Travel Alliance</u> is the 501c3 non-profit organization created to administer the Virginia Green Travel Certification program and promote certified partner businesses.
- 9th Annual Virginia Green Travel Conference & Travel Star Awards.