



LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS, USA & GLOBAL GLOBAL TOURISM BUSINESS AWARD WINNER 2007

CASE STUDY

Lindblad Expeditions (LEX) is a conservation-minded company that has been offering small, nature-oriented cruises and expeditions around the world for more than 27 years, hosting between 15,000 and 17,000 guests annually. The company approaches cruising as a form of tourism that can make a difference in one's life, and in the world.

The company has implemented environmental management systems throughout all its operations, and there is a designated Environmental Manager on all LEX's cruises. The Environmental Manager is responsible for identifying, measuring and managing each of the company's environmental impacts in conjunction with the Chief Engineer and other key employees.



The related processes and systems are standardised across the entire fleet and the related 'impacts' are thoroughly documented: gray water, black water, freshwater, oil, diesel, septic and electricity consumption rates are all measured, monitored and documented.

On all cruises, the total volume of organic, inorganic and recycled waste is measured and managed. Glass, most plastics and paper products are recycled. Organic waste is liquefied to help it biodegrade faster. Cooking and engine oil is stored in steel containers and transported to be recycled. The use of plastic is discouraged on all the company's trips. Meals are only served on china and drinks are only available in glass bottles. The company also provides guests with re-usable water bottles. In addition, Lindblad only uses non-corrosive biodegradable chemicals, detergents and cleaning products, and guests are provided with biodegradable soap and refillable shampoo and soap dispensers.

Training is key to the success of the company's 'green' initiatives, which require a co-ordinated effort throughout its entire operations (eg all employees are taught about the company's commitment to sustainable tourism and about its related policies). In addition, environmental policies are made available to employees, and they all receive related training and reports on a regular basis so that they can help the company achieve its environmental goals. This approach has had a number of indirect impacts, including influencing employees to practise environmental conservation at home.

CASE STUDY

One of Lindblad's governing principles is to "positively impact the areas we explore and in which we work".

Lindblad has established programmes for contributing towards conservation in all its key destinations. At the top of the list is the Galápagos Islands, where Lindblad has been a pioneer in promoting sustainable tourism practices.



The Galápagos Conservation Fund (GCF) was started by Lindblad Expeditions in 1997 as an opportunity for guests to contribute directly to local conservation projects. The GCF has raised more than US\$4.5 million used in a variety of projects, such as the eradication of feral pigs from the island of Santiago, and the support of National Park Marine Reserve patrol boats. The Galápagos National Park and the Charles Darwin Research Station decide how GCF funds are to be used. A full 100% of this money goes to the projects selected by the GCF advisory board. As a result of the company's early efforts and that of other companies that followed its example, tourism in the Galápagos is now highly regulated and over 90% of the land on the islands is protected.

Similarly, working with Mexican and international partners, Lindblad created the Gulf of California Conservation Fund in Spring 2004 to channel support to the region's most pressing conservation priorities. Lindblad's guest contributions are matched dollar for dollar by the Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza and the Packard Foundation. Projects directly benefiting from these funds include sea-lion disentanglement at Los Islotes, the restoration of Santa Catalina Island, and radar surveillance of Bahia Loreto Marine Reserve to monitor illegal fishing traffic in the reserve. Lindblad Expeditions' guests have contributed more than US\$300,000 and, together with matching donations, the total figure now exceeds US\$1 million for conservation work.

Lindblad was the first US signatory in 1998 to the Marine Stewardship Council certification standard for sustainable marine fisheries and it purchased from MSC-certified suppliers. As an example, in 2001, Lindblad removed shrimp from fleet menus based on lack of a sustainable shrimp supply that did not involve destructive shrimp-farming operations or trawling. The company has been offering fresh, local, organic and sustainably harvested (FLOSH) cuisine for more than a decade. It purchases FLOSH ingredients whenever and wherever possible to help local communities and support micro-enterprise.

Lindblad has promoted sustainable practices beyond its own company by also partnering with the US Tour Operators' Association to establish the Travelers Conservation Foundation, bringing industry leaders together to support conservation and responsible travel.